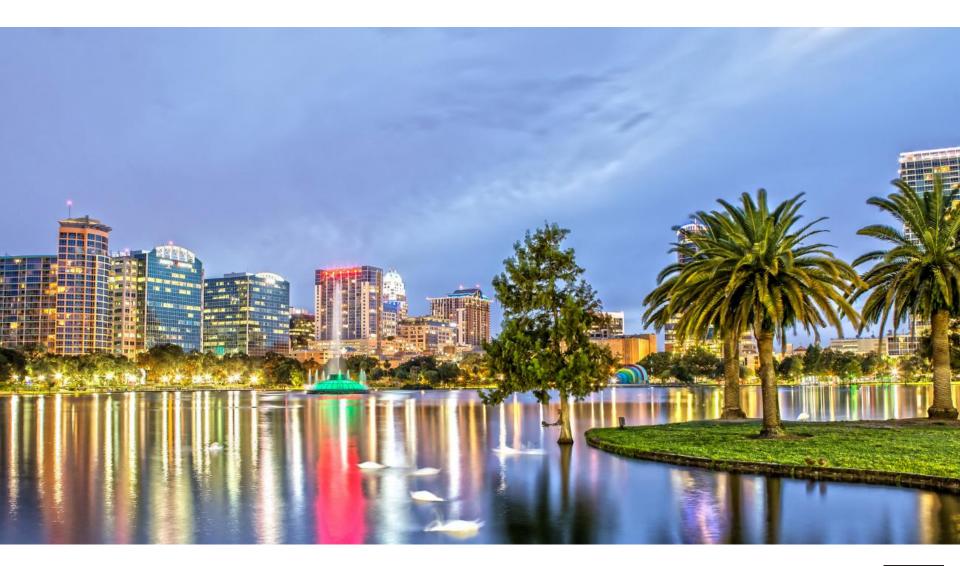# Teaching Genre as Function First and Form Second: Practical Strategies for the EAP Classroom

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My purposes today are to:

- Present the design of a professional writing course centered around genre and rhetorical flexibility

- Place that course design into programmatic and university context

- Describe and reflect on the successes and challenges of this particular course design

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Let's begin with context

- UCF is the largest university in the USA with 67000 students

- The professional writing course is taught as part of a bachelor's program in writing and rhetoric offered by the Department of Writing and Rhetoric

- The course is an "elective" which means that many students who do not major in writing and rhetoric can take it.

- The number of students in the course is limited to 25; they are mostly 3rd and 4th-year students

- The course discussed here was taught online

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Two main models of professional writing course design

Elements of rhetorical, genre, or writing process theory

Instruction in specific professional genres, OR

Problem and situation-based projects which give students flexibility in genre selection

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Design of my course

- Taught online, using the LMS Canvas

- 25 students enrolled

- Majority of students IT, computer science, or engineering majors

- 5 learning modules: 3 short modules dealing with rhetorical and genre theory; one 6-week module centered on a collaborative writing project; one short reflection module

"Zoom in" on the client project

- Students read and discuss texts on writing teamwork

- Students are placed in writing teams of 3 or 4 members and find a local client

- Students conduct a needs analysis interview with the client to determine the project's features and begin to select appropriate genres for the project

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The course's clients and genres

- Wyndham Hotels and Resorts—Infographic
- A local event-planning company—marketing packet
- A local IT company—marketing brochure
- Universal Orlando Resort—social media strategic plan
- National Multiple Sclerosis Foundation—event brochure
- Macy's Department Store—marketing materials

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What (I think) the students learned

- Awareness of genres as vehicles for accommodating and mediating various rhetorical and work situations

- Improved their ability to work in teams, which reflects their future professional reality

- Increased their understanding of their own composing processes and challenges through reflective writing

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Challenges of teaching this way

- Some students will want "clear instructions" and "rules"

- Many students will resist and dislike the uncertainly of their rhetorical situation

- Some students will resist the requirement to work in teams

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