

## **Writing as linguistic mastery: the development of genre-based literacy pedagogy**

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This chapter outlines the genre-based approaches to teaching reading and writing developed over the past three decades in what has become known as the Sydney School (Martin, 2000, 2006; Martin & Rose, 2005). The pedagogy has been designed through a series of large-scale action research projects with teachers in various educational contexts, informed by functional linguistics and genre and register theory (Painter and Martin, 1986; Hasan and Martin, 1989; Cope and Kalantzis, 1993; Martin, 1998; Christie, 1999; Martin & Rose, 2003, 2008), by the educational sociology of Basil Bernstein (1990, 1996; Christie & Martin, 2007), and by Halliday's ground-breaking work on language development (1975, 1993, 2004), and its ongoing elaboration by various scholars, especially Painter's work on language learning in the home (1984, 1986, 1996, 1998, 2004). With respect to the breadth and detail of its linguistic focus, and its uniquely designed teaching strategies, Hyland (2007) describes the Sydney School as "perhaps the most clearly articulated approach to genre both theoretically and pedagogically" (see also Hyon, 1996; Johns, 2002). The term genre-based refers hereafter to these approaches.

There have been three major phases in the pedagogy's development: the initial design of the writing pedagogy in the 1980s, with a handful of genres in the primary school; the extension of the writing pedagogy in the 1990s, to genres across the secondary school curriculum and beyond; and the development of the reading pedagogy from the late 1990s, integrating reading and writing with teaching practice across the curriculum at primary, secondary and tertiary education levels. The strategies developed in the initial stage are now standard literacy teaching practice in primary schools across Australia and increasingly internationally, as well as in ESL and academic literacy programs. The latest reading and writing strategies have been consistently shown to accelerate literacy development at twice to over four times expected rates, at the same time as they close the gap in any class between the most and least successful students (McRae et al, 2000; Culican, 2006; Rose, Rose, Farrington & Page, 2008). After reviewing developments in each of these three stages, the chapter concludes by positioning genre-based pedagogy in relation to other approaches in the literacy field.

### **The genre writing pedagogy**

The two key dimensions of the genre writing pedagogy developed in the 1980s were an analysis of the kinds of texts that students are expected to write in the primary school, and a consistent method for supporting all students to write successfully. The pedagogy was developed in an ongoing partnership between teachers and discourse linguists, in the context of a school system that had largely abandoned the explicit teaching of writing in favour a progressivist ideology of personal development. The whole language movement, which came to dominate Australian education faculties and school syllabi from the late 1970s, proscribed the teaching of grammar and composition in both the classroom and teacher training. Teachers were told not to impose direct instruction in writing on children, but to encourage them to write from

personal experience, without any models (even for handwriting and spelling), followed by an 'editing' process in which the teacher would provide feedback on their efforts. In consequence the most common kinds of writing to be found in primary schools included just two genres (examples from Martin & Rose, 2008):

[1]

*On Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup> of November Jesse my friend and me Conal, went to the park called Jonson park me and Jesse played on the playaquitmint and it was very fun but me and Jesse both like the same peace of equipment I don't know wa...*

As this kind of text makes an observation about something that has happened to the writer (going to the park to play), and comments about how they felt about it (what they liked), it was termed an **observation/comment**. The other common kind of text records a series of events unfolding through time, which was termed **recount**:

[2]

*Last Sunday me and My family went to the blue Mountains to go and see my dads friends. There were two children as well One of the childrens name was Hamish, Hamish was about 12 years old and his brother was about 19 or 18 years old. So when we arrived we all had lunch and we had chicken, bread, salad and a drink. after we had lunch I went on the tramplen after I went on the tramplen for about half an hour we went to go to a rugby leeg game for about 3 hours and I got an ice-cream and a packet of chips after the rugby leeg game I went on the tramplen agin and I got another ice-cream and after I had finished my ice-cream we went home. I had a great day.*

As so-called 'process writing' replaced literacy teaching in Australia, this genre became ubiquitous. As more curriculum time was devoted to writing in progressivist classrooms, the recounts became longer, but the genre did not develop. The writer of text [2] could be any age from 6 to 14, depending on social background. Without explicit teaching, the writing of children from literate middle class families would naturally begin earlier and develop faster, while those from oral cultural backgrounds, such as Indigenous Australian children, may still be writing no more than these two genres, with very little elaboration, by the time they reached high school (Rose, 1999).

