WITHIN THESE FOUR WALLS: GENRE AND THE RHETORICAL SITUATION IN WRITING CLASSROOMS

Jessica Hill

First-year writing courses are, by nature, predicated on the notion of transfer across the boundaries of writing situations. As teachers we operate under the faith that writing is *teachable*, and that the work students do in our classes will prepare them, in positive ways, for critical engagement in the literate lives they lead. As our field has moved through ways of understanding language and writing, the concepts of genre and rhetorical situation have given classroom teachers theories for helping students transfer their classroom experiences to other writing situations. These theories are designed to give students an understanding of the connection between textual forms and the social interactions of the writing situation, which helps them learn the rules, audience, and effects of their writing in order to aid transfer (Bawarshi; Dean; Russell).

Since Carolyn Miller identified genre as typified action—a set of conventions for acting, based on audience and purpose—a variety of studies, theories, and pedagogical approaches have been used to instruct students in the dynamics of writing as situated action ("Genre as Social Action"). These approaches include blogging and service-based writing (Wilcox; Adler-Kassner and Estrem; Mathieu and George), digital and multimodal composition (Herrington, Hodgson, and Moran; Hocks), and personal narratives (Robillard). Many of these approaches are designed in response to pressure on the authenticity and relevance of assigned writing tasks (Beck; Baily; Parsons and Ward). As

curricular implementations in college first-year writing courses, however, genre theory can be simultaneously freeing and constraining. The following case study examines the classroom practices of two teachers who work to implement a situated writing pedagogy that incorporates the notions of contextualized, typified action from genre studies. What their classrooms highlight is the difficulty of engaging in situated writing when the classroom *is* the writing situation.

The writing classroom is economic in nature. According to Anthony Welch, the economic and political reality of classroom learning in general is that "education is seen in terms of its relative capacity to contribute to economic growth . . .; an 'investment' to be weighed against other possible areas of return" (158). Labor, such as paper writing and revision, often only gains value for a student when there is a resulting commodity to be used or exchanged. As many writing teachers witness, and as the below case studies demonstrate, commodity is often sought by first-year students in the form of grades and other signals of success within the classroom.

Viewing first-year writing classes through this lens of labor and commodity, I argue that the role of the classroom unwittingly imposes itself as the primary context for student writing. The students observed in this study do not seem to be able to engage with writing without the constant knowledge that they are doing their work for a class, which will provide them with a grade. Despite the approaches discussed above, the classroom, its hierarchies, and the structure of progress and awards in higher education continually present challenges to the classroom as an authentic, transferrable rhetorical situation.

In this article I build on pertinent findings from a case study of classroom practices resulting from a writing program's pedagogical transition (Hill). By examining two classrooms in a state university's newly implemented situated writing curriculum, I explore how two instructors work with and against the academic context to situate genres and discourses for their first-year writing students. The richness of these instructors' practices and

intentions highlights three major challenges that continue to face a socially situated writing pedagogy: the economics of the classroom as a site of exchange and of institutional identity production, the role of the instructor in defining the success of a piece of writing in the classroom, and the writing future of the student. Through this analysis of classroom practices I call for a deeper treatment of the classroom as a rhetorical situation in ways that empower students to become thoughtful and successful writers. As writing instructors, researchers, and administrators, we need to acknowledge the boundaries and economics of writing in the college classroom in order to help our students develop an empowered stance built on awareness of the social pressures and economics of any writing situation.

Case Study

This study examines the instructor practices and student assignments of two teacher-student dyads in First Year Writing (FYW) courses at a mid-sized state university. Participant data includes classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, classroom documents such as assignment sheets and syllabi, and student documents such as drafts, writing projects, and assignment grades. Other data include program documents such as course descriptions, the program's faculty handbook, and a faculty committee proposal on distinctions between the first and second terms of the program's writing courses. This research is covered by an IRB, makes use of anonymized data, and provides pseudonyms for all participants. No student records are maintained.

