Glossary

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Activity system—A system of mediated, interactive, shared, motivated, and sometimes competing activities. Within an activity system, the subjects or agents, the objectives, and the mediational means function inseparably from one another (Engeström, "Developmental Studies" 67). Context, when viewed with a focus on activity systems, is "an ongoing, dynamic accomplishment of people acting together with shared tools, including—most powerfully—writing" (Russell, "Rethinking Genre" 508-9). The discursive interactions of an activity system are mediated by genre systems, which maintain stabilized-for-now, normalized ways of acting and interacting that subjects can use to produce consequential, recognizable outcomes.

Brazilian educational model—A pedagogical approach informed by theories of socio-discursive interactionism and the Swiss genre tradition. The Brazilian model brings together a focus on genre awareness, analysis of linguistic conventions, and attention to social context. Its pedagogical sequence generally begins with writing activities that draw on writers' previous genre knowledge and experience, moves to analysis of genre within rhetorical and social contexts, and culminates with (re)production of the genre. See also GENRE AWARENESS and SOCIO-DISCURSIVE INTERACTIONISM.

Communicative purpose—Purpose as defined in relation to a discourse community's shared communicative goals. Communicative purpose often serves as a starting point for ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (ESP) genre analyses.

Context—A broad label for the conditions in which discourse occurs. Contexts exist not merely as backdrops or frames within which genres and actions take place, but form in a dynamic, inter-depen-

dent, mutually-constructing relationship with the genre systems they situate. Through the use of genres and other mediational means, communicants perform context as they function within it. See also MEDIATIONAL MEANS.

Corpus linguistics—A linguistic research methodology that draws on large scale electronic text databases (or *corpora*) to allow researchers to conduct systematic searches for linguistic features, patterns, and variations in spoken and written texts.

Cultural Studies approaches to genre—A literary approach to genre that seeks to examine the dynamic relationship between genres, literary texts, and socio-culture. A Cultural Studies approach emphasizes the ways genres organize, generate, normalize, and help reproduce literary as well as non-literary social actions in dynamic, ongoing, culturally defined and defining ways.

Discourse—Language in use and understood as participating in social systems and so having determining effects in social life.

Discourse community—A way of conceptualizing context as defined by and emerging from a particular community. Discourse communities are characterized by common goals, specific genres, shared terminology, material mechanisms (*e.g.,* meeting rooms and newsletters) for communication, and a critical mass of members to pass along community goals and communicative purposes to new members (Swales, *Genre Analysis* 24-27). Genre, when defined in relation to discourse community, is understood as a relatively stable class of linguistic and rhetorical events that members of a discourse community have typified in order to respond to and achieve shared communicative goals. See also ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES.

Distributed cognition—The ability to think "in conjunction or partnership with others" (Salomon xiii) made possible by the mediation of genre systems and genre sets within activity systems. Cognition is distributed among participants across time and space by the co-ordinating effects of genre systems and sets. See also ACTIVITY SYSTEM, GENRE SET, GENRE SYSTEM, and SITUATED COGNITION.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP)—A linguistic approach to genre characterized by analysis of the features of texts in relation to the values and rhetorical purposes of discourse communities. Within an ESP framework, a genre is seen as a relatively stable class of linguistic and rhetorical events that members of a discourse com-

munity have typified in order to respond to and achieve shared communicative goals. Research in ESP commonly focuses on the use of genre analysis for applied ends. ESP genre pedagogies target advanced, often graduate-level international students in British and U.S. universities and attend to community-identified genres used within specific disciplinary settings. See also Discourse Community.

Ethnography—A research methodology that aims for a holistic understanding of human activities in social context. Ethnographic approaches to genre research foreground how patterns of linguistic and rhetorical behavior are related to patterns of social behavior. Ethnography-informed genre pedagogies emphasize the importance of enabling students to encounter, analyze, and practice writing genres with attention to the contexts of their use.

Exigence—The element of a rhetorical situation characterized by urgency brought about by a need, obligation, or stimulus that calls for a response. While exigence is traditionally understood to be objectively perceivable on the basis of inherent characteristics (Bitzer), Carolyn Miller reconceptualizes exigence as "a form of social knowledge—a mutual construing of objects, events, interests and purposes that not only links them but makes them what they are: an objectified social need" ("Genre as Social Action" 30). How we define and act within a situation depends on how we recognize the exigence it presents, and this process of recognition is socially learned and maintained.