On the other hand, some students were writing stories that teachers tended to assign greater value to, which included a complicating event that was then resolved. Following Labov & Waletzky (1967), these stories were classified as **narratives**:

[3] **My Ghost story**

*When I was 13, I was walking down the road with my best friend Mitchell. It was my birthday & my parents weren't home, so we went to egg people houses (sic). One the way home around midnight we had to walk past the tip. The story that was going round at the time that there lived a ghost in the tip. As we were about half way past, we heard a weird nosie. We went to investigate, when we got there a rat was rolling a tin can. We heard the nosie again except it wasn't tin can.*

*We went to investigate again we saw this thing floating in the air like something invisible was taking it along with them.  
 We were so scare that we screamed so loud that the whole town could here us.  
 Everyone came & by that time the ghost left.’  
 Everyone thought we were just causing trouble.  
 Every since we never walk around town after 6:00pm.  
 The End!!!*

In addition to stories, factual texts were also being written in the primary school. Some factual texts classified and described things; these were termed **reports**:

#### [4] **Crocodile**

*Crocodiles are from the reptile family. Crocodiles are like snakes but with two legs on each side of the crocodiles body.  
 Crocodiles have four legs and the crocodiles have scales all over its body.  
 Crocodiles have a long gore [jaw] and they have a long powerful tail so it cannock its enems into the water so it can eat the animal.  
 Crocodiles live on the ege of a swamp or a river. They make there nests out of mud and leaves.  
 Crocodiles eat meat lke chickens, cows and catle and other kinds of animals.  
 Crocdils move by there legs. Crocodiles can walk on legs. Crocodiles have four legs. Crocodiles also have scals all over there body and they have a powerfall tail to swim in the water.  
 Crocdils have eggs they do not have (live) babys.  
 Crocodiles can carry there egg(s) in there big gore.*

Much rarer were texts that explain phenomena with a sequence of events, or **explanations**:

#### [5] **OUR PLANET**

*Earth’s core is as hot as the furthest outer layer of the sun. They are both 6000c°.  
 Earth started as a ball of fire.  
 Slowly it cooled.  
 But it was still too hot for Life.  
 Slowly water formed  
 and then the first signs of life, microscopic cells.  
 Then came trees.  
 About seven thousand million years later came the first man.*

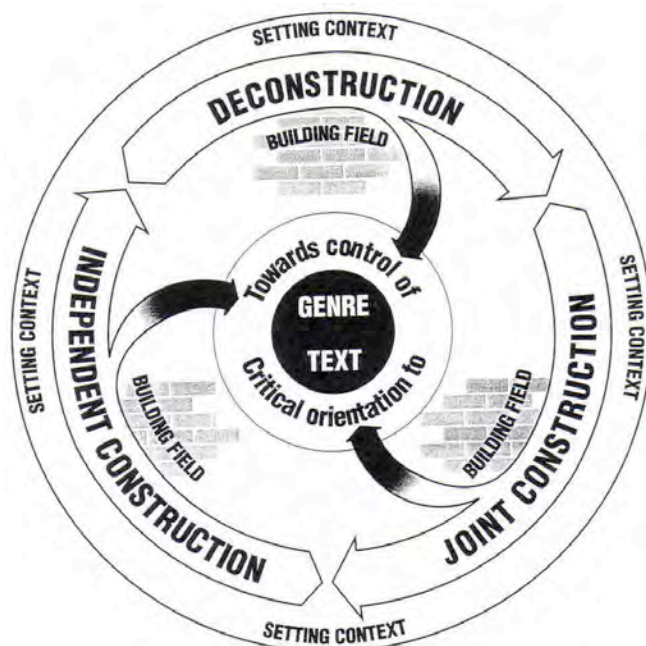
As children were generally not shown how to write these genres, their primary source for models was experience outside of school. For most children this was predominantly oral experience, while a few, such as the 8 year old writer of text [5] were able to draw on experience from their reading. As teachers had no terms for the texts they wanted from their students other than ‘stories’, they were unable to provide encouragement other than ‘write more’, and to correct their syntax and punctuation. Indeed the teacher’s written comment on the explanation [4] was “Where is your margin? This is not a story.”

With this kind of hands-off approach to writing in the primary school, only a handful of students would independently develop the writing skills they needed for success in secondary school, an approach that seemed custom designed to maintain unequal school outcomes, with just 10-20% of Australian students matriculating to university while 50-60% accessed no further education (Rose, 2005). If this inequitable trend was to be subverted, it was clear that teachers needed some explicit tools to recognise the kinds of writing their students needed to learn, and tools to teach their students how to write them.

The first step in the research program was to identify and name the kinds of texts that were found, developing a map of genres written in the school. Martin (e.g. 1999) characterised genres as staged, goal oriented social processes: social because writers shape their texts for readers of particular kinds; goal oriented because a text unfolds towards its social purpose; staged, because it usually takes more than one step to reach the goal. Following Martin's model, genres were distinguished by recurrent global patterns. For example, story genres were distinguished on the presence or absence of a time line (observation/comment vs others), and the presence or absence of a complicating event (recount vs narrative); factual genres were distinguished on whether they explained processes or described things (explanation vs report); argument genres were distinguished between those that argued for a point of view, or discussed two or more points of view (exposition vs discussion). Secondly the organisation of each genre was distinguished by recurrent local patterns, such as the narrative stages Orientation^Complication^Resolution identified by Labov & Waletzky (1967), or the stages of an exposition described in traditional rhetoric, Thesis^Arguments^Restatement of Thesis. So in addition to the names for various genres, the stages that characterised each genre were also named, developing an explicit metalanguage that teachers and students could use for talking about writing.

