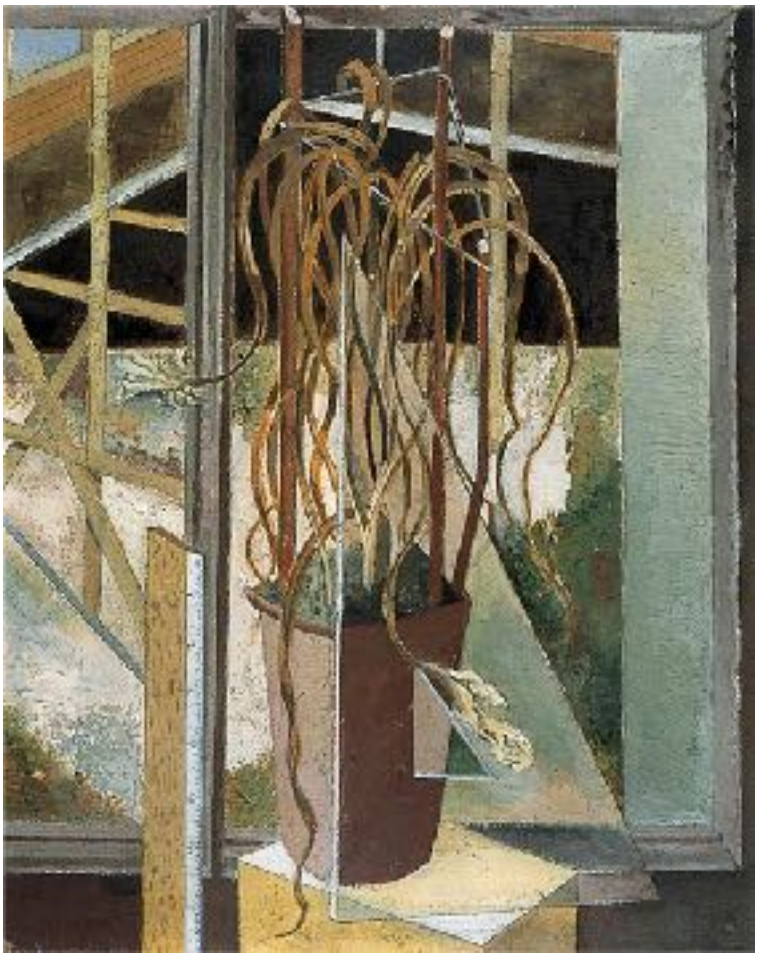
# Genre and "Shop Talk"

## A New American Teaching Method



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**Abstract**

The paper proposes a new teaching method, "Genre Awareness Pedagogy" (GAP), to make "collaboration" a teachable skill. It draws knowledge from applied English pedagogy in the late 20th century, introducing it through the eyes of a musician. A modular training model is proposed, then investigated in a single-blind comparative study that asks, "Does GAP training produce smoother conversations between professionals in different specializations?" Promising results suggest that GAP training does produce more effective collaborations. The paper presents a proof of concept ready to be investigated and further refined in subsequent studies.

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**Foreword**

Today's America thinks *dissociatively*. Novelists like Jonathan Eggers write disjunct narratives of nostalgia, love, rage, and self-contradiction, responding to American trauma of the 1960's and '70's. "Depression" has long been a cultural buzzword among millennials, and with it, its signature detached state of mind.[1] Meanwhile, American public education, culminating in the Standardized Aptitude Test (SAT), sees rigid boundaries between academic subjects. As far as it is concerned, math is not history, and history is not science. (Topical SAT "subject tests" are only being discontinued this year!)[2] The poet Robert Bly bemoans “disintegrating human consciousness” and suggests that parts of seventeenth-century Europe are responsible for it, as they minimized and erased people who were mysterious to them: “pagans, Asians, Africans, and women.”[3]

On the other hand, the twentieth century gave us words to talk about these issues. I see certain experts using *associative* thinking to suggest innovative connections between their fields of expertise and other fields. Playwright Aaron Sorkin uses music to describe his scripted dialogue.[4] Sci-fi writer Alex Garland describes a special type of artificial intelligence using a painting by Jackson Pollock.[5] When Frank Zappa said, “Writing about music is like dancing about architecture,” he was being prescient. Perhaps this is one small way to counteract the vast dissociative pall we live under: to enable different specialists to understand one another.

Mutual understanding -- switching languages -- takes associative thinking. In his book *News of the Universe*, editor Robert Bly points out the associative thinking of the German Romantics,

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[1] Hillary Hoffower and Allana Akhtar, "Lonely, burned out, and depressed: the state of millennials' mental health in 2019," Business Insider, 10 Oct 2019, https://www.businessinsider.nl/millennials-mental-health-burnout-lonely-depressed-money-stress?international=true&r=US

[2] CollegeBoard, "SAT Subject Test Areas," CollegeBoard College Readiness, accessed 13 Feb 2021, https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat-subject-tests/subjects

[3] Robert Bly, *News of the Universe,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, p. 2

[4] Aaron Sorkin, interview by *DP/30: The Oral History of Hollywood,* 19 Jan 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ya3jOt9K1Qk

[5] Alex Garland dir. *Ex Machina*, New York, NY: A24, 2015, streamed video.

uniting “the day intelligence of man and the night intelligence of nature.”[6] Bly demonstrates, even while the modern ethos compartmentalizes and severs connections in our minds, the Romantic revolution continues in spirit through diverse voices around the globe. He argues that poetry should model inclusivity -- a "leaping poetry" that builds bridges, not walls. Similarly in the teaching field, Kumaravadivelu encourages teachers to help their students be "miniethnographers [*sic*] so that they can investigate and understand how language rules and language use are socially structured, and also explore whose interests these rules serve.”[7] This metacognitive approach answers Paolo Freire's rallying cry for decolonization, and I hope my ideas prove useful in the long march towards social justice.

