

CHAPTER 7.

GENRE CHANGE AROUND TEACHING IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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As someone who has studied genre and genre change both historically and in contemporary, electronically mediated, organizational communication, I have long benefitted from the research of Charles Bazerman. Bazerman's *Shaping written knowledge: The genre and activity of the experimental article in science* (1988) was published a year before (and thus too late to influence) my *Control through communication: The rise of system in American management* (Yates, 1989), in which I studied the emergence of the genres of business communication (e.g., the memo) that dominated the 20th century. My colleague Wanda Orlikowski and I began our joint project on genre use in new media in the 1990s. Our first, theoretical paper (Yates & Orlikowski, 1992) drew on Carolyn Miller's (1984) "Genre as social action," Bazerman's *Shaping written knowledge* (1988), and Anthony Giddens' (1984) structuration theory to propose genres of organizational communication as enacted structures with a socially recognized purpose and common characteristics of form (including the medium in which they were typically enacted). We then showed how, through the conceptual lens of these structures, we could understand changes in organizational communication over time, using the emergence of the memo as our primary example and Bazerman's experimental article as another.

Bazerman's influence on our work soon increased. Our first empirical paper on genre (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994) examined the early-1980s electronic communication of computer scientists at different firms and universities who were developing the Common LISP artificial intelligence language. Here, we also drew on Bazerman's (1994) concept of genre systems as we traced the evolution of three genres and a genre system that Common LISP participants used in what was then a new medium, email. His definition of genre systems as "interrelated genres that interact with each other in specific settings" (Bazerman, 1994, p. 97), along with Devitt's (1991) notion of genre sets encouraged us to focus on the relationships among genres in this piece. We introduced the notion

of genre repertoire (an elaboration of Devitt's genre set) as a useful approach to understanding groups and organizations. Bazerman's genre systems also became the subject and inspiration of another piece in which we demonstrated their value for studying how people use sequences of typified communicative actions to coordinate their activity over time and space (Yates & Orlikowski, 2002). In that paper we identified six dimensions of genre systems¹ (which also apply to genres and genre repertoires) that can serve as heuristics for studying them: socially recognized purpose (*why*); typical content (*what*); form, including medium and format features (*how*); participants (*who*); timing (*when*), and geographical or virtual place (*where*). (I will draw on this heuristic in my analysis of teaching genres, below.) For over a decade Orlikowski and I studied how genres, genre systems, and genre repertoires evolved as they were enacted in new electronic media.²

At the same time, we introduced Bazerman's work to a new audience: scholars studying interactions between information technology (IT) and organizations in management and information schools. Bazerman (2001) contributed a chapter to a book I co-edited with John Van Maanen, *IT and Organizational Transformation: History, Rhetoric, and Practice*. Several other management and information scholars studying new media in organizations also adopted a genre approach. For example, Barbara H. Kwaśnik and Kevin Crowston edited a 2005 special issue of *Information Technology & People* on "Genres of Digital Documents." Bazerman has thus influenced the IT and organizations field, in addition to other fields from rhetoric to education.

In my contribution to this volume in his honor, I apply the notions of genre, genre system, and genre repertoire to a different content domain reflecting Bazerman's later academic home in an education school. What follows is an essay based on my participation in and observations of the changes in teaching genres, genre systems, and genre repertoires triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic in my academic home (the MIT Sloan School of Management) from March 2020 through January 2021. I draw on the recorded Zoom teaching and learning town halls (described later), PowerPoint decks for those gatherings and for a faculty retreat in May 2020, and a few administrative and teaching-related memos to faculty; in addition, I interviewed a few individuals.³ Although my subject

1 Bazerman's (1994) discussion of the patent genre system considers, without naming, most of these dimensions.

2 Carolyn Miller's provocative contribution to this volume argues that medium and genre are inseparable when new media are initially introduced. I have always found it useful to differentiate them, at least analytically.