This map of written genres and their staging then formed the basis for designing an explicit writing pedagogy. Halliday's and Painter's work on oral language learning had shown that caregivers continually model and elaborate on children's spoken efforts, contradicting the Piagetan/Chomskyan hypothesis of individuated language acquisition that whole language pedagogy was predicated on. From Halliday and Painter, the principle of 'guidance through interaction in the context of shared experience' was adapted by Rothery (1989, 1994, 1996) for classroom language learning contexts. Rothery's challenge was to make learning to write a comparable activity to learning to speak for all students, irrespective of their home background and academic strengths. To achieve this, she and her colleagues designed a teaching/learning cycle, illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Teaching/learning cycle (Rothery, 1994)



The cycle features three main stages - Deconstruction, Joint Construction and Individual Construction. Deconstruction involves teachers guiding students to recognise the cultural context, staging and key linguistic features in model texts, of the genre they are expected to write. Joint Construction involves guiding the whole class to construct another text in the same genre, which is jointly scribed on the blackboard. Independent Construction involves students writing a third text, in the same genre, on their own. All three stages of the pedagogy involve building field (so that students are familiar with the content of the texts they are reading and writing), and setting context (so that students understand the social purpose of the genre). The ultimate goal of the cycle is for students to take control of the genre, both in terms of being able to write it and also reflect critically on its role.

For the Sydney School, Joint Construction is the phase of the cycle that provides the link between language learning in the home and language learning at school. This phase is illustrated below with a Year 6 class in an Australian primary school (from Martin & Rose, 2007). Most of the students in this class come from immigrant non-English speaking backgrounds (Arabic and Vietnamese) and have learned spoken English at school. The students are working on the exposition genre, exemplified in text [5] with one student's successful independent construction following this lesson.

**[5] Exposition for: Should an amphitheatre be built in Wiley Park?** *I strongly believe that the amphitheatre in Wiley Park should be built for these following reasons, such as: it attracts more people to the area, shops and public transport will earn a larger profit, people will become more interested in Wiley park, and it is suitable for all ages.*

*My first reason is that it will bring more people to our area because there are not many main attractions in our community and it can be something to remember our bi-centenary by in years to come.*

*Another point to mention is shops will earn more money, for example, the new restaurant which will be built with in the amphitheatre. And not to forget Public transport which will create more money for the government and will be more easier for the disabled to travel by if they wish to do so.*

*And last but not least it is not only for the grown ups but it is also suitable for children for example, there will be entertainment such as concerts, plays and shows. In my opinion from a child's point of view I think it's going to be fun and it's about time the council did something like this.*

*I hope I have convinced you that we should have a amphitheatre at Wiley Park.*

In Exchange 1 the class is working on previewing arguments in the Thesis, and using a topic sentence to introduce arguments in each paragraph. The issue here is why students should go to school. At this point *I strongly believe that children should go to school* has been scribed on the board, and the class is working on how to complete this introduction. In this dialogue, the teacher is asking students for a phrase which will allow them to preview their arguments in the exposition's thesis.

### Exchange 1

T ...Filippa?

Filippa ***I strongly believe that children should go to school*** for these main reasons... um, and I'm going to list them all.

T Sorry, say that again.

Lisa *For these main reasons.*

T *For these main reasons.* Who can think of a different word other than main?

Sts *For the following reasons.*

T *For the following reasons.* Who can think of another word?

Loukia *Listed.*

T *For these listed reasons,* um. Who can think of another word?

Filippa *For these reasons shown here.*

T *For these reasons written here.* O.K. Who thinks *main reasons.* Hands up. Quick. A show of hands. *Main.* These *listed.* I've forgotten what the other ones were.

Sts *Following* [in unison]

T OK. Looks like *following.*

Sts *For the following reasons.*

T ***For the following reasons*** [scribes]. Now, trying to think, um, before we go on, before we list all of them, we want to include those things that you mentioned for that introduction, don't we? So how can we talk about that? Who can think? ***I strongly believe children should go to school for the following reasons.*** Filippa?

Filippa You could, um, learn a wide range - a wide range of subjects and um religions and um...

T Right. Who can keep going from that? ...

Following several cycles of students selecting ideas, with the teacher guiding, encouraging and elaborating, the class consensus is for *the following reasons*. This phrase is an important piece of superstructure for expositions, classifying the thesis' supporting arguments in order to preview them. Nominalising the logical meaning of

'because' as *following reasons* is the kind of grammatical metaphor these students will have to learn to read and write in secondary school (see following section). Scaffolding of this kind is a powerful technique for apprenticing young writers into a more mature control of genres and their linguistic features, because it so strongly reflects their experience of learning spoken language in the home, with its continual cycles of caregivers encouraging and extending on children's efforts.

### **Genres across the curriculum**

During the 1990s two major developments for genre-based writing pedagogy were its institutionalisation in state syllabi and/or teacher professional development and teaching materials throughout Australia (e.g. Board of Studies NSW, 1994/2007), and the extension of the action research program from the primary school to the secondary school and beyond. The institutionalisation of the pedagogy occurred despite vociferous opposition from whole language proponents in education faculties (Hyland, 2007; Martin, Christie & Rothery, 1987), which continued as pedagogic fashion switched from progressivism to critical theory in the 90s, and to currently fashionable constructivist positions (see Conclusion below). At the same time the functional linguistic basis of the pedagogy has been attacked by conservative advocates of traditional school grammar (Martin, 2000). However, as the pedagogy's demonstrable utility continues to grow, these campaigns have succeeded only in slowing its uptake.