**Acknowledgments**

I owe a debt of thanks to Maaike Vertregt for her concise and productive feedback, and to Mimi Mitchell for her meaningful critique and words of encouragement. My thanks to Jed Wentz and Kersten McCall, my flute teachers, whose languages feed my professional activity. The Blair Hot Topics Committee planted many spiritual seeds to enable this work. I have lodestones among the professors at the Blair School of Music, in particular Michael Alec Rose and Carl Smith. Similarly, Peter Sheppard Skaerved supplied early and lasting inspiration. My colleague Amy Nam supplied the nimble move-step analysis in Example 3. She, Yani Quemado, and Daniel Newman-Lessler all provided invaluable service as teachers in this project, and contributed helpful perspectives during their training. I apologize to the tens of people I have failed to mention here, among them friends, teachers, and role models. All my love to my parents, Kumaran Ramanathan and Alamelu Kumaran. SDG.

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[6] Bly, *Universe*, p. 4

[7] Bala Kumaravadivelu, “Toward a Postmethod Pedagogy,” *TESOL Quarterly* 35:4 (2001), p. 548.

**Introduction**

A lacuna exists in my flute instruction. I receive lessons in two areas, “modern” and "historical" flute music, but I rarely translate in my lessons from one "language" to the other. This separation of genres is reflected in the negligible cross-pollination between the Early Music and Classical departments of my school. This problem persists in popular music, too: if I bring my bluegrass banjo to a non-bluegrass setting, it often leads to awkwardness, unwarranted assumptions, and miscommunication. But these hard boundaries are not the future of music. Recent research indicates that genre boundaries in music are in fact weakening. More and more, arts industries are relying on metrics other than genre, like intersectionality and "dynamic density," to make important creative decisions about publishing, streaming, and human resources.[8] Across the cultural landscape, artists are resisting labels. In contemporary composition, Frank Denyer's biography says point-blank that his pieces "fall...into *none of the accepted categories* of contemporary music. [*emphasis added*]"[9] And in *The End of Early Music*, Bruce Haynes says "no" to the stilted, esoteric label “rhetorical style." According to Haynes, good rhetoric relies on commonsensical Western principles, applied without (gasp!) the baggage of the last few decades.[10] But as I will argue later, *genre* is not a label: it is more like a language or a culture.

This paper uses genre analysis to improve collaboration. Composer Nigel Clarke commented in a recent seminar that collaboration is not sufficiently taught at conservatories,[11] indicating a lack of research into "collaboration pedagogy." The seminar, entitled *Celebrating Collaboration*, was hosted by violinist Peter Sheppard Skaerved, a London-based luminary who is, himself, at the center of a dense network of collaborations (chronicled in his prolific blog entries). When asked to elaborate on Nigel's comment, the two artists wondered aloud whether "collaboration" should indeed be taught--perhaps, they mused together, it can only be discovered. But what is clear from their own collaboration is that Nigel and Peter, a composer and a violinist, regularly speak one

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[8] Daniel Silver, Monica Lee, C. Clayton Childress, "Genre Complexes in Popular Music," *PLoS ONE* 11(5) (2016), p. 4.

[9] Bob Gilmore, "Introduction," Frank Denyer, accessed 13 Feb 2021, https://www.frankdenyer.eu/.

[10] Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

[11] Nigel Clarke, interview by Peter Sheppard Skaerved, *Celebrating Collaboration*, The Exhale, 11 Feb 2021.

another's creative "languages," translating from one to the other. I dream that one day, all conservatory students will have this skill: to truly understand their own speech and playing, and the speech and playing of others. They will demonstrate the ability and inclination to translate their "shop talk" -- their profession-specific conversations -- for strangers to their field. I seek to find the specific, teachable *mechanics* of all these skills, investigate whether they produce better collaborations, and suggest how they can be applied to music teaching.

Speaking from a musician's perspective, I propose a generalized model to efficiently train professionals in the field to collaborate with one another across different specializations. I call this model "genre awareness pedagogy" (GAP), and explain it in detail below. My central research question is if GAP training produces better cross-disciplinary collaborations between professionals. This work is a continuation of two separate streams of research. The first is genre analysis, a field best summarized in John Swales' seminal work, *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. The second is music pedagogy, where Paul Harris' Simultaneous Learning model represents the current state of research. This paper extends genre analysis into music- and art-making, then suggests several new teaching practices, ultimately to promote better communication between professionals in any field.

**Understanding and Teaching Genre Awareness**

To understand genre awareness pedagogy, we need to redefine several concepts. This chapter narrows and sharpens the meanings of several common-English words: *speech* (performed language), *text* (persistent language), *community* (a group of language practitioners), and *genre* (a community's text and speech).

Disciplines (e.g. painting, accounting, football) interconnect via their uses of language. Every discipline has central goals. For instance, an artistic discipline's central goal is, arguably, to maintain a high level of accomplishment and contribute to the world. To accomplish these goals,

each discipline creates a pattern of how it uses its language.[12] Understanding these patterns enables us to describe events "thickly," as Clifford Geertz wrote. Geertz, a father of cultural anthropology, took notes from his many excursions, and crafted detailed and highly empathetic "thick descriptions" of real-world events, with large (often stratified) webs of “inference and implication.”[13] Thick description is the highest level of understanding a discipline's language patterns.

Below I will illustrate two different approaches to analyzing language patterns: John Swales *dissects* them (deconstructs and critiques them) with move-step analysis, and Charles Bazerman *distills* them (interprets and positions them) with three-level analysis.

*Speech*

Broadly, speech is "performed language" -- when people actively verbalize ideas. This is not limited to using our mouths, as the examples demonstrate below. We'll break down each instance of speech using Bazerman's three-level analysis.

> *Example 1: The interruption*
>
> *10 a.m. finds Ava in the lesson room with their teacher Ellie and a few classmates, playing Karg-Elert’s Sonata Appassionata for flute solo. As they reach the climax of the piece, Ellie looks Ava in the eye, tosses her arms in the air, and exclaims, “MORE!” Ava swiftly straightens their posture, and their sound gets a little louder.*

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[12] John Swales, *Genre Analysis: English in academic and research settings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 21. Swales quotes Herzberg 1986:1, “The pedagogies associated with...academic English...signify a cluster of ideas: that language use in a group is a form of social behavior, that discourse is a means of maintaining and extending the group’s knowledge and of initiating new members into the group, and that discourse is epistemic or constitutive of the group’s knowledge.”