Explicit teaching of genre—A pedagogical approach focusing on the explicit teaching of prototypical features of genres, including syntactic, lexical, discursive, and rhetorical features. Both English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) genre-based pedagogies are committed to the idea that the explicit teaching of relevant genres provides access to disadvantaged learners. There is ongoing debate about the roles and relative importance of explicit teaching and tacit acquisition in the teaching and learning of genre. See also English for Specific Purposes, Implicit Teaching of Genre, and Systemic Functional Linguistics.

Genre—A typified rhetorical way of recognizing, responding to, acting meaningfully and consequentially within, and thus participating in the reproduction of, recurring situations. Genres both

organize and generate kinds of texts and social actions, in complex, dynamic relation to one another. While traditional views of genre emphasize its application as a tool of classification, contemporary rhetorical, linguistic, and literary views of genre understand it to be an ideologically active and historically changing force in the production and reception of texts, meanings, and social actions. This dynamic view of genre calls for the study and teaching of how formal features are connected to social purposes, why a genre's formal features come to exist the way they do, and how and why those features make possible certain social actions/relations and not others.

Genre awareness—A genre-based pedagogical approach that recognizes the tacit elements of genre knowledge and so teaches genres both in the context of situated practice and with explicit articulation of the interrelation of rhetorical strategies and social actions. The goal of teaching genre awareness is that students acquire "a critical consciousness of both rhetorical purposes and ideological effects of generic forms" (Devitt, *Writing Genres* 192). See also Genre Knowledge.

Genre knowledge—A knowledge not only of a genre's formal features but also of what and whose purposes the genre serves, how to negotiate one's intentions in relation to the genre's social expectations and motives, what reader/writer relationships the genre maintains, and how the genre relates to other genres in the coordination of social life.

Genre set—A set of genres used by a particular community to perform their work. Genres in a set are "associated through the activities and functions of a collective but defining only a limited range of actions" (Devitt, *Writing Genres* 57). See also Genre System.

Genre system—A constellation of genre sets that coordinates and enacts the work of multiple groups within larger systems of activity. A genre system can involve the interaction of users with different types of expertise and levels of authority, yet the relationship of the genres as coordinated through a series of appropriately-timed and expected uptakes enables their users to enact complex social actions over time. See also Genre Set and Uptake.

Ideology—An abstract system of beliefs, values, and ideas that directs goals, expectations, and actions. Ideology and genre are related in that to recognize genres as socially situated and culturally embed-

ded is to recognize that genres carry with them the ideologies of particular communities and cultures. Genre provides the ideological context in which a text and its users function, relate to other genres and texts, and attain cultural value.

Implicit teaching of genre—A genre-based pedagogical approach emphasizing immersion in writing situations to elicit appropriate cognitive strategies without modeling or explication of genre features. In this model, indirect or implicit methods of instruction in genre are seen as the only way for students to achieve complex genre knowledge including the tacit knowledge beyond recognition of prototypical features. See also Explicit Teaching of Genre.

Linguistic traditions of genre study—See Corpus Linguistics, English for Specific Purposes, and Systemic Functional Linguistics

Literary genre theory—The tradition of genre study that has most informed popular beliefs about genre as either an exclusively aesthetic object or as a constraint on the artistic spirit. Recent literary genre scholarship challenges this bipolar attitude and offers a larger landscape for genre action. See Cultural Studies approaches to genre, Neoclassical approaches to genre, Romantic and post-Romantic approaches to genre, and Structuralist approaches to genre.

Mediational means—The social, cultural, and historical forms and objects available as means by which to take social action. Mediational means include both semiotic systems of representation (linguistic, visual, etc.) and material objects in the world that carry affordances and constraints.

Metacognition—Awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes, specifically the selection and application of particular cognitive strategies of problem-solving. Metacognition is an important component of genre knowledge transfer across dissimilar contexts.

Meta-genre—A genre that provides shared background knowledge and guidance in how to produce and negotiate genres within genre sets and systems. Meta-genres can take the form of guidelines or manuals for how to produce and use genres or simply shared discourse about genres. Some communities have defined, explicit meta-genres that guide their genre systems while other communities will have tacitly agreed upon meta-genres. Janet Giltrow defines

meta-genres as "atmospheres surrounding genres" ("Meta-genre" 195) that function on the boundaries between activity systems to smooth over tensions individuals experience within and between activity systems by rationalizing the contradictions and conflicts.