The extension into the secondary curriculum and beyond was spurred by major economic changes that Australia underwent in the 1990s, from heavily protected manufacturing based on deskilled immigrant labour, towards internationally competitive service and information industries. In this context, the Sydney School was funded to research the literacy demands of the country's major industrial sectors, and of related secondary school curriculum subjects, in a project known as *Write it Right*. Informed by Bernstein's (1990) sociological model of relations between education and production, reading and writing demands were explored in science based industries and the secondary science and maths curricula, and in media and public administration sectors and English, history and geography curricula. Key publications from this project include Coffin, 1996/2007, 1997; Christie & Martin, 1997; Humphrey, 1996/2008; Iedema, 1995/2008; Iedema, Feez & White, 1994/2008; Martin & Veel, 1998; Rose, McInnes & Korner, 1992/2007; Veel & Coffin, 1996.

The *Write it Right* research identified close parallels in the genres and their discourse patterns that students are expected to read and write in the secondary school, and those found in the workplaces that education prepares them for, at various vocational levels. The map of genres developed in the earlier stage of the research was considerably expanded, distinguishing specific types within each family of genres, including types of stories, text responses, arguments, histories, reports, explanations and procedures. Table 1 summarises the major types, their social purposes and expected stages (described in depth in Martin & Rose, 2008).

Table 1: Major genres in the school curriculum

	genre	purpose	stages
Stories	<i>recount</i>	recounting events	Orientation Record of events
	<i>narrative</i>	resolving a complication in a story	Orientation Complication Evaluation Resolution
	<i>exemplum</i>	judging character or behaviour in a story	Orientation Incident Interpretation
	<i>anecdote</i>	sharing an emotional reaction in a story	Orientation Remarkable event Reaction
Text responses	<i>personal response</i>	reacting emotionally to a text	Evaluation Reaction
	<i>review</i>	evaluating a literary, visual or musical text	Context Description of text Judgement
	<i>interpretation</i>	interpreting the message of a text	Evaluation Synopsis of text Reaffirmation
	<i>critical response</i>	challenging the message of a text	Evaluation Deconstruction Challenge
Arguments	<i>exposition</i>	arguing for a point of view	Thesis Arguments Reiteration
	<i>discussion</i>	discussing two or more points of view	Issue Sides Resolution
Histories	<i>autobiographical recount</i>	recounting life events	Orientation Record of stages
	<i>biographical recount</i>	recounting life stages	Orientation Record of stages
	<i>historical recount</i>	recounting historical events	Background Record of stages
Explanations	<i>sequential explanation</i>	explaining a sequence	Phenomenon Explanation
	<i>factorial explanation</i>	explaining multiple causes	Phenomenon Explanation
	<i>consequential explanation</i>	explaining multiple effects	Phenomenon Explanation
Reports	<i>descriptive report</i>	classifying & describing a phenomenon	Classification Description
	<i>classifying report</i>	classifying & describing types of phenomena	Classification Description
	<i>compositional report</i>	describing parts of wholes	Classification Description
Procedures	<i>procedure</i>	how to do experiments & observations	Purpose Equipment Steps
	<i>procedural recount</i>	recounting experiments & observations	Purpose Method Results

In the process of working closely with secondary teachers, the writing pedagogy was also refined and expanded, and teaching materials were developed that aimed to provide teachers with a high level of critical skills in both text analysis and pedagogy. Curriculum sequences were mapped out that could lead students from writing recounts in progressivist classrooms to linguistic mastery of genres across the



primary and secondary curricula. Such a learner pathway is illustrated here with key genres in the history curriculum, drawing on work by Coffin, 1997. In Bernstein's terms this pathway builds a stairway of recontextualisation, from everyday discourse to academic history.

As history recounts the past in stages or episodes, the first step students have to make, from personal stories to histories, is to manage episodic time alongside serial time, from 'sequence in time' to 'setting in time', from 'and then' to 'the next period'. And alongside managing time, students also need to shift from writing about themselves (1<sup>st</sup> person) to writing about others (3<sup>rd</sup> person), and from stories of individuals (specific) to histories of institutions (general).