[13] John Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures,* New York: Basic Books, 2017, p. 7. It bears mentioning that such a hierarchical approach is very Western. The author looks forward to contributions from ongoing decolonization research.

In this 3-second "vignette," a few assumptions have been upheld, and another has been challenged. Let's focus on one *speech act*: the teacher's shout. We will distill it into three layers: what was spoken, what was unspoken, and what was the effect.[14]

The first layer of the speech act is *what was spoken*. It has two distinct parts: the fact that Ellie spoke up is the *locutionary act,* and what she said is the *propositional act*. The fact that she spoke confirms several assumptions. Bazerman calls these assumptions "social facts," that is, facts that everybody takes for granted.[15] Firstly, unlike anybody else, a teacher has implicit permission to interrupt. Secondly, this is a lesson, not a public presentation. Everyone in the room knows that Ellie will interrupt a performance in progress, in order to give on-the-spot feedback. The feedback itself, in this case, is not terribly clear at this first level. When she said, "More!" did Ellie want Ava to play louder? Or faster? Or with better articulation? Or more emotionally? The next layer gives us more information to decode the situation.

The second layer of the speech act is the part Ellie left unsaid: the *illocutionary act*. We know she didn't specify what she meant by, "MORE!" So, from Ava's perspective, Ellie is testing their intelligent response, pushing them to make their own choices. As a student, Ava knows they should show initiative in creatively responding to feedback, and Ellie is using an illocutionary act to challenge that assumption. Ava's aware of the challenge. Can they meet it and succeed? The next layer shows us.

The third layer of the speech act is its result (the *perlocutionary effect*). On the surface, Ava changed their posture, and as a result, their volume naturally increased. But that's not all! Ava, and all the other students in the classroom, made unconscious mental notes relating to that passage, and to other things they've played. Perhaps, "Use more highs and lows." Perhaps, "Work on this specific technique." Perhaps "take more risks." The overall perlocutionary effect is

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[14] Charles Bazerman,"Speech Acts, Genres, and Activity Systems: How Texts Organize People," in *What Writing Does and How It Does It: An Introduction to Analyzing Texts and Textual Practices*, London: Routledge, 2003, p. 314

[15] Ibid. 312

defined by each student's sensitivity and initiative. Ava responded well to Ellie's speech act, and can move forward with the lesson. They will be faced with several more speech acts over the course of the lesson, and every speech act has these three layers.

The reader will note that we chose to examine the teacher's verbal shout, not the student's playing. The next example examines a musical performance as a speech act.

*Example 2: The intermezzo (Fig. 1)*

*The intermezzo is coming to a close, as the actors behind the curtain prepare themselves for the final scenes of the opera. The strings swell to the top of their range[A] while the organ and harp descend.[B] The strings fall to a simple cadential figure.[C] Then the whole orchestra repeats the same four bars[D,E] -- just as it has done with two-bar phrases earlier in the piece. Yet something is different this time. Six bars from the end, the organ and harp have changed their tune. They're slower, and the strings are quieter somehow.[F] They climb, quieter and higher, quieter and higher, as only a string section can do--and when they arrive, higher than they've ever gone in the piece, two*

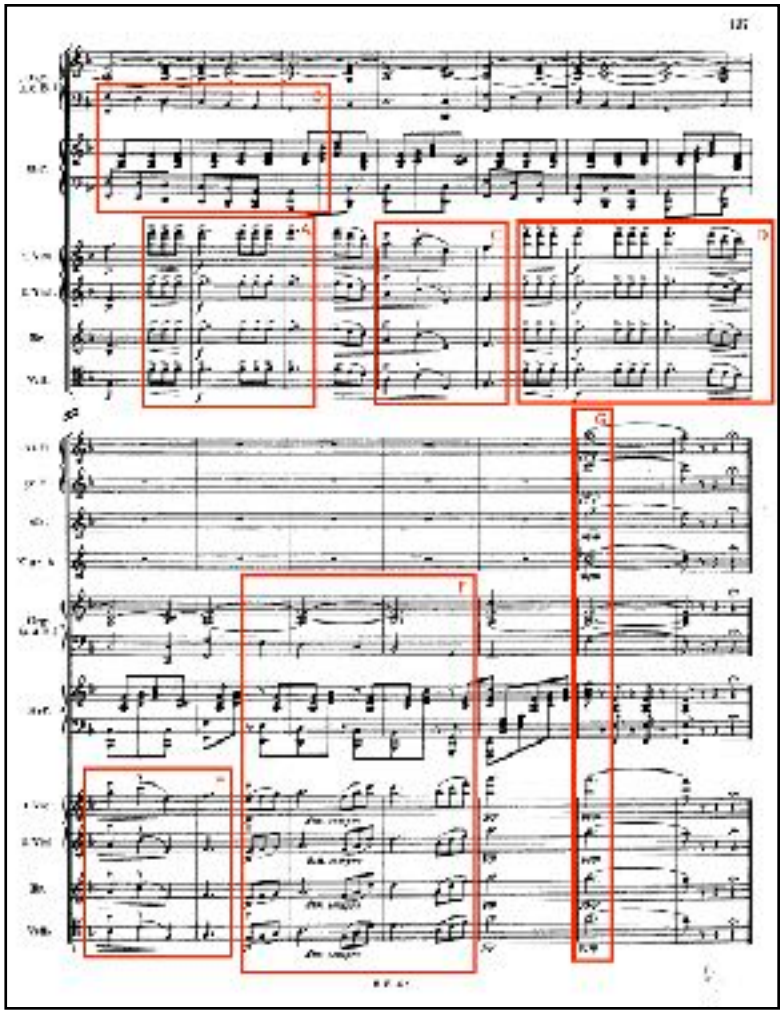

Fig. 1: P. Mascagni, "Intermezzo" from *Cavalleria Rusticana*
Red box labels correspond to the superscripts in Example 2.

