

Understanding your Personal Genres

We use different genres in our lives without even realizing it at times: e-mails, phone calls, lists, but we rarely look at what makes a list different from a phone call. In this assignment, you will be encouraged to investigate genres in your everyday life. The first steps will be to become aware of what your genres are, what details form those genres, and how you learned them. Much like Eli, from “Becoming Literate: A Lesson from the Amish,” you began to learn the different personal genres as a natural process. Although Eli is learning to read in his unique community, we learned to create these personal genres in our unique communities and the genres that accommodate them. This learning process is not often reflected upon, nor are the elements thought about after you are comfortable with that genre. This assignment is meant to help you slow down your understanding of your personal genres that are most meaningful to you and what elements comprise those genres.

In your final product, you will choose one genre that is particularly important to you. This could be any way you express yourself. What are some genres you use everyday or could not live without? List some of these genres below.

Possible Readings:

Fishman, Andrea. “Becoming Literate: A Lesson from the Amish”

Frey, Darcy. “The Last Shot”

Frey, Darcy. “Betrayed by the Game”

Jordan, June. “Don’t Nobody Mean More to Me Than You and the Future Life of Willie Jordan”

Rose, Mike. “The Working Life of a Waitress”

Toth, Jennifer. “Introduction/J.C.’s Community”

Possible Developing Activities

Observation

Noticing details

Analyzing text

Analyzing writing

Choice of diction

Description vs. interpretation

What is the difference and why?

Writing should be sensual

Painting

Constant write

What you are seeing

Why you think you are seeing

To understand the choices

Magazine

Split class up and show the magazine

Try to describe the cover

Try to have the other half describe this cover

Discover the difficulties of actually achieving this task

Things you would have to teach

What are the elements of genre

What are the personal genres

Short Essay 1

Spend one day writing down all of the personal genres that you create or encounter.

What are the different purposes of some of those genres? What are the elements of this genre?

Short Essay 2

Who would you teach these genres to? Eli was a child learning literacy before attending school, but there are different kinds of literacy. Here we are discussing becoming literate in the sense of learning and being able to use the personal genres you have chosen.

Describe who is person is. Why do they need to learn this genre? What understanding of this genre do they have as they begin to learn about the genre with you? What elements of the genre are the most important to teach? Why? What elements are the least important to teach? Why?

Long Essay

In this paper, you will need to address the following questions for one or two of your personal genres. How did I learn this genre? What are the features of the genre? What kind of people use this genre? What do they use it for? Why is this genre so crucial to your everyday life? How would you teach someone to use this genre?