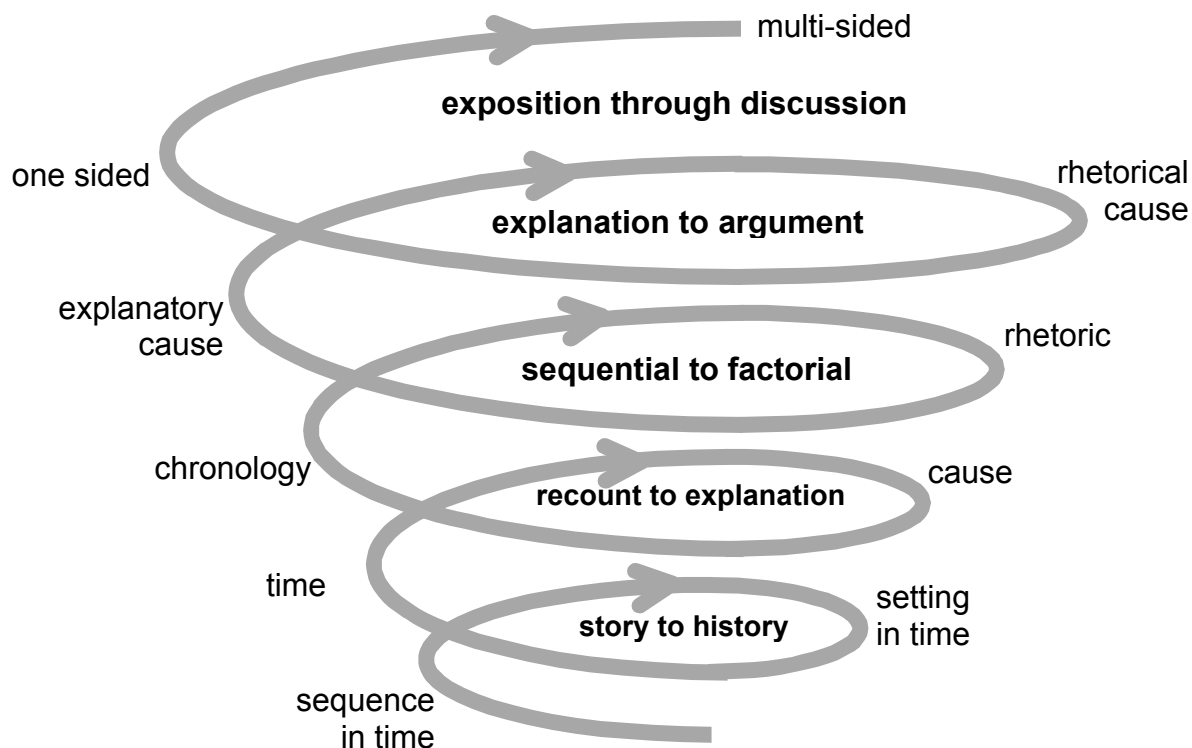
The second step is then from historical recounts to historical explanations, as this involves moving from temporal to causal connections between events. To explain causality, historical explanations draw heavily on grammatical metaphor; they tend to nominalise events as abstract things, that are related by causal verbs such as *x is caused by y*, *results in y*, *is associated with y*, and so on. For example in text [6] below, *the impact of immigration is determined not only by the number of jobs migrants take, but also by the jobs they create*, in other words 'abstraction y is determined by abstraction x' (For descriptions of grammatical metaphor see Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Martin, 1993; Rose, 2006).

Thirdly some explanations are organised, not by sequence in time but rhetorically, beginning with the event being explained and then unfolding through a set of relevant factors or consequences. Since these factors and consequences are not ordered in time with respect to one another, students have to learn to put them into a sequence appropriate to the explanation. In other words they have to organise the text independently of the sequence of events, since texture is no longer determined by chronology.

Finally students must learn to negotiate contested interpretations of history, using argument genres. As with explanations, arguments unfold rhetorically rather than chronologically; but unlike explanations, their notion of cause is also rhetorical. They are concerned with why a contestable reading of the past is motivated, not simply with what caused what. So cause is not just deployed to relate events, but to organise the rhetorical structure of the argument, presenting evidence and then drawing conclusions, and countering other positions.

From the textures outlined above, it is possible to design a spiral curriculum that leads learners through the genres of history, and the linguistic hurdles each one presents, illustrated in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: A spiral curriculum for history genres**



### Reading to Learn

As writing skills develop ultimately from experience with reading, which is the crucial mode of learning in formal education, the genre-based approach to writing has been extended over the past decade into teaching reading, using carefully designed strategies to support students to recognise language patterns in written texts, enabling them to read with critical understanding, and then to use these language patterns in their writing. This methodology, known as *Reading to Learn* is designed to be integrated with classroom practice across the curriculum, at all levels of education (Rose, 2004, 2005, 2007; Rose, Lui-Chivizhe, McKnight & Smith 2004; Martin & Rose, 2005; Martin, 2006; Rose & Acevedo, 2006; Rose, Rose, Farrington & Page, 2008, [www.readingtolearn.com.au](http://www.readingtolearn.com.au)). It approaches reading first from the perspective of genre, followed by the patterns in which a text's field unfolds through the genre, and finally the wordings within sentences that realise these discourse patterns. The methodology is illustrated below with a lesson in which adult ESL students, many of whom have weak English and/or literacy skills, learn to read and write a discussion about immigration in Australia, in an academic preparation course. An extract of the reading text is presented as text [6]. The first paragraph presents the Issue, the second paragraph presents one position on immigration's impact on employment, the third presents the author's opposing position.