> *flutes, two clarinets, and an oboe add a passing gleam to the final tonic chord--and the velvet curtains rise for the opera's denouement.*[16]

This is a "thin description" of Pietro Mascagni's Intermezzo from "Cavalleria Rusticana." How does it break down into Bazerman's three levels? We begin with the locutionary act: quite simply, the locutionary act is that the orchestra plays! The orchestra fulfills a logistical function--to keep the audience's attention while the actors prepare for their final scenes. But is this beautiful music *only* meant to stall for time? Certainly not: the next levels show us more.

Let's sample the many propositional acts Mascagni has written into this fragment. The strings repeat a high *fa* insistently in a phrase they play twice. Meanwhile, the harp and organ hold chords in their right hands while their left hands hold a descending major tetrachord in the bassline. When the piece concludes, the strings and winds resolve to a shimmeringly orchestrated tonic chord.

Since an orchestral intermezzo is without words, we find the meat of meaning in the illocutionary act, *what is not said*. Every propositional act in the previous paragraph is tied to an illocutionary act. Repeating the high *fa* in the strings suggests a more deep insistence, a longing inexpressible in words. Repeating the entire four-bar phrase underscores its urgency (a classic rhetorical move). Playing a descending major tetrachord in the bassline reinforces one of Bazerman's "social facts," just like Ellie did with her shout in the previous example. In this case, everybody watching the velvet curtain knows that this type of bassline symbolizes love. In the last six bars, the lovelorn descent slows and sinks into the ground while the strings soar airily into their pianissimo high register. The orchestra holds us there, tense, racked between earth and heaven, until it finally releases us into the last chord.

The perlocutionary effect of this example is taught in music-appreciation courses all over the world. How does an audience respond to a performance? Where does each listener draw the line between concrete and abstract, propositional and illocutionary? Popular nonfiction like Alex

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[16] Pietro Mascagni, "Intermezzo," in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, New York: Broude Brothers, n.d. (ca. 1950), p. 137.

Ross' historical survey *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* tries to contextualize each piece of music in history. To Ross, music signifies and responds to "bigger" things in the world around it. But to a composer like Michael Alec Rose, author of *Audible Signs: Essays from a Musical Ground*, the propositional & illocutionary acts are sufficient to produce a beautiful perlocutionary effect. Our three-level analysis is inspired by that idea: that an audience is capable of perceiving music as a free-standing, layered speech act. Like any other speech act, music benefits from context, but never depends on context for its own meaning. A well-crafted musical piece speaks for itself.

We have established that speech is performed language, and demonstrated it with two examples. The next section discusses *text*, the type of language with a longer "shelf-life."

*Text*

*Text* is language that is *not performed, but persists*. Of the two forms of language, speech is time-bound and text is not. Notice we use the word "persistent" rather than "permanent." Text is often erasable, but it will not disappear into thin air, like speech does.

This is a key idea: to understand how speech acts are taught, we have to explore the idea that texts are persistent. A piece of sheet music survives a lot longer than the speech acts it literally produces (i.e. concerts), which dissipate into the air seconds after they are performed. Speech acts are recorded as text in a variety of different ways, including performance materials, critical and analytical documents, personal and interpersonal writing (journals or memos), and memories. Unlike performed speech, text can be "re-activated" and experienced multiple times. A score or recording can be replayed, an article or a letter can be re-read, a painting can be re-seen, and a memory can be relived many times indeed.

For teachers, this leads to a powerful implication: *texts create realities*. Bazerman takes college admissions as an example: *"...my right to attend a college may depend on...whether I had sent in a* check *to pay back tuition, whether I had received a* diploma *from high school, and a whole list of other social facts determined by* texts*. In order to be allowed to attend, I need to respect the*

*institution's definition of required social facts and then be able to produce acceptable textual tokens of each." [emphasis added]*[17]

Texts are heritable, and their descent from generation to generation is a key element of culture. For instance, the Masters degree program in historically-informed performance, the classes it contains, and the job market it feeds could never exist without the realities created by a variety of texts: manuscript and print scores, their copies and illegitimate children, primers and treatises on execution, concert reviews, journal entries, *curricula vitae*, and so on. The social facts that these texts produce "put food on the table" for many of my colleagues.

While texts can also be analyzed with Bazerman's three levels, a second analytical tool is useful here: John Swales' *move-step analysis*. The core concept of move-step analysis is simple: define a speech act's central goal, and then find out how well it achieves it. In my experience, the process is iterative:

1. Hypothesize: guess the speaker's goal.
2. Deconstruct: Find and classify at least two separate rhetorical moves.
3. Prioritize: Determine the relative importance of each move, using metrics like effort, space, or chronology.
4. Critique: Evaluate how effectively each move accomplishes the goal.
5. Iterate: Revise the hypothesis from step 1 and repeat the process.

*Example 3: Dead Spring*[18] *(pictured on front coverpage)*
*We hypothesize that the painting is about the interaction of life and death. We assign the first move to the triangle in front of the plant. So close that your eyes feel unfocused, painter Nash juxtaposes a limp cluster of dead leaves with a host of inanimate setpiece figures, including a mirrored triangle with a hole in the middle--a curious optical trick. The leaves' lines show more life than the figures ever could, and yet, form battles with*

[17] Bazerman, "Speech Acts," p. 313

[18] Paul Nash, *Dead Spring,* 1929, oil on canvas, 48.5 x 40 cm, Tate Modern.

