Pedagogical materials as genre(s):
Examining how classroom materials may position students as (un)critical

Introduction: Pedagogical materials as a new focus for new genre theories

The pedagogical materials we use in our composition classrooms are central parts of our own and our students' reading, writing, and learning experiences. These pedagogical materials include syllabi, overviews, prompts, and explanations, in textbooks, handouts, or other texts, and they have significant uses and implications in a writing classroom: they tell students what to expect, what not to expect, what to critique, and what not to critique, in writing activities, in the course, even in various disciplines. They convey messages about what "good" writing is, how to become a "good" writer and reader, and who might have the authority to decide what "good" writing and reading are. These materials are genre(s) – the genre(s) of pedagogical materials – that we use in our classrooms, and they call our critical attention as such. In naming these materials genre(s), I draw on insights of new genre studies, heretofore rarely used to analyze pedagogical texts. A look at new genre scholarship reveals that though it has rarely been used to talk about pedagogical materials, it provides valuable insight for doing so.

In short, new genre scholars in composition studies have emphasized that genres are influential, internalized parts of reading and writing. This influence and internalization are a part of the "work" of all conventional genres, from institutionalized jury reports (Paré) to "everyday" texts such as user manuals (Miller). Genres are dynamic and situated, but they are also firmly established by recurring over time, often in the service of those with power or status (Bawarshi "Sites of Invention"; Devitt "Generalizing"; Paré). Results of the work of genre can include differential power relations, privileging of certain voices and perspectives, and otherwise pre-scripted responses on the part of writers and readers of those genres.

This work of genre, and of specific conventional genres, continually influence writers and teachers in composition courses (Myers). Placing this influence as a central concern in her scholarship and composition courses, Nancy Myers emphasizes how texts operate both within and outside of a specific genre and how genres privilege specific perspectives and exclude others (168). Myers writes that *ignoring* genre in the classroom neglects the ways that genre closes off and opens to the powerful discourses of disciplines, institutions, and communities (Myers 168).

Myers here stresses the need to challenge students to examine the purpose, audience, and message of a text, and she draws students' attention to how multiple kinds of texts – essays, pamphlets, newspapers, and websites – work within genres. With this approach, Myers wants to foster critical awareness of how genres work to privilege certain information. While Myers is particularly concerned with the generic features of academic disciplinary writing, her claims about genres at work in classrooms can be applied to pedagogical materials. This view encourages us to closely examine the recurring features of pedagogical materials and how writers and readers use and respond to these features – inquiries that provoke the questions: What perspectives are foregrounded in pedagogical materials? What perspectives are downplayed or excluded? Perhaps more aptly stated, *whose* perspectives are privileged in these materials, and whose are not?

In this paper, I will argue that pedagogical materials potentially assert the perspective of editor or teacher – or even a textbook – as an uncritiquable authority, and thereby position student critique or perspectives as unknowing and passive-recipient. First**,** I provide a brief overview of research in new genre studies, highlighting what this

research suggests about genre and how it has examined conventional genres. I then use their ideas and ideas from positioning theory in an analysis of the introduction to two classroom composition textbooks, Bartholomae and Petrosky's *Ways of Reading*, and Axelrod and Cooper's *Concise Guide to Writing*. In that examination, I demonstrate the ways that Myer's points about disciplinary genres also play out in pedagogical materials: the introductions to these composition textbooks in many ways privilege and exclude certain perspectives. Specifically, these introductions at times privilege editor or textbook perspectives as "fact" to be passively absorbed by students. These patterns suggest that though composition is a field concerned with students and pedagogy (Harkin), and a field which seems interested in communicating to students that they are peers in our academic conversation in the university (Bartholomae), actually our pedagogical materials may often take on the voice of an unquestionable authority reporting to a passive, unknowing student. These patterns may also suggest that a recurring feature of the discourse of pedagogical genre(s) is this unequal positioning, of teacher as authority and student as inactive recipient[1].