#### [6] Plus to immigration equation

*Both before and since the White Australia policy of the 1950s, immigration has been a political hot potato – yet the economic evidence shows immigration*

*has been extremely good for the nation. In spite of the facts, today's economic nationalist parties – One Nation, the Australian Democrats, Advance Australia, the Greens and Australia First – espouse policies of greatly reduced or zero net migration. They do so for several reasons.*

*The most common argument against allowing migrants in numbers is based on a lopsided view of the impact on Australia's economy. The Advance Australia party wants to call a "halt to all immigration until we have solved our unemployment problems" as if the only impact of migration is to take jobs which might otherwise be available to unemployed Australians.*

*But the impact of immigration is determined not only by the number of jobs migrants take, but also by the jobs they create. Population growth through migration creates demand for housing, goods and services which is met through higher production which in turn leads to higher employment.*

*Depending on the size and composition of the migrant intake, most studies show the net impact of immigration on unemployment is positive....*

Before reading this text, the lesson began with a discussion about immigration and the Australian economy and political parties, building the field of the text. This was followed by the teacher outlining the social function and stages of the discussion genre (see Table 1 above), and then a summary of the text's field as it unfolds through each phase of the discussion, in terms accessible to all students. This stage is known as Preparing before Reading in the *Reading to Learn* methodology. The text was then read aloud and discussed paragraph by paragraph.

The next stage, known as Detailed Reading, supports students to read the text themselves, sentence by sentence. A carefully designed scaffolding interaction cycle is used to prepare all students to identify the word groups in each sentence, which they highlight as they go. In each cycle, particular students are asked to identify and say the wordings in turn, ensuring that all students participate equally. Student responses are always affirmed, and the meaning of the identified wording may be elaborated, by defining words, explaining concepts, or discussing the students' knowledge. These cycles are illustrated for one sentence in Exchange 2, each cycle beginning with a Prepare move.

### **Exchange 2: Detailed Reading**

T	Now in the next sentence the author tells us that some political parties want a separate national economy for Australia, and they want less or no immigration. So I'll read this. <i>In spite of the facts, today's economic nationalist parties – One Nation, the Australian Democrats, Advance Australia, the Greens and Australia First – espouse policies of greatly reduced or zero net migration.</i>	Prepare sentence
T	Now, it starts off by saying ' <i>in spite of the facts</i> ', and I'll tell you what that means. ' <i>In spite of the facts</i> ' means that even though the facts are there, they are not looking at the facts. They're still going this way [demonstrates by walking across].	Elaborate
St	Ignore?	Select
T	Ignoring the facts, that's right. <i>In spite of the facts.</i>	Affirm

T	And then it tells us which parties. And I'll ask these people at this table to tell me [indicating table]. Today's...? Can you tell me what kind of parties?	Prepare
Sts	<i>Economic nationalist parties</i>	Identify
T	Exactly. So that's what I want you to highlight - <i>economic nationalist parties</i> – if you can just highlight those three words? [checking students' highlighting] That's perfect...that's exactly right, <i>economic nationalist parties</i> . Beautiful...perfect...OK...we're on the right track.	Instruct Affirm
T	Then it tells us the names of these parties. You guys can tell me the names of these parties. Don't highlight them, just tell me the names, have a look.	Prepare
Sts	<i>One Nation, the Australian Democrats, Advance Australia, the Greens, Australia First.</i>	Identify
T	So the author has mixed all these parties up, and they're all very different. But he's grouping them together and he's calling them ' <i>economic nationalist parties</i> '.	Elaborate
T	Can you see what they espouse? Two policies. <i>Policies of...?</i>	Prepare
Sts	<i>Greatly reduced or zero net migration.</i>	Identify
T	Exactly.	Affirm
	Let's highlight those two. <i>Policies of...</i>	Instruct
Sts	<i>Policies of</i>	Identify
T	And then those two policies...	Prepare
Sts	<i>Greatly reduced</i>	Identify
T	<i>Greatly reduced</i>	Affirm
Sts	<i>Zero net</i>	Identify
T	<i>...or zero net migration.</i>	Affirm
T	So, <i>greatly reduced</i> ? What do you think that means? [demonstrates by pointing downwards]. Can we say that in a simple way?	Prepare
St	Much less	Select
T	Much less, that's exactly right, Tatyana, much less.	Affirm
T	<i>Zero net</i> ? 'Net' means what you have in the end. So if you have one minus one [writing equation on board $1 - 1 =$ ], what do you get?	Prepare
Sts	Zero.	Identify
T	Zero, that's right. That's <i>zero net</i> .	Affirm Elaborate

Preparation moves enable all students to identify the wordings in the text, and elaborations extend their understanding, in terms of either the field (eg, grouping different parties as 'economic nationalist parties'), or language (eg, defining conjunctions 'in spite of', or technical terms 'zero net'). Elaborations can also open up critical discussion by students, of both language patterns and the text's field. While neo-Vygotskian theories often focus on the learning potential of the elaborating ('feedback') move in 'IRF' cycles (e.g. Mercer, 2000), Reading to Learn treats preparation moves as equally important, and carefully designs both to ensure equal access for all learners to written meanings. Working through texts in this fashion

enables all students to read them with critical understanding, no matter what the starting levels of the students, or the difficulty of the text.