3 Interviewees include the teaching dean, staff director, head of Sloan Technology Services, and several faculty. I appreciate all my colleagues who helped me in this effort. I also thank Lori

matter is higher education, I examine it not from an education perspective (an area in which I have no expertise), but with the hope that my empirical case and analysis will be of interest to people in multiple disciplines that value Bazerman's work, including IT and organizations, media studies, rhetoric, and education. In it, I will use a genre lens (including the heuristic set of dimensions) to illuminate the changes that management faculty and administration instituted in teaching, as well as in discourse about teaching, in response to pandemic emergency regulations imposed by the state (Massachusetts), the university (MIT), and the management school (Sloan).⁴

On the most obvious level, in spring 2020 faculty had to adapt familiar genres of classroom teaching (e.g., the lecture, the discussion, the experiential exercise) to reach students mediated by Zoom, and in fall 2020 to reach masked students separated by 6 feet simultaneously with those in different locations and mediated by video or Zoom. Changes in the medium and form features (*how*) that Zoom offered initiated changes in other dimensions of genres. Encouraged by Bazerman's (1994) focus on interaction among genres, I also consider changes at the level of genre systems that coordinate a sequence of activities outside and within classes over an entire course. Further, the faculty's need to learn newly evolving teaching practices from each other spawned a new genre that was not part of a specific teaching genre or course genre system, but an addition to Sloan's previously limited community discourse about—and thus genre repertoire around—teaching: the teaching and learning town hall, which in turn catalyzed sharing of genre and genre system adaptations across the community. Finally, I reflect on these changes at different levels, and on how temporary or permanent they are likely to be.

TEACHING AT MIT SLOAN BEFORE THE PANDEMIC

First, some background on the MIT Sloan School of Management (Sloan) and its teaching in normal times is necessary to understand what follows. Sloan has an extensive portfolio of degreed educational programs. In the largest, flagship two-year MBA program, classes occur in the fall and spring semesters, with MBA students working in internships over the summer between the two years. Sloan also offers two mid-career MBA programs: the 12-month residential Sloan Fellows Program, and the part-time Executive MBA Program (EMBA) with employed students who often travel from a distance (or occasionally use Zoom) to attend weekend classes every three weeks. Beyond that, Sloan offers multiple

Breslow for pointing me to the few education papers I have cited.

4 Throughout this paper I focus on teaching from the faculty rather than student side of the teaching and learning process.

specialized programs, many of which include classes in the summer as well as during the academic year. I will focus primarily on the teaching changes for the two-year MBA but will need to refer to other programs and formats when they became important in faculty sharing of new learnings about pandemic teaching.

Sloan faculty use a variety of teaching approaches, but below I briefly describe some common genres of classroom teaching enacted at Sloan and other business and professional schools. These classroom teaching genres may also be combined in a single class session. Some aspects of the six genre dimensions⁵ are common to all of them: the medium (*how*) is face-to-face communication with the teacher and students (*who*), in the same classroom (*where*), during scheduled class time (*when*). In addition, teaching assistants (TAs)—more advanced MBA students or doctoral students—are present in most classes (*who*) to monitor student participation.

- Lecture:⁶ A lecture's socially recognized purpose in the Sloan community (*why*) is the primarily one-way presentation of new content (*what*) by the instructor to the students (*who*), using PowerPoint slides or writing on the board (*how*). Lecture is frequently combined with discussion in Sloan classes.
- Discussion: In a discussion, students are assumed to have already received new content in a lecture or in pre-class reading, and the instructor solicits student reactions to the material and to each other's points to help students explore, apply, and understand the content and its implications (*why* and *what*). The professor often writes on a board or annotates slides to record student input (*how*).
- Case discussion:⁷ A case class is a specific type of discussion teaching that pushes students to explore and extract more general principles from a concrete situation (*why*). It requires students to prepare for class by reading and analyzing a business case⁸ built around a protagonist who must make a decision (*what*). The professor typically leads students through the case by asking them a series of questions and

5 In this paper I restrict my use of the dimensions to genres, not genre systems or repertoires, to avoid confusion.

6 I am focusing on genres as they are understood at Sloan, based on my own experience, but the lecture genre and others are more broadly recognized in academia and in education. For a classic exploration of the lecture, for example, see Bligh (1971, 2000).