Neoclassical approaches to genre—A literary approach to genre that utilizes a theoretical, transhistorical set of categories in order to classify literary texts according to internal thematic and formal relations. The main critique of such taxonomies has been the way they universalize the ideological character of genre rather than seeing genres as emerging from and responding to socio-historically situated exigencies.

New Rhetoric—A twentieth century shift in the rhetorical tradition from a classical emphasis on the centrality of persuasion in rhetorical discourse to an emphasis on the role of identification. A new rhetorical approach examines how people use rhetoric not only to persuade but also to relate to one another, to create shared experiences and versions of social reality. According to Kenneth Burke, the new rhetoric recognizes rhetoric as a dimension of all discourse and a form of symbolic action.

North American Genre Theory—See Rhetorical Genre Theory.

Occluded genre—A genre that operates behind the scenes of more dominant genres and to which access is limited within the participating discourse community. Examples of occluded genres include submission letters, review letters, abstracts, etc. (Swales, "Occluded Genres" 46).

Pedagogy—The principles and methods of teaching and learning that guide instruction. Genre-based pedagogies inform classroom strategies for teaching both the production and analysis of discourse.

Phenomenology—A philosophical tradition established at the beginning of the twentieth century with the work of Edmund Husserl and later expanded by Martin Heidegger. Phenomenology emerged as a challenge to the Cartesian split between mind and world. It rejects the idea that consciousness is self-contained and privately held and, instead, seeks to account for how objects in the world manifest themselves and become available to human consciousness. At the heart of phenomenology's outer-directed view of consciousness and experience is the notion of intentionality understood as a cognitive, sense-making act. Phenomenology relates to genre theory in that in the same way intentions bring objects

to our consciousness, genres bring texts and situations to our consciousness and so inform our intentions.

Primary and secondary genres—Levels of genre complexity and relationship to context as outlined by Mikhail Bakhtin. Primary genres form in the course of everyday communication. Secondary genres, such as the novel, re-contextualize these primary genres by placing them in relationship to other primary genres within its symbolic world.

Prototype theory—A theory of graded categorization based on Eleanor Rosch's theory of prototypes. Prototype theory identifies membership within genre not on the basis of shared, essential properties of texts but on the basis of more or less similarity to a prototypical text. This notion of more or less similarity has played an important role in historical and corpus linguistic approaches to genre categorization.

Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS)—Also known as North American Genre Theory. A rhetorical approach to genre that emphasizes the study of genres as forms of situated cognition, social action, and social reproduction. RGS has contributed to the work of new rhetoric by examining how genres, understood as typified rhetorical ways of acting within and enacting recurring situations, function as symbolic means of establishing social identification and cooperation. Within RGS the focus of genre analysis is directed toward an understanding of social practices and events: the ideologies, power relations, epistemologies, and activities that animate them, and the role that genres play in how individuals experience and enact these practices in various sites of activity. An RGS approach raises questions about the pedagogical possibilities of teaching genres explicitly in classroom environments, outside of the contexts of their use. Work to develop RGS genre-based pedagogies face the challenge of teaching genres in ways that maintain their complexity and status as more than just typified rhetorical features. RGS scholars have for the most part advocated an apprenticeship-based approach to teaching and learning genres with attention to the following issues: how to develop genre knowledge that transfers across writing situations; how to teach a critical awareness of genre; how to teach students to move from critique to production of alternative genres; and, finally, how to situate genres

within the contexts of their use, whether public, professional, or disciplinary contexts.

Rhetorical situation—The context of rhetorical action. Lloyd Bitzer defines a rhetorical situation as "a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence" ("The Rhetorical Situation" 304). Bitzer acknowledges that all discourse takes place in some context, but proposes that the distinguishing characteristic of a rhetorical situation is that it calls forth rhetorical discourse (which produces action). By positing rhetorical situation as generative of rhetorical action, Bitzer recognized the "power of situation to constrain a fitting response" (Bitzer 307). Carolyn Miller further observes that our recognition of a situation as calling for a certain response is based on our having defined it as a situation that calls for a certain response and so argues that "situations . . . are the result, not of 'perception,' but of 'definition'" ("Genre as Social Action" 29). Rhetorical situations, then, are social constructs, and genres are how we mutually construe or define situations as calling for certain actions. See also Exigence.