> *content. The leaves are officially "dead," but nonetheless curl and flex in the center of the frame, a formal suggestion of life.*[19] *The size of the plant demands our attention, so we give it first priority. But we wonder, doesn't the mirror's hole distract us from a life/death duality? It might not be the most effective choice for that central goal. We assign the second move to the subtle echoes of color and geometry. The setpiece figures' suggestions of triangular trinity and rectilinear duality (the mirror, the ruler, the scaffolding) highlight the inherent asymmetries, but also point our eyes to odd color matching in different parts of the picture. We give this move second priority, but it still seems ineffective in communicating life and death--it seems more like a confusing entanglement. Both these moves, and the priorities they take in our view, cause us to revise our central hypothesis. We now guess Nash's true intention: that the things that we perceive often get entangled with our perception itself.*[20]

Texts' persistence is key to our study, because it facilitates the teaching of speech acts. Both 3-level and move-step analysis are powerful teaching tools to "critically preserve" speech acts through memorization, transcription, and criticism. *To reiterate, we teach speech acts by facilitating their preservation.*

*Community*

A community is a group of people who practice the same language, and teaching cannot exist without a community. We prove this with a simple syllogism: teaching cannot exist without traditions, since every teacher was influenced by their own teachers. Traditions cannot exist without a larger community to sustain them. Teaching, therefore, relies on a community to ground it. We will now discuss the salient parts of Swales' concept of *discourse community* (DC). Swales defines "discourse communities" before "genre," so we will do the same. A discourse community is the group of people that "owns" and shapes (a) specific genre(s). To be a discourse community, the group needs to have a critical mass, consistent and purposeful

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[19] Ramakrishnan Kumaran, "Lecture Essay for 'Love and Music,'" Rama Kumaran, Flutist, 30 April 2019, http://www.ramaflute.com/writings/2019/4/29/lecture-essay-for-love-and-music

[20] Amy Nam, conversation with author, 12 November 2020.

communication channels, and commonly agreed-upon goals.[21] Classical musicians, for instance, have the common goals of advancing their musical art, presenting emotional challenges or catharsis, and surviving in their respective artistic economies. Microbiologists, by contrast, have the common goals of staying current in their knowledge of the field, conducting productive research, and dealing with scientific institutions. Both musicians and microbiologists use language patterns motivated by their respective goals.

Does this sound familiar? Discourse communities produce speech and texts with signature language patterns, and we analyze them with 3-level and move-step analysis. There's a beautiful self-propagating cycle here: the DC *generates* a new text to solve a problem, that text *persists* and become the standard method for solving that problem, then all future texts *reflect* that solution. This is what Tzvetan Todorov, an early genre analyst, called "codification."[22] Bazerman uses the professional résumé as an example: a few years ago, when management résumés started declaring which computer programs the applicant was familiar with, the feature quickly became standard.[23] The DC had codified a new addition to one of its existing text types.

Music, an extraordinarily dense layering of oral and written traditions, is “owned” by an extremely complex DC, spanning across cultures, history, social strata. Music teachers, as members of that community, speak musical languages and pick up on social facts (sometimes "unspoken rules"). They collaborate and "talk shop," discussing specialized topics with other specialists, and teach their students to do the same. In the earlier example, Ava's teacher produced a verbal speech act ("More!") that communicated several layers of social facts at once. But what if a teacher could leap up beyond the social facts of their own DC? What if they understood how to teach *genre analysis itself?* They could teach their students to be “ethnographers in the academic culture,”[24] as Ann Johns puts it. As a result, instead of

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[21] Swales, *Genre Analysis*, p. 21

[22] Tzvetan Todorov and Richard M. Berrong, "The Origin of Genres," *New Literary History* 8(1) (1976), p.162

[23] Bazerman, "Speech Acts," p. 317

[24] Ann Johns, "The Discourse Communities Dilemma: Identifying Transferable Skills for the Academic Milieu," *English for Specific Purposes* 7 (1988), 57

swallowing the prechewed social facts provided by their teachers, students could discover social facts from their own discipline's raw materials. This is the goal of Genre Awareness Pedagogy: that a student recognizes the inner workings of their DC, and actively engages in discovering its social facts. These include discipline-fundamentals like technical best-practice and interpretive goals, but also collaborative principles and management skills.

We have established the importance of community as it relates to text and speech acts. The next section explains "genre," and explains how teachers can use genre analysis to empower their students.

*Genre*

A genre is a group of texts or speech acts produced by a DC (for instance, music students' program bios). A step above a genre is the *genre set.* This is the group of genres a member of that DC interacts with (the music student's bio, instrument type, scores, scheduling emails, etc.). A step above that is the *genre system*, all the genres of all the people in that discourse community (every genre pertaining to the student, and also genre pertaining to their teachers, school administrators and staff, etc.).[25]

Understanding a discipline's genres means understanding its culture. For instance, you cannot claim to be an expert in American football without understanding the genres *playbook* and *player stats*. You would have a very low command of the discipline, even though you could technically participate in the sport without knowing, for instance, "how playbooks determine strategy" or "how to use player stats to assemble a team." But an experienced player or analyst can use your parallel knowledge from other disciplines to teach you what playbooks and player stats are. If you are a historian, for instance, you can compare a playbook to a battlefield map: it is a book of tactics used by a coach to direct his "troops" to penetrate the defenders' weak points and accomplish the mission objective: scoring a touchdown.

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[25] Bazerman, "Speech Acts," p. 318

To translate their discipline for a member of another DC, any student must become an "ethnographer of their discipline," to borrow from Johns above.[26] In particular, a music student is uniquely placed to understand his own discourse community and the interactions between its members and texts. Musicians can, with the attitude of an ethnographer, apply their effort to understanding other discourse communities. Teachers can train this skill too, using the definitions outlined above. That is the meat of "genre awareness pedagogy" (GAP), which I explain below.

A problematic approach similar to GAP is Paul Harris' Simultaneous Learning method, which uses the idea of transferrable, connective skill sets, but fails to ground that concept in genre analysis. The central teaching tool of Simultaneous Learning is a flowchart linking a number of different music-related skills to one another in a dense "mind map":[27] singing, rhythm, memory, intonation, composition, and others. Harris suggests various "routes" through the "map" of these skills. For instance, rhythm and performance, two "locations" on the map, can be modeled by hand-clapping through a piece of sheet music. Then dynamics, rhythm, and articulation can be simultaneously related by playing a simple fragment in various styles of increasing complexity. By encouraging a student to make intuitive connections between performance skills, we foster an organic learning process (as opposed to disjunctively focusing on one aspect at a time--"first dynamics, then rhythm, then articulation," etc.).[28] The missing link, filled by genre analysis, is communicative purpose. Harris wants to develop the student into a competent, confident performer--in the Western Classical music tradition. While he does encourage educators to reach beyond the "map" and invent their own paths, he is limited to his preconceptions of "good music." In the end, the Simultaneous Learning model is a prescription, not a process.

