

GENRES THAT WORK IN THE WRITING CLASSROOM

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What do you write?

Genre makes a difference

“Describe your room, and explain why it’s a good place to study.”



“Write an estate-agent’s listing for your flat or dormitory room.”



“Compare you and your best friend.”

“Write an email to the Curriculum Committee comparing your experience with print textbooks and e-books.”

Writing is transitive

We don't *just write*

We write *something* to *someone* for *some purpose*

We write in *genres*

Understanding Genre

- easily recognised by members of a community
- a social purpose
- recurring way of using language

(Hyland, 2007)

Teaching Genres

“Teachers need to create opportunities for students to write *different types of texts* and help them focus on *how those texts are most effectively constructed* so that students can *extend their repertoires* and make register choices that realize *new and more challenging genres.*”

(Schleppegrell, 2004)

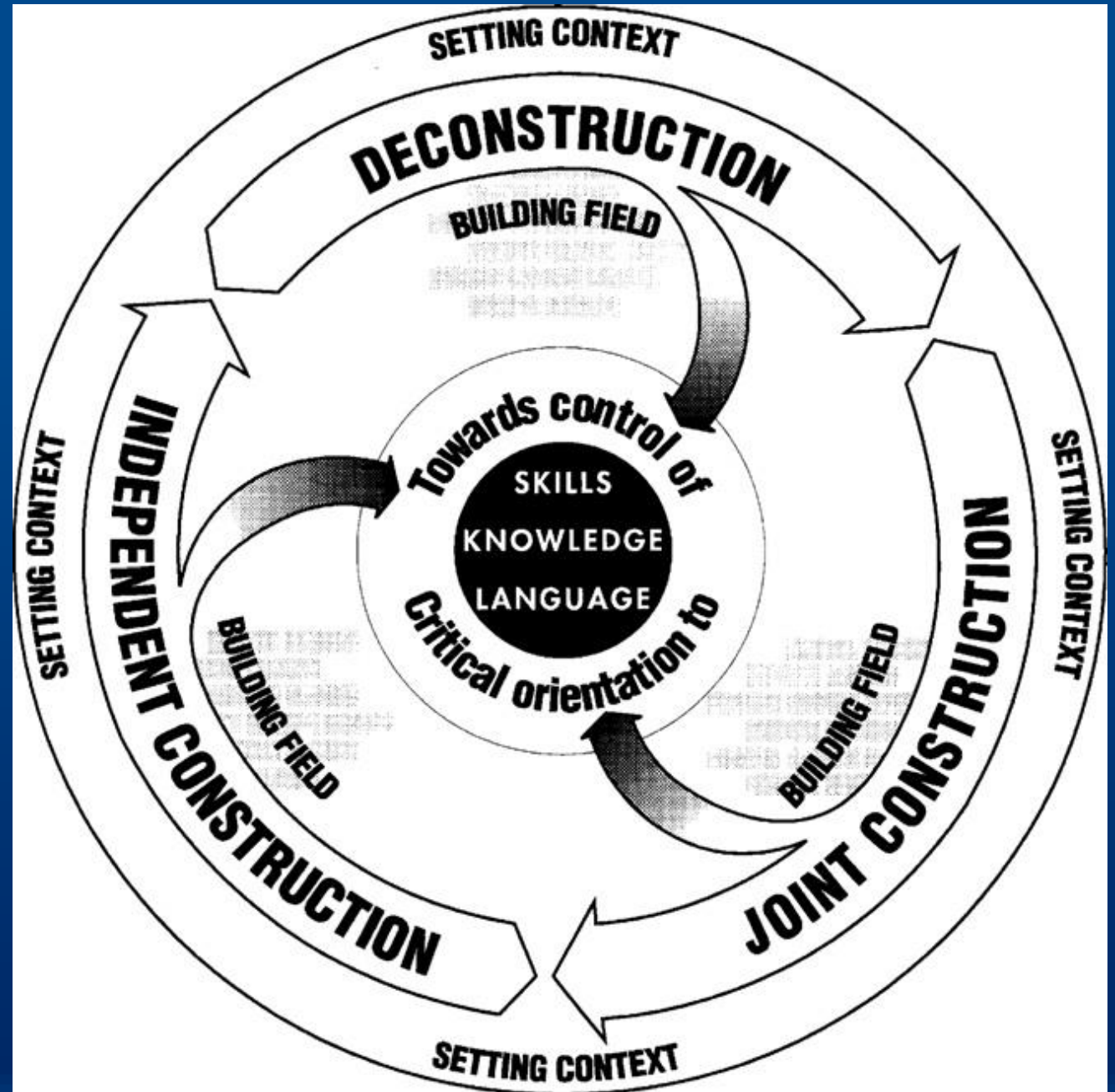
Theory to practice

Teaching/Learning Cycle

“Guidance through interaction in the context of shared experience.”