Romantic and post-Romantic approaches to genre—Literary approaches to genre that reject genre's constitutive power, arguing instead that literary texts achieve their status by exceeding genre conventions, which are perceived as prescriptive taxonomies and constraints on textual energy.

Socio-Discursive Interactionism (SDI)—A theoretical approach to discourse that "postulates that human actions should be treated in their social and discursive dimensions, considering language as the main characteristic of human social activity" (Baltar *et al.* 53). Within SDI, genres are considered both "as products of social activities . . . and as tools that allow people to realize language actions and participate in different social activities" (Araújo 46). Bakhtin's influence on SDI is evident in its focus on language-in-use and genres as typified utterances. Vygotsky's influence appears in SDI's key distinctions between *acting, activity,* and *action,* with 'acting' describing "any form of directed intervention," 'activity' referring to the shared, socially-defined notion of acting in

particular situations, and 'action' indicating the interpretation of "acting" on an individual level (Baltar *et al.* 53). Genres play a mediating role between the social and behavioral dimensions of language (the activity and action). Within this framework, SDI pays attention to actors' *motivational plans* (their reasons for acting), *intentional plans* (their purposes for acting), *and available resources and instruments* (habitual strategies, familiar tools).

Structuralist approaches to genre—A literary approach to genre that understands genres as both organizing and shaping literary texts and activities within a literary reality. Structuralist (or literary-historical) approaches acknowledge the power of genre to shape textual interpretation and production. They examine how socio-historically localized genres shape specific literary actions, identifications, and representations. However, by focusing on genres as literary artifacts that structure literary realities, structuralist genre approaches overlook how all genres, not just literary, help organize and generate social practices and realities.

Sydney School approach—A pedagogical approach to genre that emerged in response to an Australian national curriculum aimed at K-12 students. Based largely in Systemic Functional Linguistics, the trajectory of teaching and learning begins with educators modeling genres and explicating genre features using the Hallidayan socially-based system of textual analysis. Students then work to reproduce these genres and thus acquire them. See also SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)—A linguistic approach to genre, based on the work of M.A.K. Halliday, that operates from the premise that language structure is integrally related to social function and context. SFL holds that language is organized in particular ways in a culture because such an organization serves a social purpose within that culture. "Functional" refers to the work that language does within particular contexts. "Systemic" refers to the structure or organization of language that provides the "systems of choices" available to language users for the realization of meaning (Christie, "Genre Theory" 759). The concept of *realization* is especially important within SFL, for it describes the dynamic way that language *realizes* social purposes and contexts as specific linguistic interactions, at the same time as social purposes and contexts *realize* language as specific social actions

and meanings. Systemic functional approaches to genre arose in part in response to concerns over the efficacy of student-centered, process-based literacy teaching, with their emphasis on "learning through doing."

Typifications—Socially defined and shared recognitions of similarities. Typifications are part of our habitual knowledge (Schutz 108); they are the routinized, socially-available categorizations of strategies and forms for recognizing and acting within familiar situations and thus they are central to a view of genre as social action.

Uptake—A concept originally established in J.L. Austin's speech act theory to refer to how an illocutionary act (saying, for example, "it is hot in here" with the intention of getting someone to cool the room) gets taken up as a perlocutionary effect (someone subsequently opening a window) under certain conditions. Anne Freadman applies uptake to genre theory, arguing that genres are defined in part by the uptakes they condition and secure. Uptake helps us understand how systematic, normalized relations between genres coordinate complex forms of social action. As Freadman is careful to note, uptake does not depend on causation but on selection. What we *choose* to take up and how we do so is the result of learned recognitions of significance that over time and in particular contexts becomes habitual. Knowledge of uptake is knowledge of what to take up, how, and when, including how to execute uptakes strategically and when to resist expected uptakes.

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)—A pedagogical movement to incorporate writing in courses across college curriculums. Since their inception in the 1970s and growth in the 1980s, WAC programs have focused on two strands: writing to learn (writing as a tool for discovering and shaping knowledge) and learning to write in the disciplines (learning the specific genres and conventions of a discourse community). WAC pedagogies that integrate genre approaches envision genres as situated actions that function both pragmatically and epistemologically—both as sites of material interaction within social environments and as tools for understanding and interpreting these interactions.

Writing In the Disciplines (WID)—A pedagogical movement emphasizing writing instruction in specific disciplinary contexts. See also Writing Across the Curriculum.