7 Some business and professional schools have traditionally focused entirely on case classes, but Sloan uses a mix of genres.

8 The case itself is also a recognized genre used in business and professional schools; it is part of the case teaching genre system, which requires students to read it in advance, to participate in class discussion of it, and sometimes to write a case analysis due before or after class.

- recording key points on the board (how).
- **Experiential exercise:** Experiential exercises are used to help students learn a skill or gain deep understanding (why) through participating in a role play or other experience (what) and discussing it. The instructor typically divides students into groups (sometimes sending them out of the classroom to breakout rooms—where) to engage in the exercise; afterwards, the teacher leads a full-class debrief of it, often recording the learnings on boards (how).

Various additional form features may optionally be incorporated into multiple teaching genres. For example, faculty (especially in more qualitative courses) often pause a lecture or discussion and ask students sitting close together to form small *buzz groups*⁹ to discuss a topic or raise questions among themselves for several minutes, then ask groups or individuals to report out. *Cold* and *warm calls* are questions posed by a teacher to a specific student (rather than to a volunteer), either with no warning (cold call) or with a warning earlier in the class (warm call).

The genre system around a course, which governs the dynamics of teaching and learning in it, includes many genres in addition to the teaching genres themselves. A website set up on the Canvas course management system contains the syllabus, assignments, readings, and cases for students to use as needed for each class, as well as places for them to submit their completed assignments (also genres in the genre system) and to receive feedback and grades from the TA or instructor. TAs interact with students outside of class, including holding office hours, responding to student questions, grading and returning assignments, and, in some courses, conducting scheduled recitations. Faculty also typically hold regular meetings with their TAs to coordinate these interactions and to discuss student participation. During class itself, the instructor instantiates the teaching genre in interaction with the students. These activities interlock across the entire semester as faculty, students, and TAs sequentially enact the course genre system.

Stepping back from specific courses to teaching more broadly, although good teaching is valued at Sloan (e.g., many teaching awards recognize it), discourse about and instruction in teaching (the part of Sloan's overall genre repertoire focused on teaching, which I will call the teaching repertoire) has traditionally been relatively informal and limited. Newly hired faculty attend an orientation which focuses more on research than on teaching. Most attention to teaching occurs within specific teaching groups (e.g., applied economics, accounting, organization studies). New faculty often learn to teach MBAs (a particularly

9 Buzz groups are related to the pair or small group activities that educational experts cite as ways to make lectures more interactive (Cranfield, 2016).

challenging audience for those who earned their Ph.D.s in disciplinary departments rather than in business schools) by talking to and sitting in on the classes of one or more senior faculty members in their teaching groups who have reputations as particularly good teachers. In classes with multiple sections, especially core (required) courses that are expected to be consistent across sections, all those teaching the course typically meet before each class to discuss *what* material will be covered and *how*, another source of learning about teaching. If newer faculty are struggling with teaching, they can also ask a senior faculty member or an in-house teaching coach to observe them teaching one or more class sessions and meet with them to give feedback and suggestions. Sharing *across* teaching groups around teaching is informal and relatively rare, occurring occasionally in workshops around new technology, in meetings for faculty in special programs, or in hallway conversations among friends.

With this background on pre-COVID-19 Sloan teaching, I now turn to the changes in classroom teaching genres, genre systems, and genre repertoires that were triggered by the pandemic and consequent restrictions. This period, from March 2020 to January 2021, included two phases of intensive change: the initial shift from in-person to fully online Zoom teaching halfway through the spring 2020 semester and the summer that followed, and the overlapping phase beginning in July 2020 when the school began preparing for simultaneously in-person and online instruction (which came to be called hyflex teaching) in fall 2020.¹⁰

PHASE 1: THE SHIFT TO TEACHING REMOTELY BY ZOOM

Initial changes occurred rapidly when MIT responded to the spread of COVID-19 and state restrictions by locking down in mid-March of 2020, sending students, faculty, and staff home and announcing that all classes would shift online. The lock-down was announced late in the week of March 9, and all MIT classes were cancelled for the following week; the week after that was MIT's scheduled spring break. Sloan faculty thus had two weeks to prepare for online teaching, a shift in the teaching medium (*how*), beginning the week of March 30. They immediately focused on learning technology basics to allow them to complete the semester from home, quickly migrating their teaching genres into Zoom, initially with as few other changes as possible.