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[26] Johns, "Transferrable Skills," p. 57

[27] https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56129aa3e4b02dbd234975cf/t/58308b64197aea0348045bff/1479576421385/SL+Map+NEW2.pdf

[28] Paul Harris, *The Virtuoso Teacher: the inspirational guide for instrumental and singing teachers,* updated ed. London: Faber Music Ltd., 2015, p. 39

Kumaravadivelu (2001) forcefully critiques such "method-based" teacher training and proposes a "post-method" pedagogy with three key attributes. The first is *particularity*: specific goals, not generalized ones. The second is *practicality*: action-research with teachers, not theoretical research on teachers. The third is *possibility*: recursive critique, not tradition.[29] Independence (autonomy) is a key quality: students independently acquire skills and socialize within their DC, and teachers independently seek to understand their students' DC, in order to find the best teaching approaches. This means that teachers are comfortable with ethnographic principles including finding and isolating research questions, determining their students' skill complexes, and critiquing their own teaching ideas. Thus, Kumaravadivelu connects the Simultaneous Learning model with current cultural research, by applying the "everything connects" principle in a manner consistent with genre analysis.

The litmus test for successful communication, then, is connection with the DC. Can a performing art student participate in the "overhead" conversation that happens behind the scenes? Can a science student advance their field in quantitative or qualitative research? Can a humanities student contribute to the conversations of their professors and leaders in the field? And, with the help of genre awareness pedagogy, can different specialists talk with one another to intelligently unite their communicative purposes and link their DC's together?

**Experiment - Applying GAP Training**

Research question: “Does GAP training improve the fluency of profession-specific conversations between specialists in different disciplines?”

In my own teaching, I use a "unit-study" approach to GAP. For instance, when Ahmad's month-long unit in poetic diction is over, the second month focuses on the algebraic concept of the variable. Consequently, Ahmad discovers how to treat poetic rhyme schemes (where A & B stand for phrases) just like variables in an algebra problem (where *a* and *b* stand for numbers). Or if Amanda's Month 6 piano lessons focus on figured bass, Month 7 can be about songwriting, and

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[29] Bala Kumaravadivelu, “Toward a Postmethod Pedagogy,” *TESOL Quarterly* 35:4 (2001), p. 538

Amanda applies her knowledge of chord inversions to "talk through" a pop progression. The more units a student studies, the more connections they find between different DC specializations. This approach is compartmentalized like Harris' but flexible like Kumaravadivelu's.

From this approach, I designed a 30-minute GAP training module for the training phase of this experiment: explain discourse communities, analyze a speech act using Bazerman's 3-level analysis, and analyze a text using Swales' move-step analysis. I prepared three teachers to administer GAP training to my test participants. I follow Geertz' advice that theoretical explanations are only useful as they serve particular situations,[30] so the teacher trainings were administered one-on-one, with plenty of practical examples to support the information. But the modules did not *teach to the genre*, as Kumaravadivelu cautions, by allowing teachers to pretend to be members of a specific DC and train the student in its genres. To prevent this "borrowed voice" approach,[31] both teacher and participant trainings covered general principles and applied them to examples within the trainee's own DC.

For the experimental phase, participants in different professional specializations worked together to accomplish a task. Half of the participants were in the experimental group, which underwent the training and tried to apply "GAP thinking" on their feet. The other half were in the untrained control group. Since GAP training aims to improve collaboration, I evaluated the success of the experiment based on the patterns I found in the participants' conversation. A successful experiment would show very different conversational patterns between the control group and the experimental group. An unsuccessful experiment would show no difference between the "untrained" and "trained" conversations.

*Phase One: Recruitment*

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[30] Geertz, *Interpretation*, p. 322-3

[31] Kumaravadivelu, "Pedagogy," p. 552

I recruited participants from my American network of friends and colleagues. Participants signed up on an online form, listing their contact information and demographic information including education level and professional field, as well as a few red-herring questions so that they were not aware of the criteria for their placement in the experimental/control groups. The sample pool began with 24 participants. They varied in age from early 20's to mid-80's, and came from a variety of backgrounds, including music, law, aviation, and education. All of them were well-educated English speakers; most had a Bachelor degree or higher. As signups were collected, I paired individual participants and assigned them to different teachers. I made these pairings so that participants would not know one another or their teacher. Initially, the study was designed as a double-blind investigation, so after the pairings and trainer assignments were complete, I randomly sorted the pairs into a control group and an experimental group. As a few participants dropped out of the study, I was forced to unblind myself to follow up with individual participants and manage training/test schedules. I mediated this bias in the analysis phase by using a reasonably objective rubric (see Discussion below) to evaluate the conversations. In the end, the sample pool dropped to 16 participants: from there, 8 participants underwent the training, and the other 8 formed the control group.

*Phase Two: Teacher Training*

I selected the teachers from my network of colleagues. Each of the teachers was a native English speaker of graduate or post-graduate educational standing. Each teacher training followed this general outline:

1. GAP training statement of purpose: "I'm here to prepare you to work together with a complete stranger. I'm giving you learning strategies to learn their language, but I'm not going to teach you their language. Hopefully they'll learn your language as fast as you learn theirs."

2. Explain "discourse community" using the common-language definition "a group of people who talk the same language" and then use Swales' key characteristics[32] (stated mission, voluntary modes of communication, membership structure, etc.) to give it greater definition.
3. Introduce three-level analysis using a dance video, then fully demonstrate with a red table. (See Appendix A)
4. Introduce move-step analysis with Swales' CARS model, then fully demonstrate with John Nash's "Dead Spring" painting. (See Example 3, p. 7)
5. Didactics: Use the GAP Training Guide (outlined in Phase 2 below). Suggest the questions and give example replies. Insist that they ask the trainees to reflect on each step in the training. Emphasize the importance of initiative and improvisation in GAP training.