It is my goal that by naming these pedagogical materials as genre(s) and looking at discursive patterns in them, we can begin to think about these materials as interacting with, and constituting and being constituted by, students and teachers and classrooms, in particular ways. These ways may include the positioning – and corresponding responses – of students as passive-novice recipients and teachers or editors as "disinterested" authorities. They may also include positioning students or teachers in ways that contradict how they are positioned – students as critics, for example – of other texts, such as published essays or "literary" texts. Further, in dis-inviting students to be critics of

pedagogical parts of textbooks, we run the risk of mystifying the subjective and constitutive nature of such choices as how writing and reading are conceptualized. We also run the risk of constructing undergraduate students not as peers involved in similar, critical pursuits as their instructors, but as obedient novices, to be critical only when and with what information an authoritative voice asks them to do so. Viewing these pedagogical materials as genre(s) challenges us to think about how recurring features of these materials privilege and exclude certain points of view and can be internalized by both their readers and writers. As such, we uncover new and important opportunities for demystifying the production of meanings and knowledge, and we might arrive at new ways to think about when students are and are not asked to be involved critics.

New genre studies and the under-studied genre(s) of pedagogical materials

Examining genre as concept(s)

Genre and assumptions about writers and readers

New genre theorist Carolyn Miller heralded a new wave of genre study with her portrayal of "Genre as Social Action." In this 1984 article, Miller nuances the roles and influences of genre; rather than a way to name formal textual features, genre is now understood as "working" in certain ways. This work is social action, she argues, and genre "acquires meaning from situation and from the social context in which that situation arose" (Miller 37). Miller argues that rhetorical genre must be defined in terms of rhetorical action rather than form or substance. This work of genre has also been characterized as the "genre function": genres become social actors within the genre function, endowed with certain social status and value (Bawarshi "The Genre Function"

357). Through genre study, we are challenged to note the ways that we assume things about a text, an audience, the text's purposes, and its writer (Devitt "Generalizing" 87); in so doing, we might begin to develop new theories of writing and move away from learned, standard goals for writing (Devitt "Generalizing" 94-95). All of these points encourage us to critically confront the ways that genre actively functions, shaping readers, writers, and reading and writing. That includes questioning what teachers and editors assume about student-reader audience(s) and what student-readers assume about the writers of pedagogical materials.

Genres as constraining, enabling

New rhetorical theories of genre suggest that genres are not just about textual features or fixed categories but that "people use genres to do things in the world (social action and purpose)" and that "these ways of acting become typified through occurring under what is perceived as recurring circumstances" (Devitt "Integrating" 698). Power relations are an important part of these recurring circumstances in genres. Devitt claims that "all utterances, all acts of discourse, entail power relationships, valorize some over others, enable some and constrain others," and that the point is not to understand certain texts as "genre-free" and others not, but to recognize that all texts and all contexts constrain as well as liberate (Devitt "Generalizing" 615).

Thinking about these points in light of pedagogical materials, we can ask new questions for new genre studies in composition classrooms: What are the implications for power relations between teachers and students, and how might the pedagogical genre(s) we use in composition classrooms reinforce these power differences? How might these genre(s) as such constrain students, or thwart or exclude their perspectives? We must

reflect on who is constrained and enabled in pedagogical genre(s), such as the ways that student-readers may be constrained by the power relation of educator-authority and passive-novice student, and how these recur in pedagogical genres. One of the ways that pedagogical genre(s) may constrain critical student responses is through the discursive positioning of authority in these materials.

Examining conventional genres

A significant contribution of new genre studies includes its close analysis of established genres and the implications of defining and understanding these genres in rigid and formalist ways. Devitt claims that within established genres, what are seen as formal conventions have developed as rhetorical acts and continue to act rhetorically; she offers lab reports, business memorandum, and journal articles as examples. As rhetorical acts, these genres are defined less by their formal conventions than by their purposes, participants, and subjects: by their rhetorical actions (Devitt "Generalizing" 698).