(Martin, 2009)

(Martin, 2009's version based on work by Derewianka, 1991, Feez, 1988, and Rothery, 1996)



Great little radio!



ATMOS-FEAR 3000 Weather Radio



Finally, a small emergency¹ weather radio that really works! I've owned many radios in this **category**, but

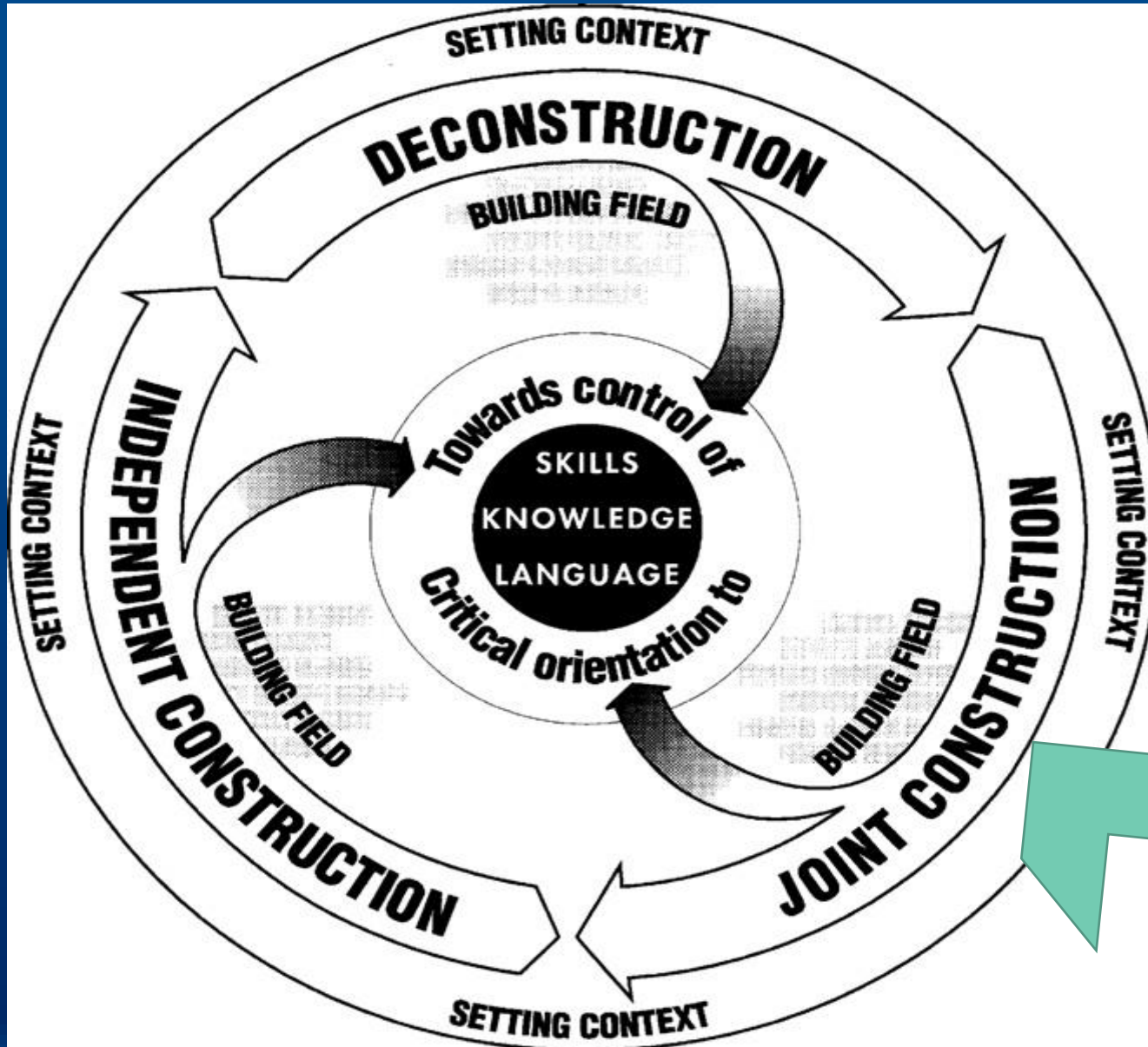
they are all terrible compared to the ATMOS- FEAR 3000. A good emergency radio needs to work even if you don't use it for a long time. It also needs to receive radio signals² from a wide area. The Atmos-Fear gets it right. It has a solar panel³ on the top and a flashlight on one end.