*Phase Three: Participant Training*

The experimental group was trained by the three teachers. Each one-on-one training session was approximately 30 minutes long. The teachers used the "GAP Training Guide" below to structure their trainings. The control group received no training and moved directly to Phase Four.

*GAP Training Guide*

1. We first address discourse communities, as Swales defines them. *"At the superficial level, what words might you and your partner have in common?"* Then we interview to find out the communicative methods inside the trainee's discourse community. *"How do your community's members talk to each other? Are there any obvious patterns in status and style?"* We follow by investigating how membership and social groupings are structured and maintained. *"Who makes your big decisions, like defining important words or determining 'the right way to do things'? Who chooses those people? And how does thinking about this put the things you produce into perspective?"*

[32] Swales, *Genre Analysis*, p. 21

2. Communicative structure becomes a pressing question, and Bazerman's genre systems become relevant. We first determine, using the same Socratic style, the web of texts, speech acts, and social facts in the trainee's discourse community. *"Who produces which texts and speech acts? Are the texts spread out among all the members equally, or are there nodes or repositories? Which texts seem the most significant, and why?"*

3. As genre systems come into clearer focus, the discussion turns to communicative purpose. We quickly outline Bazerman's three-level analysis and Swales' move-step analysis, and apply them to examples in the trainee's discipline. *"What messages is the community sending? And most importantly of all, how do the most commonly known texts send those messages?"*

*Phase Four: Conversation*

I contacted registered participants in pairs to set up appointment times. They met one another for the first time on a Zoom call. I introduced them to one another using the professional field they listed on the signup form. Then, I gave them a stimulating task: in 20 minutes, they were to propose a viable, detailed collaborative project. I left the prompt deliberately open-ended, so later analysis would reveal how the participants arrived upon their ideas. I suggested that the participants spend the first part of their conversation discussing their skill sets, and told them that the debrief after their conversation would include a discussion on the detail and viability of their project, and on how well the project utilized both their professional skill sets. In certain conversations, this suggestion was taken literally, as the participants divided up their intellectual responsibilities; other participants more successfully applied each other's lexis (see below) and thought patterns.

I then disabled my audio and video feed and stepped away, but continued to record the call as the participants worked. After the 20 minutes had passed, I returned to briefly discuss their final project proposal, debrief the participants on the goals of my experiment, and thank them for their participation. After ending the meeting, I proceeded to transcribe and analyze each meeting.

**Results**

| Participants (names hidden) | Threads | "Lexi stretches" | Time to project (min) | Comm. errors | Detail | Agency | Structure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **N - A *** | 4 | 6 | 5.25 | 1 | 1/2 | Equal | Propose-refine |
| **A - J *** | 3 | 5 | 16.0 | 2 | 1/1 | Equal | Discuss-propose |
| **S - J *** | 1 | 7 | 6.5 | 3 | 1/3 | Med S | Propose-refine |
| **B - M *** | 3 | 5 | 4.5 | 1 | 2/2 | Slight B | Propose-refine |
| **T - A** | 3 | 2 | 3.75 | 3 | 1/3 | Equal | Propose-refine |
| **S - J** | 4 | 7 | 10.0 | 3 | 1/2 | Med J | Discuss-propose |
| **H - W** | 3.5 | 4 | 3.0 | 5 | 3/4 | Med W | Propose-refine |
| **A - I** | 4 | 5 | 3.5 | 4 | 2/4 | Heavy I | Propose-refine |

There were 16 participants total, grouped into 8 samples. 4 of the samples were the GAP-trained experimental group (NA, AJ, SJ, and BM), and the other 4 samples were the untrained control group (TA, SJ, HW, and AI). An asterisk (*) indicates the experimental group. The columns of the table indicate each criterion on my evaluation rubric; I explain the five quantitative elements and two qualitative elements below.

I counted the number of conversation threads, to indicate how effortlessly the conversation flowed from one topic to the next. A "thread" is an unbroken line of thought, passed between the two participants, often covering several tangentially-related subjects. A thread breaks when one of the participants redirects the conversation consciously, or pauses and pursues an unrelated line of thought. A low score indicates a smooth conversation with few breaks; a high score indicates a choppy conversation. As an example of a broken thread, B finishes introducing herself, then consciously redirects the conversation to M's profession.

> *B: "So that kinda sparked, like, my interest in why I'm pursuing my doctorate.* What about you? *What made you get into, uh, music composition?" [emphasis added]*

I counted the number of "lexi stretches" in the conversation. By "lexi stretch," I refer to Swales' term for a professional lexicon. Since specialized language is one of the characteristics of a

discourse community, a successful conversation means the participants adopt each others' professional language. When one of the participants "stretched" their vocabulary to use an unfamiliar term or idea from the other participant's discipline, I called it a "lexi stretch." A high score indicates that one (or both) of the participants reached out several times to engage with a professional term or concept from the other's discipline. For instance, T searches for a term that A helps him find:

> *T: ...once in a while, you see those, I don't know what they're called, but those symbols, you take a picture of it, and then your phone knows where it is on the Internet, and connects you to--*
> *A: Oh, the QR codes, yes!*
> *T: QR codes. So you could have QR codes in -- displayed, with a brief explanation...*

I estimated how long it took for the participants to decide on a project: more specifically, the amount of time elapsed (in minutes) between the beginning of the conversation, after I signed off, and the first appearance of the project they ultimately presented to me. This is related to the last column of the table, which deals with the structure of the conversation. "Propose-refine" conversations came to a project idea very quickly, then spent the bulk of the time adding details. "Discuss-propose" conversations started with a long discussion linking the two professions, a discussion that eventually boiled down to a project idea. This second conversational structure presented us with two outliers in the "time to project" statistic: 2 pairs of participants took a notably long time to propose their final project idea. As an example of a final project idea appearing for the first time, J proposes to code a computer program to generate legal documents, and S suggests that the two of them could work together instead.