Paré addresses what he calls “institutional genres,” describing that institutional genres portray “successful patterns in local discursive forms and functions,” and that as institutions have changed over time, certain textual practices have “proven effective and endurable”(Paré 140). Yet their persistence, Paré argues, is not the result of “natural selection” so much as “human volition” – they are sociorhetorical habits that “‘work’”(140). He goes on to consider the implications of such a paradigm: For whom do these rituals “work”? To what end? Paré asserts that in his own observations of institutional genres confronted by social workers, such as hospital advisory reports, police reports, psychological assessments, and medical charts, these materials often serve

administrators, judges, and lawyers as opposed to the social workers or the individuals with whom they work.

Bawarshi lists various kinds of texts – technical, business, legal, literary, expository – as "complex rhetorical actions that socialize their users into performing social roles and actions, roles and actions that help reproduce the realities they describe and enact" (357). Also attending to the socializing nature of common genres, Miller names several "everyday" kinds of texts. She writes:

> To consider such homely discourse as the letter of recommendation, the user manual, the progress report, the ransom note, the lecture, and the white paper, as well as the eulogy, the apologia, the inaugural, the public processing, and the sermon, is not to trivialize the study of genres; it is to take seriously the rhetoric in which we are immersed and the situations in which we find ourselves. (Miller 155)

These explorations of established genres draw important attention to genre as a socializing force that engenders particular rhetorical actions.

Looking specifically at conventional academic genres and the "insiders" who use them, Berkenkotter and Huckin compile research from multiple fields in order to reveal the ways that genre influences research in an academic field. They write, "knowledge production is carried out and codified largely through generic forms of writing: lab reports, working papers, reviews, grant proposals, technical reports, conference papers, journal articles, monographs, and so forth"(Berkenkotter and Huckin 476). They assert that genres are the media through which scholars and scientists communicate with their peers, and they examine research in academic articles to show the ways that actors in

particular fields negotiate genre in order to perform effectively (476). For example, Berkenkotter and Huckin cite Marshall and Barritt's study of *American Educational Research Journal* (AERJ), which shows how philosophical considerations strongly affect the genre of these articles (488); scholars who publish in *AERJ* repeatedly manifest a positivist stance, shaping textual features such as the ways parents are referred to – in this case, as not having the same voice or status as researchers (Marshall and Barritt 603). Berkenkotter and Huckin conclude that that due to these generic trends, researchers perceive that methodology that does not adhere to positivist norms may not be as likely to be published; in this way the genre continues to be defined and taken up by actors in the field (489).

These examinations of educational and everyday genres illuminate important work of new genre studies: genres privilege certain perspectives and exclude others, and they influence readers and writers of texts. However, this research largely neglects instructional texts used by teachers and students in the classroom. Laura Behling does make a passing mention of the generic work in "simply" putting together notes on a text before presenting them to one's students (424), and Bawarshi's look at genres of the first year writing classroom, including the syllabus and writing prompts, draws imperative attention to often mystified or unquestioned kinds of reading and writing in composition pedagogy (Bawarshi "Sites of Invention"). Further, Elsie Rockwell has researched classroom speech genres as crucial and formative genres that are situated, heterogeneous, and often overlooked (Rockwell). Yet these examples receive much less attention than many of the institutional and everyday genres listed above. Pedagogical materials are recurring, influential genre(s) in our classrooms with significant implications, and new

genre studies provides valuable ways to acknowledge and critically attend to this under-explored genre(s)

The composition textbook: a pedagogical tool in a pedagogical field

Though complicated by concerns about professionalization and the establishment of composition as an academic field, composition has in many ways continually distinguished itself as a field driven by pedagogical concerns, concerns about social action and how students learn (Harkin 422). Long asking questions about student writing, the kind of "social turn" in composition studies in the late 20th century further took into account the ways that student and teacher writing and reading practices are influenced by contexts, power relations, and positions that students and teachers are (un)able to occupy (Vandenberg, Hum and Clary-Lemon 3, 10-11). For example, Bartholomae's influential composition studies essay "Inventing the University" asserts that the rhetoric of teacher-as-authority and student-as-novice may communicate to students that they are "not in a position to carry on [the] discussion"(8) occurring in an academic field. These concerns about positioning, power, and pedagogy continue to be important in the field of composition: though there exists an unresolved tension between whether teachers should be authorities and gatekeepers, or guiding but more equal peers, this and related issues are key topics in composition courses and research (Corbett 29; Dickson 740; Elbow 64).