The wordings that students identified and highlighted in this lesson were the lexical items presenting the key information in each sentence. In the next stage, Preparing for Writing, these wordings are written as dot point notes on the class board, by students taking turns to scribe, as other students dictate the highlighted words to them. When one side of the board has been filled with notes, they are then used to write a new text on the other side of the board, in a stage known as Joint Rewriting, again with students taking turns to scribe while the whole class selects what to write, guided by the teacher. As students select the wordings, and scribe the sentence on the board, the teacher may elaborate with language issues at various levels, from text organisation, to grammatical issues, to spelling, pronunciation and even handwriting. Importantly, the processes of reading and writing are not interrupted to study language systems that are typical concerns of language teaching, rather the elaborations occur rapidly as the text unfolds. If need be, these systems can be studied in extension activities following Detailed Reading and Rewriting. Text 3 is an extract of the discussion that this class rewrote from their notes.

### **[3] A Balanced View of Migration**

*Political parties have been arguing about immigration since the 1950s. We know from the economy that immigration is excellent for the nation.*

*Parties that want to protect the national economy want to lessen or eliminate migration. These parties have three main arguments. They have an unbalanced view of how migration affects the economy. Some parties think that migrants take jobs from unemployed Australians.*

*However, migrants take some jobs but they also produce new jobs. More people need more houses, more goods and more services so more of these are produced and this more jobs. Research shows that the effect of immigration is good, although it depends on who comes and how many people come- -*

In terms of mode, this text is closer to what this group of students would be expected to write at this stage of their academic preparation course. The level of metaphorical and idiomatic language has been reduced, while holding the field of the text constant. In the process students with varying backgrounds have learnt to read highly metaphorical, idiomatic academic English, to identify the key information in each sentence, to write this information as notes, and to use it to write their own text - fundamental skills required for academic study. At the same time they have encountered and practised using a variety of English language features in both oral and written modes. This level of scaffolding support ensures that all students will be able to independently construct successful new discussions, at the same time as they acquire a plethora of the language resources that realise them.

## **Conclusion**

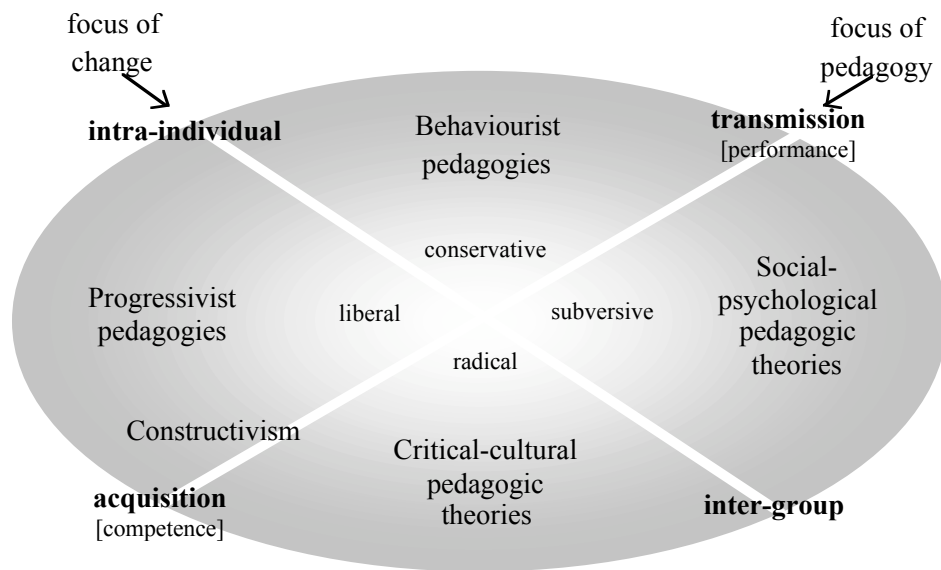
Genre-based pedagogy has been designed to enable learners to make connections between the repertoires of meanings they bring from their experience in the family, community, school, workplace, and the reservoir of meanings that have evolved in modern societies for controlling the social and natural worlds. The research base of the pedagogy has been concerned on one hand to map the genres through which

control is exercised, and on the other to design pedagogic strategies that will enable all learners to make these genres part of their own repertoires. Over the past 25 years this action research project has achieved some remarkable successes. Measures of its success include the take up of genre writing pedagogy throughout Australia, and increasingly internationally, in countries such as Indonesia where it is now mandated for the entire primary and secondary school systems, as well as the extraordinary rates of literacy development reported for Reading to Learn (McRae et al, 2000; Culican, 2006; Rose, Rose, Farrington & Page, 2008); while other literacy pedagogies report significant improvements, few can claim consistent literacy development rates at twice to over four times what is normally expected.