I followed the first assignment—roughly the first month of the semester—of two different FYW classes in this writing program in order to consider the constraints and freedoms of their situated writing curriculum. This article makes explicit the question we need to consider when furthering a socially situated writing pedagogy. If first-year writing instructors are to teach writing as a socially situated and contextually-bound task, reliant on the writer's ability to recognize the effects and consequences of his or

her writing choices, then what role do the individual classrooms play in helping students recognize and learn the awareness or adaptation necessary for writing beyond that particular classroom?

The instructors in this study desire to instill an external value on writing by showing students the social actions and situations associated with writing, in two very different ways. The first instructor, Andrea, uses a genre studies foundation which asks students to examine and cross the boundaries of well-known communications genres. The second instructor, Jeanne, attempts to build critical knowledge of writing as argumentation and argumentation as power within academic contexts. But as the following interviews and observations suggest, they both struggle to accomplish this while maintaining student work that only takes places inside the insoluble boundaries of the university system.

Case studies, by nature, can provide a powerful lens into the social aspects of writing instruction by examining the individual perspectives of participants. The contextualized practices of these two writing instructors, for example, demonstrate the messiness of praxis and the need to continue examining the practical implementation of theoretically sound best practices. By examining theory in practice, this study offers insight into classroom practices based on theories of genre and situated writing.

Participants and Research Site

The participants in this study are instructors who teach both first and second sequence first-year writing courses in a state university's FYW program. During my observations and interviews, I examined only one section among their first-sequence FYW courses, and interviewed only one student from each section. These instructors have been given the pseudonyms Andrea and Jeanne, and their students have been given the pseudonyms Meredith and Brian. The FYW program in which these women teach has only recently implemented a pedagogy that focuses on situated writing, genre, and social processes of language and learning. The program itself has been a site of

transition for the last two years, as it has introduced and begun to integrate this socially-focused curriculum while retaining a majority of the faculty who taught in the program's current-traditional and formalized process curriculum in the years prior. Many of the instructors in the program express positive feelings about the change, including Andrea: "for me," she says, "it just seemed like a natural transition; I could buy into it, I believe it." Despite the positive support for this change and the research that backs it up as a best practice in writing pedagogy, little is known about the effects of socially situated writing pedagogies: not only in regards to efficacy, but also in regards to the practical ways they play out in the classroom.

Classrooms like Andrea's and Jeanne's attempt to provide students with opportunities to engage in required material in meaningful ways, by helping them articulate knowledge for themselves and by demonstrating how that knowledge connects to the world beyond their textbooks and classrooms (Fello and Paquette). The FYW courses in this program privilege the process work of the students in several ways. First, the courses require that "students write, revise, edit and reflect on their writing with the support of the teachers and peers" (*Undergraduate Catalog*). This often manifests in writing workshops, development of multiple drafts, and writing conferences where the students meet with their instructors one-on-one or in small groups.

The faculty handbook in this program states that "the current curriculum's approach to literacy and learning encourages [faculty] to approach any act of writing as primarily a social act that might take a variety of different forms, depending on audience and context, rather than as primarily a standard textual form" (*First Year Writing Orientation*). This requires both the contextualization of a writing project, as well as the use of peer-to-peer or public writing, such as workshopping, blogging, or the use of writing groups. This university's FYW program allows instructors to select their own approach, and integrates an emphasis on the student's own writing styles and processes, to create an environment of inquiry and workshop in which the

social forces that influence writing become central to study and practice.

Both Andrea and Jeanne have chosen to use personal literacy as the topic of their first writing assignments. In Andrea's class, students read or view a variety of literacy narratives and then create their own personal narrative about the development of their literacy. Andrea's students are given the option to write their narrative in a traditional format, but they are strongly encouraged to recreate the content in a multimodal project or in the format of a different genre. In Jeanne's class, students read scholarship on literacy and write personal belief statements about their individual development and about the role of literacy in culture. They then use these statements to hold vigorous classroom discussions, fueled by inquiry, debate, and critical thinking.