These concerns, in addition to new genre theory's close attention to the ways that genre can dictate reading practices and reader position, make composition an important place to look at the very pedagogical materials used in this field. Amidst the pedagogical

materials of composition courses, the composition textbook, or reader, is a central one. Composition textbooks provide ways to organize and frame composition courses, and they are often the written introduction to writing on the college level for composition instructors and for their students. Many composition textbooks appear in multiple, continuing editions, and they detail how to write, read, and see various texts in directed and critical ways.

Though unnamed and under-studied as genre(s), these textbooks – key examples of pedagogical materials – call our attention as such. These materials follow particular rhetorical patterns (such as always providing a student introduction) and are intended to be read by a particular kind of audience; they are written for use by composition teachers, teaching generally new-to-college student readers and writers. They are texts that reflect textbook features and institutional practices that recur over time: they are intended (almost exclusively) for classroom use; they are directed at students; they have (an) organizing principle(s) and sections; they include prompts and overviews that contextualize information; and they aim to provide an overall introduction to skills of academic reading, writing, and thinking.

Reflecting on these materials in terms of the work of genre(s) leads us to question: What are some discursive patterns in these texts? What assumptions about the readers and writers of this genre seem to be at work? How might these generic features enable or constrain? To begin to address these questions, I will use new genre theory in conjunction with a theory from social psychology to look closely at the introductions of two popular composition textbooks.

New genre studies and positioning theory: Theoretical frameworks for examining composition textbooks

In my examination of these textbook introductions, I look for some recurring features of these opening passages, including the ways that the editor-writers discursively position their own authority, and their student readers. "Discursive positioning" is a term that comes from "positioning theory," with which theorists explore how people impose, take up, and/or resist social positions in communicative interactions, specifically in more fluid ways than the previous notion of more fixed "roles" (Davies and Harré; Harré and Davies; Rom Harré and Luk van Lagenhove; Rom Harré and Luk van Lagenhove; van Lagenhove and Harré). Though primarily used to analyze spontaneous verbal interactions, I use positioning theory to analyze these written materials because it is a helpful way to think about how communicative mediums position their own authority and position their student readers.

I draw on positioning theory in conjunction with genre theory because I perceive patterns of discursive positioning as generic features of texts. That is, discursive positioning of a writer's authority and a reader's position can be a part of the recurring "work" that genres do – such as establishing and re-establishing, with each reading and writing of hospital reports, that doctors are to report the scientific, minimum number of "facts" about a patient while entirely "eras[ing]" themselves as a "narrator"(Paré 148). I would argue that the genre of hospital reports that Paré addresses includes the positioning of the doctor (as removed authority) and the patient (as factual case).

Harré and van Langenhove stress that positioning is a dynamic process and that those positioned in a communicative interaction have (varying degrees of) power to take

up or oppose that positioning. I perceive the discursive positioning of students-as-novice-recipient and editors/teachers-as-objective-authority behind pedagogical materials as a generic feature of these materials. Thinking about these discursive patterns in light of new genre theory helps highlight the "work" that pedagogical materials can do: due to generic expectations, solidified over time, these materials can be both written and read in ways that dis-invite critical evaluation on the part of student readers. This discursive feature seems to contradict composition studies' ostensible goal of making students better thinkers and readers of *all* kinds of texts (Corbett; Dickson; Lu and Horner). Part of this contradiction can be explained by they fact that pedagogical materials (as a genre) are not traditionally analyzed by students – what I suggest is a generic pattern worth exploring.