During the two-week pause in courses, Sloan's administration and technical support groups disseminated considerable information related to teaching on Zoom. Within days, they sent faculty and staff a link to a Resource Hub for

¹⁰ Both online and hyflex teaching continued through the spring term of 2021, but I focus on the two periods of most intense change.

Online Teaching that Sloan Technology Services (STS) had just launched. The new Resource Hub signaled Sloan's initial approach in shifting to Zoom teaching with a statement that although teaching online might require faculty to rethink their classroom approach somewhat, most of their usual methods could be "interpreted" for use online. That is, they could enact their teaching genres live in Zoom with minimal changes beyond the new medium (*how*), as illustrated in a table with two columns—*Classroom Approach* and *Remote Alternatives*—and rows for teaching genres. An alternative to lectures, for example, was presenting using laptop and Zoom conferencing.¹¹ The table also suggested drawing or annotating on an iPad to replace writing on the board, a technique useful in multiple teaching genres. Similarly, alternative ways to conduct group work (for experiential exercises or for buzz groups in other genres) included using the Zoom breakout room feature to create virtual groups. These suggestions focused on importing form features (*how*) of existing teaching genres from the face-to-face classroom into Zoom (combined with Canvas, iPads, and other tools) as directly as possible. Formerly, STS had worked individually with faculty whose in-person courses included EMBA students who sometimes needed to Zoom into in-person classes, as well as with a few faculty who had created online courses on MITx (a massive open online course program using the edX platform developed by Harvard and MIT). Now, STS lacked the time and staff to work individually with every member of the spring teaching faculty before classes restarted in two weeks. STS and Sloan's administration immediately urged faculty, TAs, and administrative staff (admins) working with teaching faculty to take three newly created or revised live STS training classes via Zoom: Zoom Essentials, Canvas Essentials, and Best Practices in Online Teaching.¹² These live classes were offered multiple times during the next two weeks and recorded so those who could not attend them live could watch a recording. In the past, faculty were often reluctant to spend time attending STS training classes such as the earlier Canvas training, often sending their TAs and admins instead; now, however, facing imminent online teaching, many of them joined TAs and admins in taking the courses.

The class on Zoom Essentials demonstrated how to share screens, how to use Zoom breakout rooms, how to conduct a poll, and how students could put

11 The table also included a few suggestions for asynchronous online classes (e.g., providing all pre-recorded lectures on Canvas), an approach adopted by some undergraduate MIT courses outside of Sloan to better accommodate international students who returned to their home countries, but these were never used at Sloan. Most MBA students stayed in the Cambridge area, and all Sloan constituencies (e.g., faculty, program administrators, students) preferred synchronous classes to allow interaction.

12 Because Sloan had shifted to Canvas courseware recently and not all faculty were fully comfortable with it, STS included and built on existing Canvas training to create Canvas Essentials, adding new elements linked to Zoom teaching.

questions in Chat (unless it was disabled) or raise their blue Zoom hands to indicate they had a question. Trainers presented these many Zoom and Canvas features as ways to translate face-to-face teaching techniques such as recognizing student questions and putting students in buzz groups directly into the new medium through raised blue Zoom hands and Zoom breakout rooms. Nevertheless, this basic Zoom training made clear that change in *how* would necessitate other changes in the teaching genres, as the TAs would have to monitor the chat and raised hands for student questions, as well as set up and initiate breakouts and polls. This expanded role would involve them more critically in classroom teaching genres (a change in the participants or *who* dimension). Canvas Essentials, the second offering, taught how to use Canvas courseware, especially in conjunction with Zoom (e.g., timing the release of materials to students for use in experiential exercises, allowing outside speakers into a Zoom class via Canvas). The third new class, Best Practices in Online Teaching, was led by an instructional designer in STS; she suggested another unavoidable change: that faculty would not be able to cover as much content in an online class as in an in-person class (a change in the *what* dimension that was standard wisdom in MITx). These more-or-less involuntary changes in the participants (*who*) and content (*what*) of genres induced by the change in medium would become recurring themes in faculty discussion of the switch to Zoom.