Andrea's Class: Genre Adaptation

In Andrea's classroom, she asks her students to practice adapting genres, and uses this work to demonstrate the dynamic nature of writing and its relationship to audience and situation. However, the classroom as a site of exchange and identity formation, the role of the instructor's assessment, and her intention of educating for the writing future of the students pose challenges to this theoretically sound stance. Andrea's literacy narrative assignment offers students the option of using multimedia or nontraditional genres to tell a personal story about their literacy development. Andrea's student Meredith chose the multimodal option for her narrative because she felt it would give her more distance from her own story than a traditionally written narrative would. The project she shows me is a PowerPoint presentation, full of text and images and soft colors, narrating an experience she had reading books with her grandfather when she was a child. When I ask Meredith about her instructor's expectations for the project, she replies: "I think that she expects a well written paper that shows insight into the experience instead of just chronicling it and I think that that's what I have done."

Despite the fact that Meredith chose to complete her assignment using PowerPoint as her medium, she keeps referring to it as a "paper." Meredith sets up multiple meetings with her instructor Andrea in order to review the project and discuss directions for revision. "My project doesn't need any editing to fit the guidelines," Meredith proudly reports after one of those meetings, "she just said that if I wanted to I could add a few insights to enrich the story." But tension arises when Meredith receives a grade for her project. Meredith calmly reported to me that she expected to receive a very specific grade for her paper, but when she got the project back she discovered that she did not achieve her goal. While the first grades they receive in college can be startling for first-year students, there is more at work with Meredith's lack of success than a simple misassumption about the rigor of assessment in college.

When I talk with Andrea about Meredith's project, she begins to illuminate the problem with this particular student's genre adaptation. "It was very text heavy for what the genre of PowerPoint, I think, requires," Andrea explains of Meredith's project. The slides of Meredith's presentation contain text from top to bottom with small images placed in the margins. This echoes Meredith's view of the project as "a well written paper." Andrea wanted Meredith to think about how the genre of PowerPoint is often used, and what conventions are considered successful for a PowerPoint presentation. She suggested that Meredith do more with pictures and colors, which she did, but Andrea's suggestions about heeding the conventions of text length were apparently ignored. Andrea tells me that she was uncomfortable as a reader when trying to view such a text-heavy presentation. "I tried to help her think about that," she says, "and I think that she was pretty adamant in her decision to use it." Interestingly, Meredith didn't mention the discussion of genre, or the tension her rhetorical decisions created with Andrea, when she described the conference to me.

This disconnect between Andrea and Meredith is relevant to the struggles of situated writing for several reasons. The

economics of the writing classroom affect not only students' grades, but their institutional identities as *students* rather than as *writers*. First consider Meredith's orientation to the assignment: Meredith reported that she chose the multimodal version of her project for distance. "I think this assignment is unfamiliar in that I have never written about my childhood from a literacy perspective," she tells me, suggesting that it conflicts with two separate identities. Meredith admits: "I don't enjoy writing about myself and that option gave me the ability to narrate my life in third person." Meredith distances herself from the authorial "I", choosing not to claim the agentive stance of telling her own story. The institution has granted Meredith the identity of student, and she is diligently working within her means to embody it, as is evidenced in her continual meetings with Andrea and her hard work towards earning the grades she desires. The institutional identities of students are closely tied to exchange within college classrooms, as their work is traded for institutional rewards that are recognized beyond each individual classroom.

In addition to the problem of student identity, there appears to be a gap between Andrea's advice and Meredith's application of it that demonstrates a complex power dynamic of the FYW classroom. In order to participate successfully in the classroom economy, students must recognize not only modes of writing and of institutional selfhood, but they must also acknowledge the people who act as gatekeepers to their academic success. For Andrea's class, the context of the writing classroom—and education in general—is crucial to her students' participation in the student economy. It also becomes problematic for her genre approach, which requires her students to imagine an audience or situation beyond the instructor and the classroom. Andrea provides her students with opportunities to explore the forms of various genres and to determine the boundaries of their success by encouraging them to recreate assignments in new forms and genres that are untraditional to the writing classroom. Despite Andrea's attempts to articulate this process to her students, Meredith spends her time on the narrative elements of

demonstrating insight, rather than on the visual production or presentation of her project, as she remains focused on producing a text that maintains the values of a traditional classroom genre. Thus, the classroom economy and Andrea's role of power within it maintain the ability to provide Meredith with a grade as a unit of academic value, to affirm her institutional identity as a good student, and to act as gatekeeper to her academic success or failure. By observing typical classroom conventions of writing, Meredith is attempting to be a savvy student and optimize her work within the classroom economy.