Analysis of composition textbook introductions

In the following section, I offer close readings of the introductions to two composition textbooks, *Ways of Reading* and *Concise Guide to Writing*. These composition textbooks, like others of their kind, serve as guiding, pedagogically-supportive materials for composition courses, and their introductions are specifically part of the genre(s) of pedagogical materials (as opposed to the published essays that follow) of this larger pedagogical text (the composition textbook). These introductions exhibit what I have suggested about authoritative positioning in pedagogical materials: the introductions at times slip into the discursive positioning of editor and teacher as knowing "reporter" of "fact," and student-reader as passive, uncritical recipient.

Both of these textbooks open with a preface to instructors, followed by table of contents and then a general introduction to the text (beginning on page 1). These

introductions address why and how reading and writing are important and then explain how the textbook is structured and intended to be used. I focus mostly on the opening pages of these introductions, as they introduce the textbook and its authority, directly address a student audience, and convey particular notions about what good reading and writing are.

Concise Guide to Writing: Authoritative text, hidden writer-editors

Two discursive patterns in Axelrod and Cooper's introduction to *Concise Guide to Writing* represent students and the textbook in particular ways: students are often positioned as passive, unknowing, and entirely new writers; and in several parts of the introduction, the title of the textbook is presented – instead of the editors or other contributing writers – as though it is an "objective" authority reporting about the importance and steps for learning how to write. These discursive patterns hide editor-teacher-scholars as subjective writers asserting opinions about writing, and they suggest that students are absorbers versus contributors to composition studies[2].

Axelrod and Cooper's introduction opens with a series of questions about what is important about reading and writing. These questions appear to represent students' concerns as they begin their composition course and the textbook. The questions are immediately followed by a single statement: "Read on – for *Axelrod and Cooper's Concise Guide to Writing* offers some answers to these and other questions you may have"(1). This discursive pattern continues throughout most of the introduction: the text's name, rather than editors, is the subject, and is posed as the reporter of how and

why reading and writing are important, as well as the solution for how to develop reading and writing skills.

A section entitled "Why writing is important" follows this opening question and answer passage. This section consists of subsections entitled "Writing influences the ways we think," "Writing contributes to the ways we learn," "Writing fosters personal development," "Writing connects us to others," and "Writing promotes success in college and at work." These subsections are posed to explain why writing is important, and they include the subject "we," throughout – referring, it seems, to a kind of collective "we," of all people who effectively engage in writing. The entire section has an informative tone; it tells student readers what happens when "we take notes in class," or "when we write to understand the significance of a particular event," or when we write "an argument for a controversial position" (2-3) – that we identify and remember what is important, that we reflect deeply on our personal experience, and that we "assert our position," respectively. Though informative, the "we" suggests that the authorities behind this text – the editors, perhaps – are present, and that they belong to a community of writers. It is not clear whether students are also considered a part of this writing community at this introductory point. Nonetheless, it seems clear that there are authoritative writers behind the introductions' claims, and that these writers have gone through the writing process many times.

The following section of the textbook provides an interesting contrast. This second section is entitled "How writing is learned" and consists of three subsections: "Reading," "Writing," and "Thinking critically." Each of these subsections includes a paragraph about "How the *Concise Guide* helps you develop" each respective skill (4-

12). The section title and these subsections exhibit discursive patterns that hide any subjective writer-authority behind them. Instead, the *text* is presented as the "objective" and informative authority. Even the section title ("How writing is learned") uses passive voice, a construction from which an active subject is removed; Axelrod and Cooper, the composition teachers and editors of the textbook, remain secondary to the authority of the textbook itself.

For example, the first part of the section reads, "*Axelrod and Cooper's Concise Guide to Writing*, now in its third edition, has helped many students learn how to become effective, confident writers"(4). The subsections on reading, writing, and thinking critically also make claims about the text without naming or otherwise drawing attention to the editors or their reasons or choices. These claims include that "the *Concise Guide* presents a variety of examples in each genre"(6), that "the *Concise Guide* will provide you with a full writer's toolbox and teach you how to select the right tool for the job"(10), and that "the *Concise Guide* helps you think critically about your reading, your writing process, and the genres you are using"(11). Also throughout these sections, the text makes many assertions about what students "will" do and what they "should" do and will "need" to do (6-11).