However the pedagogy is still evolving, and its future development will emerge from the diversifying contexts in which it is currently being applied across the globe, from early years literacy programs in east Africa, where teachers often have to manage multilingual classes of 80 or more children with minimal resources, to national curricula in nations as large and diverse as Indonesia, to post-graduate academic programs in China, Latin America and South Africa, and the complexifying multimodal learning environments of western schools. The particular cultural, linguistic and pedagogic issues of each context helps to shape the design of the theory as a whole, as well as each component of the pedagogy. This chapter has focused on the design of classroom interaction cycles and learning sequences, for learners to build connections between their existing repertoires and the genres of schooling. But this access for learners would not be possible without programs that support teachers to expand their pedagogic repertoires, to build connections between their existing practices and the linguistic knowledge and scaffolding strategies of genre-based approaches. Where the aim of the classroom strategies is to provide learners with metalinguistic tools to recognise and use the language patterns of the texts they encounter, the aim of the teacher training programs is to provide teachers with both metalinguistic and metapedagogic tools for analysing and carefully planning their classroom practices. Designing such training programs has been a major focus of the action research to date (see Rose 2007; Rose & Acevedo, 2007; Koop & Rose, 2008).

The third level of the action research program is metatheoretical, designed to provide teachers and researchers with tools for constructing relations between genre-based pedagogic theory and other positions in the crowded literacy education field. To this end the metatheoretical perspective of Basil Bernstein's educational sociology (1990, 1996) provides an overview that is useful for interpreting both the principles of genre-based pedagogy and the antipathy with which it has often been received. In Bernstein's analysis, schematised in Figure 3, pedagogic theories may be contrasted along two axes: whether the focus of change is primarily on the psyche of the learner or on relations between social groups, and whether the focus of pedagogy is primarily on transmission of textual performances (skills and knowledge), or on acquisition of competences (personal, cultural, critical).

**Figure 3: Types of pedagogy (adapted from Bernstein, 1990)**



Pedagogies focused on change within individuals through transmission of textual performances include, for example, traditional approaches to grammar or curriculum instruction, intended to transmit systematised knowledge using lectures, demonstration, drills and practice tasks, as well as phonics, spelling and 'sight word' drills and basal reader programs. The tacit theory of learning implicit in these kinds of activities is made overt in certain dimensions of behaviourist psychology. Broadly, learning is conceived as a process of individuals practising behaviours demonstrated by teachers or texts. Acquisition is then demonstrated by performances for which the criteria are made explicit and visible to the learner, and reinforced by positive or negative evaluation. These kinds of approaches have often been associated with conservative political positions, such as the mandating of phonics programs by the Bush administration in the US. Bernstein (1990, 1996) describes their association with 'old middle class' occupations in economic production, but comments that they have also produced generations of radical thinkers.

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century such traditional approaches have been opposed by progressivist education movements in North America and the UK, associated particularly with liberal political positions and 'new middle class' occupations in the production and distribution of semiotic resources, 'agents of symbolic control'. As liberalism valorises individual freedom and opportunity, these pedagogies conceive learning as a creative process emerging within individuals, which may be constrained or crippled by transmission pedagogies, that are caricatured as 'teacher-centred' or 'rote learning'. As teacher training was professionalised from the 1960s, this view was legitimated in Piaget's theory of innate cognitive development and Chomsky's hypothesis of innate language acquisition, and in the ESL field by Hymes' notion of communicative competence. The focus of these pedagogies is on competences emerging within the person of the learner; the teacher's role is primarily to facilitate this process by 'immersing' the learner in a language environment and encouraging expression of personal experience. As learners are not given overt external criteria for textual performances, Bernstein describes them as 'invisible' pedagogies.

A third position in the model is occupied by critical pedagogic theories, such as Freire's 'critical consciousness', Bourdieu's critique of 'symbolic violence', or the critical-cultural theories of Giroux and others. These pedagogic theories are associated with radical politics; they expect social change as learners acquire a critical awareness of power relations. As with progressivism, the focus of pedagogy is still on the person of the learner but the competences to be acquired are critical and/or cultural dispositions. As they are opposed to transmission of hegemonic discourses, criteria for textual performances also remain invisible to the learner. These radical positions have had less direct influence on mainstream teaching practice, but may be absorbed into liberal movements, such as Freire's appropriation by North American adult education theorists in the 1970s and 80s. More recently they have been absorbed to varying degrees in constructivist theories, which straddle the progressivist and critical quadrants in a smorgasbord of opposition to transmission pedagogies (see Muller, 2000, for a detailed review).

The fourth position in the model is concerned with changing power relations between social groups by transmitting textual performances. This is the position occupied by Vygotskian social psychology and genre-based pedagogy, theories that treat learning as a social process in which teachers model activities for learners. As genre-based pedagogy advocates explicit teaching of textual performances, it has been attacked from each of the competence positions above. But unlike behaviourist pedagogies, the contents and practices of transmission are viewed as social semiotic resources that have evolved as means for exercising power and control in contemporary societies, and so are distributed differentially between social groups. Genre-based theory regards the endemic inequality of schooling as the fundamental problem for literacy pedagogies to address. However it does not start from an oppositional stance to transmission pedagogies, nor to the ideological positioning of learners, or the discourses of the academy. Rather the goal of genre-based pedagogy is to give all learners the opportunities in education that are currently restricted to the few who matriculate to tertiary study. Its strategy is to provide teachers with tools for analysing texts and scaffolding learning, that will enable all their students to realise their potential. This position is neither conservative, liberal nor radical, but rather subverts the inequity of educational outcomes simply by giving students and teachers the tools they need to succeed.



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