As a dedicated instructor, Andrea is concerned less with the economics of grades and more with the development of Meredith as a writer who will have to creatively manage genres outside of an academic environment. For this reason, she values the practice of multiple forms of expression and communication. As Andrea describes student papers and projects to me, she lingers on examples of her students manipulating the relationship between form and content and deciding how to present their information in unexpected ways. These nontraditional expectations focus on composition for an outside audience, rather than on following the rules for classroom success.

Andrea tells of a student who wrote about learning to be an artist in her literacy narrative. This student created a graphic novel to present her story, rather than writing a typical narrative. Another of Andrea's past students recounted the story of dealing with her father's cancer diagnosis and presented it as a how-to guide in a series of steps, much like she would detail the directions for learning a technical skill. In addition to encouraging these experimentations of form, Andrea also focuses on helping her students develop a critical lens for examining their content. She tells of a student from a past semester who started writing a narrative about positive and negative learning experiences in grade school. The student then revised and refined the paper so that her final draft was no longer just a narrative, and instead had become a narrativised critique of the effect of standardized testing on the creative process of writing.

From these descriptions of projects that stand out in Andrea's memory, it becomes clear that the way her students manipulate form to express themselves is important too. When Richard Coe addressed the significance of form during the process movement, he claimed that in the view of "expressionist process writers . . . form grows organically to fit the shape of the subject matter" (16). He contrasted this with a formalist or current-traditional approach, which he felt "ignores content to teach form" (16). Andrea seems to be grappling with the role of form in her writing classroom that has recently transitioned from a current traditional pedagogy. She deals with the issue with some complexity. On the one hand, Andrea distances herself from the program's history with current-traditionalism and its decontextualized emphasis on memorizing forms and the grammatical rules and conventions that accompany them. "You learn grammar, punctuation [and] that kind of stuff the more you read and write and talk," she claims; "but the ideas have to be there." Yet Andrea's approach does not discount the form in favor of student expression. Instead, she values the way her students use various forms to present their ideas in new, creative, or thoughtful ways; something that Meredith doesn't seem to realize.

The students who succeed in Andrea's class are those who have recognized possibilities for form and style in the context of a larger and more public audience. These students are thinking about technical manuals and graphic novels and the kinds of experimentation they have seen from published writers, rather than considering only the kinds of writing they expect to encounter in an English class. But Meredith's project suggests that the focus on genres as textual forms to be thoughtfully manipulated and challenged begins to overshadow the students' conceptualizations of audience and situation. Meredith's project emphasizes this struggle with context and audience and its relation to form, when she considers it a paper for an English class. Andrea's frustration with the amount of text in Meredith's presentation highlights the differences in the way the two are conceiving of the use of genre. Andrea expects Meredith to follow

the conventions of an informational presentation, since that is the primary use of PowerPoint. Yet Meredith is adapting the genre to the way she understands assignments to be created in the writing classroom, and includes large amounts of text. This adaptation of a genre from one situation to another isolates the genre from its context, blurring the function and therefore the specifics of its form. This process of transfer also hinders the student, who cannot understand whether to adhere to the values of the form from its external context or to maintain the values of its new context.