> *S: Okay. That doesn't necessarily have to be done with coding....On the other hand, to create that kind of a document, that might be something we can do.*

I counted the number of communicative errors that occurred in the conversation. A low score indicates few mistakes; a high score indicates many. These errors could be small mistakes in

word choice that the participants needed to pause to clarify, or larger misunderstandings that required some backtracking to fix. For instance, J remembers an event in a movie that A misunderstands, requiring J to backtrack and clarify.

> *J: Ah, another thing that came up is...can't remember what the movie was, but it had like, this underlying sound that, like--it was like a scary movie, and people were reacting to that sound, like even fainting during the movie, and not even knowing what--*
> *A: Well, yeah! I mean, I don't know if you're talking about Jaws, uh, in terms of the soundtrack, because, you know, that was like very famous for, for that--just two notes being really, you know, scary--*
> *J: Yeah, I hadn't--I hadn't thought of that one. It was older than that, and it was like a--you couldn't even identify the sound. It was like an underlying hum or something throughout the-- and it was discordant or, I'm not sure, but it just increased people--the fear factor of the movie.*

I counted the number of "detail-questions" the participants successfully answered. This criterion assesses how well they considered the idea from several different angles. The first number indicates the number of questions the participants answered well, indicating a thorough conversation; the second number indicates the total number of clarification questions I asked when the participants presented their project. I did take care to warn every pair of participants before they began, saying I would be asking for specific details of their project. This warning was not always effective, as in the case of N, who unsuccessfully answers a question about a concert program in an art gallery.

> *R: Okay, so now, now I'm hearing that you're, you're thinking about pieces in the repertoire, rather than, uh, rather than newly composed works. Is that--am I hearing you right?*
> *N: Well, not really. It doesn't have to be pieces from the repertoire. Because there are many pieces written that are not standard repertoire. They are to be discovered.*
> *R: Sure!*

*N: Couldn't--we haven't really spoken about this. But yeah.*

Finally, I observed the agency of each participant when they explained their idea to me. Were they both active agents, or did one of them do most of the talking? Sometimes one participant ceded to the other when the project dealt primarily with one field of expertise. For example, M acknowledges that A has more experience, though in the end they shared the burden of explanation almost equally.

*B: Do you wanna talk about it?*
*M: Yeah, sure. Uh, you have more experience in the putting it all together, so I think if you talk about it--*
*B: Okay. I could, I could discuss a little bit. But feel free to interject anything I miss out.*
*M: Of course! I will.*

**Discussion**

The study compares conversational patterns in the control group with those in the experimental group. The factors which did not change (excepting outliers) were threads and conversation structure. Most participants' conversations arrived quickly at a project idea and then spent time refining it (the "propose-refine" structure), and contained 3-4 conversation threads.

"Lexi stretches" form a compelling statistic, even in this small sample pool. On average, GAP-trained participants reached out and engaged with their partner's vocabulary 25% more frequently than untrained participants.[33] They also made fewer mistakes in communicating, with less than half the number of communication errors compared to the control group.[34] When presenting the final project, GAP-trained participants tended to share the burden of explanation more equally. This suggests that GAP training led to participants feeling equally invested in the

[33] Average scores of 5.75 lexi stretches for GAP-trained participants and 4.5 for untrained participants

[34] Median scores of 1.5 comm. errors for GAP-trained participants and 3.5 for untrained participants

final project; as a result, they were more inclined to cooperate when "selling" their final project to me.

The "time to project" statistic was interesting in two ways. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, it was linked to conversation structure. "Discuss-propose" conversations took significantly longer to arrive at the project idea, since most of the conversation time was invested in sharing information rather than developing a specific idea. One such outlier appeared in the control group, and another in the experimental group. Secondly, GAP-trained participants took slightly longer to arrive at their project idea. Excluding the outliers, the experimental group arrived at their final project idea 2 minutes later than the control group.[35] This could indicate they spent more time understanding the skill sets present at the table, before they proposed their project.

**Conclusion**

The results of the experiment suggest that GAP training does improve collaboration. Naturally, the small sample size (16 participants) limits the scope of this promising conclusion. I was surprised to see consistent results in several of my quantitative statistics, and my sample size was just large enough to adjust for outliers.

I consider this paper a proof of concept. It lays out the principles of a powerful new pedagogy, and presents a useful experimental design to test its effectiveness. The background research chapters indicate a strong foundation and a pressing need for further investigative research. The discoveries of genre analysis ought to be applied to fields other than English for Applied Purposes, where it originated in the late 20th century. Future studies will apply and refine GAP principles in more specialized situations like private music lessons or university STEM classes, continue developing the modular approach that can be used in free-standing trainings like the 30-minute crash courses offered to participants in this study, and situate GAP in decolonization work. Time will tell if Genre Awareness Pedagogy will enable a new confluence of the arts, sciences, and humanities in modern education.

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[35] Average scores of 3.5 minutes for GAP-trained participants to 5.5 minutes for untrained participants (excluding outliers)

**Appendix A: An Unusual Example of Three-Level Analysis**

[Adapted from training discussion with Yani Quemado]

*I'll point my camera at the table I'm sitting at. What do you see?*

It's red, it's big, it looks sturdy.

*So far so good! These are the propositional acts--the things that are being said.*

It's standing on four legs. They look metallic, unpainted, a sort of industrial look.

*Okay, keep going. How are they held together?*

They're welded in place.

*Good, let's use that to talk about the illocutionary act. The legs of this table are NOT painted, NOT polished, NOT even made to hide the weld marks. Just welded in place with no frills.*

So is this industrial design?

*Exactly. The illocutionary act is the obvious, unstated thing. In this case, the table's design hearkens back to a period in history when extreme simplicity was elegance. Think Mondriaan paintings with their blocks and lines, Wassily chairs with their tubular steel -- Bauhaus design values and the history that walked alongside them.*

I want to sit at this table now.

*Yep, that's the perlocutionary effect. What effect do the designer's choices have on me, the viewer? Like you said, it's sturdy, dependable, accommodating for several people at once. I can rely on it unthinkingly. It's also a wonderful, bright, glaring red--whenever I look down, it calls my attention. This table is a speech act, and its designer is talking to me.*

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