It has a hand crank⁴ for manual power, or it can run on batteries⁵ or an **external** power source. The radio starts easily and charges fast. Its reception⁵ is excellent; I can hear the weather report from anywhere in my house. The display is easy to read, too. The Atmos-Fear 3000 comes with a power **output** for a cell phone, so you can charge your phone if you lose power. The only feature I didn't like was the charging **indicator** light. It's too bright, so I don't want it near me at night. Apart from that one small problem, I highly recommend this great little radio.

Deconstruction: Product Review

Stage	Purpose	Language
Title	Attract attention	Not a sentence
Context	Establish <i>ethos</i>	Present perfect verbs Use of "I"
Description	Inform readers	Adjectives Present tense verbs Coordinating conjunctions
Evaluations	Express opinions	Evaluative language Relative (adjective) clauses
Supporting Reasons	Persuade readers	Subordinating conjunctions
Recommendation and stars	Call to action	Adverbs Modal verbs

Teaching/Learning Cycle



“Guidance through interaction in the context of shared experience”

(Martin, 2009, p. 15)

(Martin, 2009's version based on work by Derewianka, 1991, Feez, 1988, and Rothery, 1996)

Joint Construction (Collaborative Writing)

1. Write a short text in pairs/groups
2. Rewrite a bad text/paragraph
3. Put jumbled sentences in order
4. Write a text from notes
5. Information gap
6. Whole-class Joint Construction

(Feez, 1988)

Why do Collaborative Writing?

- “Languaging” (Swain, 2006)
 - “Collaborative scaffolding” (Donato, 1994)
 - “Cognitive apprenticeship” (Daiute & Dalton, 1996)
 - Compared to individual writing, CW is often:
 - More complete
 - Higher quality
 - Somewhat more sophisticated
 - More accurate
 - Shorter
- (Storch, 2005, 2013; Storch & Wigglesworth 2009)

Let's write a product review!

Short and sweet, but not very Scottish

As a true Scot, I've tasted a wide variety of shortbreads starting with my granny Morag's famous recipe. Tesco's *finest* All-Butter Shortbread Fingers fall somewhat short of this high standard but may be an economical and welcome addition to your biscuit tin if you don't have time to bake your own.

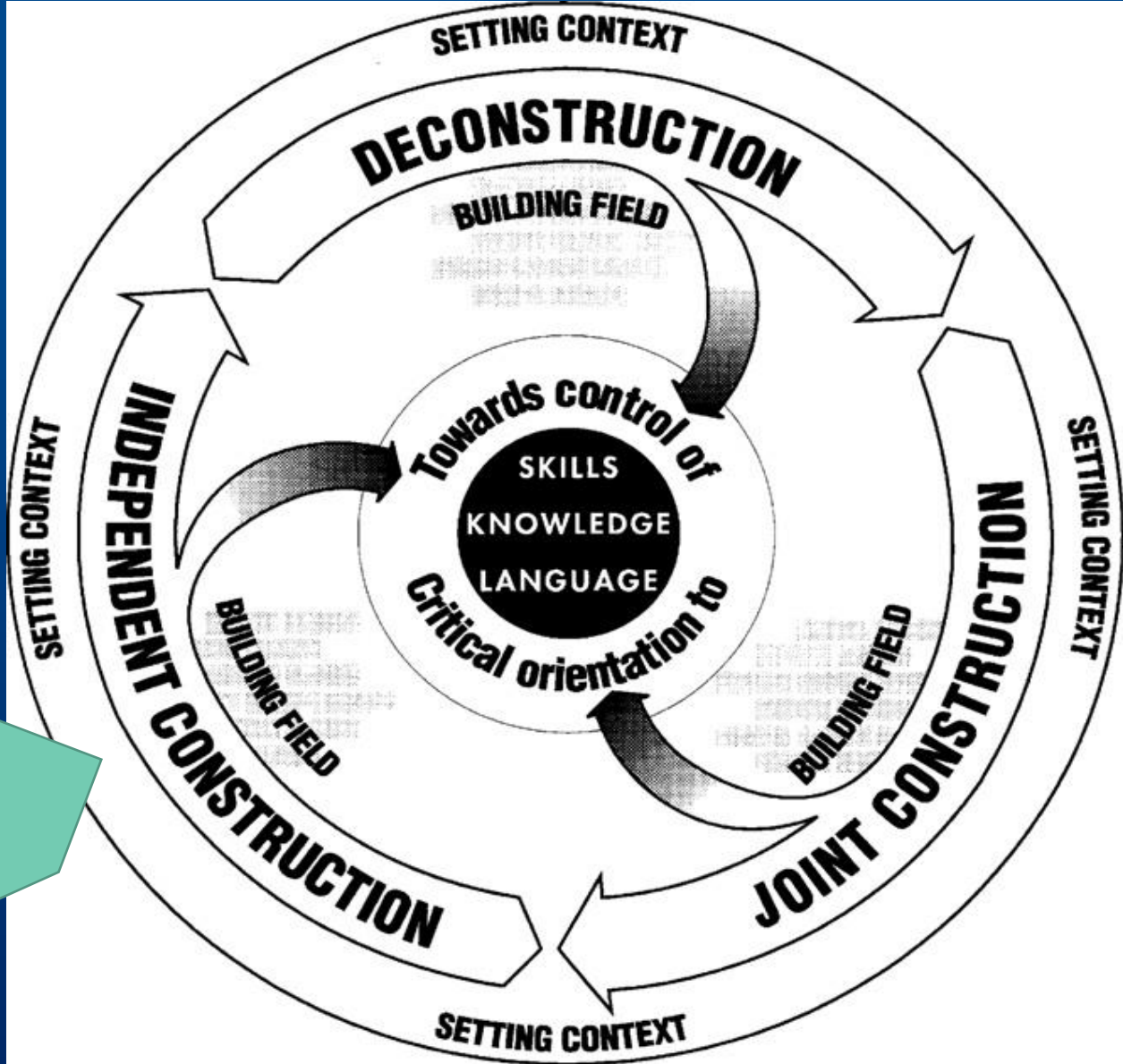
The shortbread arrives in a smart but rather generic black plastic tray that is deceptively deep. The biscuits are pleasant but quite dry and crumbly rather than buttery. Despite claims to the contrary on the outer box, they do not melt in the mouth, but the taste is satisfyingly sweet.