Jeanne's Class: Academic Genre Foundations

In contrast to Andrea's use of genre as a way of exploring form, Jeanne places emphasis on academic genres by fostering critical argumentation skills. Jeanne's class also focuses on personal literacy as an introductory topic, but she favors academic genres rather than cross genre adaptation, and relies heavily on critical thinking and argumentation. Jeanne has a student, Brian, who is earning a B in her course. When I ask him about the focus of the class, he says that he feels that conversations and class discussions are more important than the actual writing that he does for the course. Instead, he characterizes the writing as a test, measuring his retention of knowledge to prove that he participated in class-wide conversations. Jeanne agrees that talk and conversation play a big role in her course, although she feels that the writing is important as well. When I ask Jeanne for an evaluation of Brian, she describes the following: "He's a strong student," she says, "he comes to class each day, he participates, I can tell he's reading the material and thinking and doing that work." But Jeanne wants more than this basic level of participation from Brian. The piece that she feels is missing is his effort to critically argue an idea, like many of the scholars she references do, and to help his classmates critically argue as well. "He'll present new ideas," she says, "but they're not pushing [anyone else's] further." Jeanne believes that critical and complex thinking, which she believes manifests in her students' argumentative

abilities, are foundational to academic genres and classroom writing.

Russell's (1997) follow up to his work with activity theory suggests that classrooms are authentic situations of their own, with purposes, actions, tools, and commodities. Other work on classroom writing (see, for example, Bazerman; Brandt; Haas) also suggests that genres of writing exist within the classroom—research papers, literacy narratives, lab reports, etc. Jeanne's practices suggest an awareness of the classroom as the writing situation, rather than focusing on forms, genres, and situations that are removed from the immediate academic tasks and goals. Like Andrea, Jeanne uses personal literacy as her first writing assignment, but instead of dwelling on personal experiences and then retelling them in genres borrowed from outside of the classroom, Jeanne emphasizes the modes of thought and argumentation that characterize academic scholarship. Her students explore ideas of literacy that are internal or external to the classroom, but they do so by utilizing modes of argumentation that are closely linked to academic genres.

Jeanne's use of literacy as a topic for writing means that she spends less time on the forms or genres of writing and more on the conversations that academic writing embodies and the habits of mind that will help her students understand the situated genres they will engage with in the future. "I can already tell you guys have some cool ideas, just from talking about what you think writing is," she tells her students on the first day of class. "I am smarter when I hear your ideas, and you're smarter when you hear everyone else's ideas," she says, "so the majority of the time, I won't stand up here and talk at you." She introduces the class to academic debates by them having read scholarly articles. She then asks her students to take a stance on the topic, inviting them into those academic conversations.

"There's a debate," she says with authority on this first day of class, "over whether anybody can be a writer, or whether anyone can write, but not everyone can be *called* a *writer*." She asks the class for a show of hands for each side of the argument and then

says "I want to hear from both sides." In class discussions like these, Jeanne expects her students to present new ideas, and then to challenge one another's ideas in order to encourage each other to think more critically.

In her personal literacy assignment, Jeanne asks her students to take a similar argumentative stance and begin asking questions for which they don't have the answers. She tells me that exploring "how they've grown and how they've gotten this literacy" is a way to begin helping her students understand "how they learn the rules for certain literacies in specific communities . . . [and how they] learn to write in those fields." To this end, she asks her students to engage with various perspectives about literacy and discourse communities and to formulate their own beliefs. By asking her students to take a personal stance on an academic topic, and to argue and question their beliefs, Jeanne is fostering the role of inquiry, active discussion and critical conversation.

It becomes clear from observing Jeanne's classroom habits that she is very concerned with her students' abilities to participate in classroom economies and build powerful institutional identities. Because her students will continually face gatekeepers to their academic success, she focuses on helping them develop their academic authority by embodying the genres of academic discourse. This liberatory approach leads to the classroom as a practice space for discussion in future classrooms, while ignoring a host of genres students will have to use in their future writing. While empowering in one sense, this approach potentially hinders students by robbing them of the experience of *writing,* which should be a core of the writing classroom.

Much like Andrea's concern over the future of her writing students, Jeanne works to prepare her students for a variety of academic genres by focusing on what she believes to be the foundational element of those genres. Thus, Jeanne places priority on the ways of thinking that a student engages with over any modes of writing down such thinking. "I want them to think beyond just what they were handed in class," Jeanne tells me; she wants her students to "be able to push against the ideas in class and

help their thinking, whether they are agreeing or disagreeing with it." Despite the local context of the genres, Jeanne's focus is on power and critical theory, not on the economics of situating those things in the writing. This is because she believes in social interaction as a way of engaging with writing and with a student's own process, and because she believes that critical skills are foundational to good writing: "It's there to argue against," she says of a student's stance on a topic, "it's something tangible that you can use or fight with or do whatever you need with." Unlike Andrea's focus on the relationship of form and content, Jeanne focuses almost primarily on the foundational skills of critiquing content, employing a critical pedagogy designed to give her students a voice in the classroom.

