Rethinking writing instruction in the lower-level French classroom

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Overview

- Audience participation #1
- Conceptual background
- Implementing genre-based instruction
- Data on instructor and learner perceptions of genre-based writing
- Audience participation #1
- Conclusion and questions
Audience Participation #1: Think – Pair – Share

1. On your own, take 5 minutes to think about the questions on p. 1 of your handout.

2. Pair with the person sitting next to you and discuss your answers.

3. Be prepared to share your answers to #2, #4, and one challenge you identified in #5.
Value of the 3 communicative modes

- **Magnan et al (2012)**: interpersonal and interpretive modes rated highest by post-secondary students; presentational mode rated lowest

- **Mills (in press)**: interpersonal mode rated highest by post-secondary teachers and students; presentational mode rated lowest by students

- **ACTFL (2011)**: interpersonal mode rated highest by K-12 teachers; presentational mode rated lowest

Prioritization of interpersonal and interpretive modes over the presentational mode suggests that students may feel “that understanding is a prerequisite for expression” (Magnan et al., 2012, p. 179)
Approaches to writing instruction (Hyland, 2016; Kern, 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Presentational Communication</th>
<th>Interpretive Communication</th>
<th>Interpersonal Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product-based Instruction</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Process-based Instruction</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genre-based Instruction</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>
What is genre-based writing instruction?

- **Genre**: “a staged, goal-oriented social process” (Martin, 2009, p. 13)

- **Instructional cycle** (adapted from Maxim, 2009a)
  - Genre analysis (instructor)
  - Introduction to genre
  - Scaffolded analysis
  - Independent construction
Transitioning from interpretive to presentational through **textual borrowing**

- Model texts provide learners with resources for their own writing
  - Organizational patterns
  - Generic conventions
  - Functional language

- **Textual borrowing** refers to learners’ uptake of model text features at the word, phrase, and discourse levels for making meaning in their own written texts (Maxim, 2009b)
How does genre-based instruction bridge the three communicative modes?
How does genre-based instruction bridge the three communicative modes?

Introduction to genre

I. Think, Pair, Share – Faites des hypothèses: Quel type de renseignements est-ce qu’on trouve dans un « magazine de voyage » ? Notez deux (2) possibilités.

Expressions utiles: Dans un magazine de voyage, on trouve... ; des descriptions de... ; des suggestions pour... ; des astuces (tips)... ; de la publicité... ; des conseils (advice)...
How does genre-based instruction bridge the three communicative modes?

Genre analysis

IV. Pour aller plus loin. Quelles expressions sont associées avec les idées suivantes:

A. Ce départ répondait à un besoin (need) vital de...

B. Selon mon vécu (from my experience), les points positifs du voyage peuvent être...

C. J’aspire à d’autres expériences de découverte dorénavant/à l’avenir dans le futur.

D. J’éprouvais (I felt) ...

E. ...j’ai découvert nombre de personnes, cultures, modes de vie plus essentiels parfois, que ceux que nous connaissons en occident (in the West) ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Les réflexions sur soi (on oneself)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Les réflexions sur le voyage</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Les aspirations pour le voyage</td>
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</table>
How does genre-based instruction bridge the three communicative modes?

Pre-writing → Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mouvement dans le texte</th>
<th>1. Mots/Expressions à utiliser</th>
<th>2. Écrivez de nouvelles phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Les expériences personnelles (ce qui s'est passé)</td>
<td><em>Ex. dorénavant</em></td>
<td><em>Ex. Je cherche dorénavant d'autres expériences à l'étranger.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Les avantages de l'expérience à l'étranger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Les inconvenients de l'expérience à l'étranger</td>
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</table>
Investigating instructor & learner experiences of genre-based writing instruction

- What are the benefits and challenges of engaging in genre-based FL writing instruction for instructors (N=3) and learners (N=14)?

- Interview data from 3 sections of a collegiate elementary-level French course, Spring 2017

- The research project also collected lesson plans, teaching materials, audio recordings of writing workshops, learners’ genre-based writing projects, learners’ written reflections on their projects/engagement in genre-based writing, and writing portions of two exams
Benefits of genre-based writing

For instructors:

1. Building learners’ Available Designs from model text (3)
2. Enhancing learners’ presentational writing skills (3)
3. Transferring learners’ analysis skills to new contexts (3)

For learners:

1. Building Available Designs from model text (13)
2. Enhancing presentational writing skills (13)
3. Making assignments more accessible (7)
## Challenges of genre-based writing

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>For instructors:</th>
<th>For learners:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Earning learner buy-in (3)</td>
<td>1. Buying into the pedagogy (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Possessing a solid conceptual understanding of genre and textual borrowing (3)</td>
<td>4. Struggling at different stages of the process (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Implementing instructional activities successfully (3)</td>
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Synthesis and implications of preliminary findings

- Participants perceive genre-based writing instruction is a valuable pedagogical approach for both the writing process and the outcomes of participating in genre-based instructional activities.

- Understanding the purpose and conceptual underpinnings of genre-based pedagogy are critical to participant buy in.

- Participants struggle at times as they participate in genre-based writing instruction.

- Robust, ongoing professional development is needed to maximize teacher learning and effectiveness of this approach.
Discussion Activity

- Look back to the list of knowledge types in question 4 on your survey. Based on the data we’ve presented, which domains of knowledge for written seem to be built up through genre-based writing instruction?

- Look back to your answer to question 5 on your survey. Reflecting on what we’ve discussed during this session, how do you think genre-based writing might help to address some of the challenges of teaching written presentational communication?
Conclusion & Future Directions

- Presentational writing tends to be undervalued by both instructors and learners; however, a genre approach to writing instruction can facilitate the integration of the three modes and lead to increased learner engagement with foreign language writing.

- How do instructors engage in pre-instructional stages of genre-based writing?

- How do instructors’ and learners’ concepts related to genre and textual borrowing develop?
Thank you!

Comments?
Questions?

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