Overall, Tesco's shortbread looks better than it tastes. It's just not my cup of tea because it lacks authenticity despite its alleged origin.

What happens during Joint Construction?

- Reviewing the genre stages
- Eliciting words, phrases, and sentences
- Recasting sentences
- Expanding on sentences
- Explaining language choices
- “Languaging”
- Developing strategies

Teaching/Learning Cycle



Independent Writing: Genre-Based Assignments

- Not every assignment is an essay (Johns)
- Not everything is an argument
- Rhetorical modes are not genres
- But they are still important
- Writing is “goal-directed” (Martin)

From Mode to Genre

Rhetorical Mode	Genres
Description	Company profile Observation report Information pamphlet Architecture review
Narrative	Personal narrative Research paper (methods section) Movie synopsis
Argument	Fundraising letter Business proposal Argument essay (thesis-driven) Discussion Challenge

Genres Across the Curriculum

- **Intermediate:** *Possible purposes for writing include:* story, description, journals, email, personal letters, reports, short magazine/newspaper articles, single-paragraph answers to questions, and short essays, answering reading comprehension questions in complete sentences
- **High intermediate:** *Possible purposes of writing include:* essays, reports, email, personal letters, letter to the editor, newspaper/magazine articles, business correspondence, and creative writing.

(From the University of Delaware ELI Writing Curriculum, 2012)

- **Low advanced:** Newspaper/magazine articles, reports, business correspondence, case analysis, reviews, critical responses, creative writing, and essays.
- **Advanced academic:** (auto-)biography, critique, arts review, scientific report (food diary), rhetorical analysis, advert analysis, literature review, data commentary, documented argument, editorial, observation report

Genres in your classroom

For each writing assignment, ask yourself:

- What is the genre?
- Who writes texts like these?
- Why are they written?
- How are they written?
- How does language work in the genre?

Try the Teaching/Learning Cycle

- Analyse exemplars with your students
- Study the staging
- Expand linguistic resources
- Write the genre together
- Students write when they are ready
- Continue to use writing processes
- Connect to other genres

In Summary ...

GUIDANCE

- Models! Textbooks, Authentic sources, Teacher-created, Joint Construction, Former students

THROUGH INTERACTION

- Collaborative writing
- Asking questions and negotiating answers
- Making thinking visible

IN THE CONTEXT OF SHARED EXPERIENCE

- Write about the coffee shop we visited
- vs. write about your hero

Writing is transitive:

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Thank you!



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Spring Colloquium, Portland, Oregon (19 March)
Summer Institute, Monterey, California (7-10 June)

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