Jeanne's admitted concern with power seems focused on the discourse communities she sees surrounding the classroom. Rather than preparing students to write in the business world or other post-education experiences, Jeanne has them engage in the discourses of power that are localized in their own classroom. Her students may not become academics, but they will have had the opportunity to practice their critical skills in a situation that is, in a way that Andrea's was not, more genuine. Jeanne's heavy focus on argumentation and critical thinking suggests that writing in her classroom is less about writing for an audience—note that she does not provide guidance on form at all—and instead is focused on writing to learn. Jeanne's class privileges content and individual ideas, critically engaging students in logic and argumentation. But it also creates a blind spot by ignoring the contextual aspects of the writing.

At first glance, Jeanne's use of situation is less problematic than Andrea's because it keeps the work firmly grounded in the classroom, where students interact with scholarly texts and with one another. But it becomes problematic because it abandons forms, suggesting that form and structure are unimportant aspects of the writing situation. Rather than acknowledging the social practices of writing, Jeanne immerses her students in conversations. Her focus on giving her students power draws their

attention away from an examination of that power and its relation to their actions in the situation.

The Genre Problem

A classroom that fully engages with the values of genre theory (as expressed by Dean, Gee, and Swales) would have to engage in a critical understanding of purpose and audience in a way that Andrea's and Jeanne's classes do not yet. Genres are closely linked to discourse communities: locations or groups of people with shared forms of communication based on a shared value system (Swales). This suggests that the situation and participants of a genre are vital to understanding how that genre functions. Regardless of whether instructors use an approach that explicitly engages in genre theory, the curriculum Andrea and Jeanne follow is based on the idea that writing is situated and contextualized.

As the classroom economies affected the purpose and form of writing, these students began to have trouble recognizing the complexity of situations and contexts. In her book on genre theory, Deborah Dean quotes Devitt, Bawarshi, and Reiff's claim that "genres—like all language use—are not eligible for study once they are considered to be independent of their contexts of use" (27). Dean presents the work of several critics who take issues with the way genre is incorporated into writing pedagogy. Each of these critiques claims that the study of genres decontextualizes them from their social function and location, turning them into rote forms, lifeless and devoid of purpose (Dean).

Andrea's classroom—which is supposed to be situating writing or showing how writing can adapt across situations—is the context for the writing. Yet she asks her students to borrow tools from other contexts—which only have life outside of the classroom—and bring them into the classroom. Andrea doesn't ask her students to go to the genres and study and embody them as contextualized sites of action, because once the purpose shifts from the situated use to classroom study they cease to be what they once were. Instead, Andrea expects her students to see those

generic forms as sites of possibility. She asks that her students bring those genres into the classroom, engage with them thoughtfully, and adapt them for a new context of use. This emptying and repurposing of genres is something Andrea expects her students to complete on their own, rather than teaching them as forms—the current-traditional model she is pushing back against.

Jeanne's classroom focuses so much on the localized context that students fail to receive experience or practice writing in multiple genres or forms. Instead, the form is considered irrelevant, and its relationship to the context is abandoned in favor of building powerful identities and keys to success in academic economies.

Genre studies and socially situated writing curricula present a paradoxical conflict that we must frankly acknowledge, examine, and consider. The classroom economy, the role of the instructor as gatekeeper, and the writing futures of the students pose powerful and conflicting constraints on the study of writing as an infinite set of dynamic and living responses to social situations. Contemporary genre studies is concerned with these dynamic and living responses, which are socially situated and constructed in response to experienced situations. If the writing classroom is to encourage such a view of writing, then the genres used must be dynamic and living as well. How are students supposed to generate live responses to current social situations—the concern these instructors have over their writing futures—when the economy of education and the role of gatekeepers means that writing happens in a finite space with pre-determined ends?