These patterns should provoke some questions in a writing classroom. Who are the voices behind these statements? Who exactly are Axelrod and Cooper, if the *Concise Guide* is the subject of these claims? And where do students fit? Statements throughout this section indicate potential answers to these questions. For example, though the text presents a particular version of writing and thinking, it appears to be reporting facts to unknowing students, in such statements as "To make writing a true process of discovery,

you need to recognize that the process of writing is a process of thinking"(7). In another example, one part of the "Reading" section reads:

> Experienced writers read and learn from positive examples as well as negative ones. Sometimes, they focus on a particular problem – how to write realistic-sounding dialogue or how to refute someone else's argument effectively, for example. They do not look for answers in a single example. Instead, they sample many texts…This sampling is not slavish imitation, but education. (6)

In this sentence, several assertions are made about "experienced writers." These sentences are constructed in such a way that indicates that neither the student readers nor the editor-writers are in this community of "experienced writers." A related way to read these sentences is that students are entirely novice learners, and the writers of these pedagogical materials are "objective," removed reporters who need not acknowledge their subjective presence. Because these statements appear in a pedagogical part of a composition textbook, they are not followed by questions that invite critical analysis of ethos, rhetorical strategies, or content, as are the published essays in the textbook. Yet these discursive patterns "work" in certain ways: they silence, or make invisible, the subjective editor/educator presence, and report seemingly "factual" information to inexperienced-writer students.

Ways of Reading: Alternating authoritative positioning

In many ways, the introduction in Bartholomae and Petrosky's composition textbook works hard to articulate that students should feel like they have an equal place

as editors and teachers for critically engaging in reading and writing practices. In this way, *Ways of Reading* contrasts some of the patterns I have described in *Concise Guide*. At the same time, the editors [3] often slip into a contradictory authoritative voice in which they define things such as reading for an apparently unknowing and passive audience.

The following are the opening statements of the introduction to *Ways of Reading*:

> Reading involves a far measure of push and shove. You make your mark on a book and it makes its mark on you. Reading is not simple a matter of handing back and waiting for a piece, or its author, to tell you what the writing has to say. In fact, one of the difficult thinks about reading is that the pages before you will begin to speak only when the authors are silent and you begin to speak in their place, sometimes for them – doing their work, continuing their projects – and sometimes for yourself, following your own agenda. (1)

This opening adopts the voice of a parent or teacher reporting to (seemingly unknowing and uncritical) readers about what "Reading is"(Bartholomae and Petrosky 1). In this opening passage, the editors relate several things about what reading is, as well as what the reading process entails – for example, that students will begin to speak back to texts (a key part of the reading process according to *Ways of Reading*), "only when" they are doing certain things. The paragraph asserts a definition of reading and a "to do" list for how to be a reader, and the discursive positioning in throughout the paragraph suggests a kind of knowing-editor-authority and unknowing-passive-student reader. Here, the editors' suggestions about reading and how to do it appear as uncritiquable "fact."

However, the introduction then goes on to tell the students that the editors want the students to "imagine" that they are "in a position to speak back"(1). As the introduction continues, the editors slip more into a voice that "recommends" rather than "reports," and they draw attention to their choices as editors. They write, "We'd like you to imagine that when you read the works we've collected here, somebody is saying something to you, and we'd like you to imagine that you are in a position to…say something of your own in turn"(1). Here, Bartholomae and Petrosky use first person pronouns to make a personal assertion, indicating what Harré and van Langenhove call "deliberate self-positioning" (Harré and van Langenhove 24). Further, they make visible the subjective choices involved in creating a composition textbook ("the works we've collected here"). As Harré and van Langenhoven indicate, this deliberate self-positioning "involve[s] not only speaking and writing rights…but also expectations as to how someone in a certain position will exercise their rights"(van Langenhove and Harré 103). In these statements, the editors appear to expect that students will doubt their ability to critique, but, unlike the opening paragraph, that students are invited to do so and should be aware of the editors as a subjective presence behind the textbook. At the same time, the students are positioned as able to "speak back" to the *published* works in the textbook.