Conclusion

The academic contexts of their classrooms affect the way these two instructors deal with the role of situation and purpose in this social curriculum. Both instructors make strong use of their understanding of the academic world by asking their students to begin taking part in the work of academics. In Andrea's class, writing stories is not enough. Instead, she wants her students to

experiment with the relationship between form and content, or to use narratives for greater critical, evaluative, or expository purposes. This is much like the academic writing that Andrea herself reads and writes. The scholarly articles in academic journals and the anthologies and books on pedagogy and writing that Andrea consumes are not narratives. Yet some of the academic writing that Andrea values is pushing the boundaries of typical academic formats, sometimes using narrative for critical purposes. "There's nothing wrong with a good story," Andrea explains, but that is not what she believes her students need to practice in her class. Instead, she places priority on the critical use of form over the formless content.

In Jeanne's class, her students read and then emulate the critical claims of researchers and theorists in order to begin taking part in the privileged discourse community of academe. She introduces academic arguments that take place over years of published writing and research, rather than live and in person. These perspectives are presented by decorated individuals: their articles are peer reviewed, they have academic credentials, and they often possess years of experience. These authors show they are well read and familiar with the "conversation," and then they take a stance by critically engaging with other work that has preceded them. Jeanne asks her students to temporarily adopt this identity, without the credentials or experience, as a way of practicing critical skills. She also brings them into a discourse and allows them to experience the writing in its academic situation.

Both instructors use this work to ask their students to cross boundaries. Andrea's students are expected to engage in multiple genres by adapting them for new situated uses. They must consider completing tasks in different situations, therefore considering transfer across contexts, while simultaneously using a single context where they practice these skills. This approach might highlight for the students the ways they have to alter their communication for different situations. Jeanne asks her students to cross the boundary from student to academic, as they practice engaging in a genuine context by taking on authority they do not

possess. For Jeanne's students, the context is real; the readings show them what the field looks like and who the players are. In a sense, Jeanne's students are practicing a single context that embraces the isolated microcosm of a classroom. This use of the classroom means that her students are privy to the way the work they complete is situated in a specific context. In contrast, Andrea's students practice adapting a wider variety of styles to this isolated context. They pull work from multiple contexts and place it into a new contextualized purpose, therefore practicing the adaptation and awareness of genre to situation. This allows Andrea's students to expand beyond the walls of the classroom and the boundaries of the academy.

These perspectives on the academic context offer complications of their own: Andrea's student Meredith doesn't understand where she went wrong in her genre adaptation of her literacy narrative, and Jeanne's student Brian isn't able to see the value of critical argumentation or the adoption of an academic discourse to his writing. The classroom as the unspoken context for writing proves a difficulty when audience, situation, and hierarchies are not considered or discussed. This struggle highlights the way students see the college classroom—often not as a place of construction and experimental learning but as a site of production and evaluation—making the work of a social pedagogy even more difficult. Jeanne's attempts to forefront the classroom and its issues of audience, situation, and social hierarchy results in a separation of the acts of writing from their contexts, and the authenticity of work becomes problematic again. If instructors attempt to engage their students in writing that comes from beyond the classroom, is it still possible to position writing as a social act?

These instructors are grappling in sophisticated ways with the need to let their students actively explore and mediate meaning in a social context, while working within the boundaries of their writing classrooms. The determination of these writing instructors to provide a writing classroom that best serves their students and

the curriculum while maintaining current best practices highlights that the problem lies not with implementation but with theory.

As instructors like Andrea and Jeanne work to integrate a focus on situated writing, awareness of audience, and adaptation of form and content, the role of the classroom needs to remain a site of inquiry. As students struggle to make sense of the simplified tasks of writing for an instructor, while living in a richly literate world where audience and situation are often much more complex than many of our previous theories have accounted for, we need to take a closer look at how we define audience and situation in the composition classroom, and how they derive from, impact and complicate our theories of social and situated writing that is bounded in the classroom.

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