Later in the same introduction, the editors again assert what "reading is"(10), things that are "often necessary" and even "desirable" as a part of the reading process (9), and what "writing gives" and "allows" for the students (4). Throughout the introduction, Bartholomae and Petrosky position themselves differently, at different points: they are a silent kind of reporter in some of the "objective" statements about what reading is at

some points; but at other times they point out subjective reasons for choices they've made and identify themselves as teachers, drawing on their experiences teaching one of the texts they include in the textbook (3).

In many ways, Bartholomae and Petrosky appear to deliberately offer a different model for a composition textbook, inviting students to enter academic conversations and offering an "unusual way to talk about reading"(1). These patterns in some ways contrast the more hidden or silenced editor-writer presence in *Concise Guide to Writing*. Bartholomae and Petrosky's critics quoted on the back of the textbook claim the same things – that *Ways of Reading* is unlike many comparable textbooks (from Borgstrom), and that it is an innovative textbook that challenges students to new things (from Dane). Nonetheless, Bartholomae and Petrosky at times position students as passive recipients to "objective" pedagogical materials. This intermittent positioning reveals that though Bartholomae and Petrosky's textbook strives to be innovative and empowering in some ways, the introduction periodically portrays a more traditional discursive positioning of student as passive-recipient.

The discursive patterns in *Concise Guide* and *Ways of Reading* encourage us to think about larger-scale patterns in the genre(s) of pedagogical materials. These include instances in which editor-teachers are removed or "objective" authorities, students are unknowing and passive recipients, and pedagogical texts are to be understood rather than critiqued.

Conclusion: The need for further research

Though thus far underemphasized in new genre studies, pedagogical materials are recurring, influential genre(s) in our composition classrooms that provide an important new focus for new genre studies. Even this brief and beginning look at the work of pedagogical genre(s) draws attention to significant potential implications: students, teachers, and materials may continually reproduce positions based on such normative power relations as those between passive-novice-students and uncritiquable-authoritative-educators. A related implication is that though pedagogical materials used in composition courses necessarily offer only particular versions of reading and writing, in the described paradigm, these versions can be posited and read as informative fact. In these ways, pedagogical materials can typify composition classrooms less as sites of critical approaches to all kinds of rhetorical acts than as a site of analysis of only certain (kinds of) texts. In that scenario, there is a boundary around when students are or should be "critics." Instead, we might think of pedagogical materials as genre(s) to be evaluated by students and teachers, analyzed for what they privilege and exclude and for how they position writers and readers. In this approach, we work to keep composition a field that is committed to social action and critical thinking on the part of teachers and students, a field that is "willing to take risks in order to teach better"(Harkin 422) – even if that means we acknowledge that as teachers, we are not the (only) experts.

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[1] I am broadly naming pedagogical materials as genre(s) in order to turn critical attention to these texts in light of new genre studies. I anticipate that actually, these pedagogical materials may fall into many genres and subgenres as we look closer at them. In this beginning examination, I use the composition textbooks that I analyze in this paper as an example of these materials. However, I consider these questions and patterns to be important in light of many pedagogical texts; I therefore present many of my questions and observations not just for these textbooks, but for the larger genre(s) of pedagogical materials.

[2] In my wording here and throughout this section, I suggest that Axelrod and Cooper's textbook itself produces an effect. I do so because although editors and publishers may actually be the writers in these cases, the wording in this textbook often hides the editors and publishers. Further, I believe that these textbook features – and this genre – actually produce effects themselves.

[3] Unlike my analysis of *Concise Guide to Writing*, in my analysis of *Ways of Reading*, I refer to both the text and Bartholomae and Petrosky (or "the editors") as agents of the effects of the introduction. I do so because of the ways that Bartholomae and Petrosky themselves intermittently indicate their presence as editors (such as "texts we've chosen," and "when we have taught "The Achievement of Desire to our students…"(3)). At the same time, they "disappear" at other points as well, making the textbook appear to be the agent of certain effects.