Finally, the deputy dean (a faculty member who was scheduled to end his term as deputy dean¹³ on July (1) sent an email before Zoom classes began that sought to reassure faculty: “The most important thing for the moment though is not technology but thoughtfulness. Remember: It’s your course and you know the pedagogical goals of the course better than anyone” (email, deputy dean to faculty, 3/13/2020).

Faculty taught the second half of the spring term over Zoom, necessarily adapting the teaching genres by cutting back on content and working with TAs and admins in new ways. Meanwhile, recognizing the need to maintain an intense focus on teaching into the summer and following academic year, Sloan’s dean persuaded the departing deputy dean, who was highly respected but better known for his research orientation than for his teaching, to take on a newly created position of associate dean for teaching and learning (teaching dean) beginning in July 2020. In preparation for a faculty retreat scheduled for late May, the soon-to-be teaching dean and the director of faculty and research services (staff director) organized a series of (Zoom) focus groups with faculty and a few students to extract learnings about online teaching from spring term that could be shared and incorporated into summer teaching. They reported

13 The deputy dean is the top academic officer in the dean’s office.

their findings—based on 19 focus groups and 143 participants—during the (Zoom) faculty retreat.

They judged that “Overall, this sudden transition went remarkably well” (PowerPoint slide from Zoom faculty retreat, 5/21/2020; subsequent quotations from the same source). Nevertheless, they also reported that faculty found Zoom teaching more stressful, exhausting, and not as much fun as in-person teaching. Faculty noted the importance of working as a team with the TA or a co-instructor in the classroom to manage questions, initiate polls, and put students in breakout rooms (a change in *who*). As the training had suggested, they found that the content they could cover in class was reduced (a significant change in *what* was covered in the teaching genres), for technology and other reasons. Faculty felt that student attention spans on Zoom were shorter and that “students need more interpersonal time . . . to maintain engagement,” encouraging them to add additional form features (*how*) such as Zoom polls (which took time) to get student attention and gauge student understanding. Faculty also reported problems leading fluid discussions and getting good participation on Zoom, and the report mentioned one fairly common workaround: having students discuss questions among themselves in small Zoom breakout groups and report out (an adaptation in *how* the discussion and case class genres worked that also replaced cold calls with warm calls, since students knew who would report out). Other less common spring term workarounds were summarized on the retreat slides as follows: “Well-designed exercises—such as group presentations, pre-questions, polls and surveys, ‘warm calling’—can increase participation.” One instructor, for example, assigned brief reflection papers on cases or readings, due the night before class, to assure student preparation and to enable her to choose students to talk about specific points the next day in class, often with advance warning; another assigned open-ended surveys to be completed before class for a similar purpose.¹⁴

The report reflected a few, relatively small changes in teaching genre systems and in Sloan’s teaching repertoire, as well. The added assignment and resulting reflection papers, for example, added faculty and student genres to the course genre system. Faculty also found that practicing Zoom teaching in advance with TAs was helpful, with practice sessions adding to the course genre system on the faculty and TA side. In terms of the teaching genre repertoire, they endorsed the importance of taking the STS workshops, which allowed some discussion of teaching methods, and took many more of these than usual in March. One faculty quote presented in the report pointed to a more interesting, though informal, development in Sloan’s genre repertoire: “This experience has brought

14 These techniques were later discussed during the teaching and learning town halls described below.

me closer actually to [other] faculty. Like we're comparing notes about how we each teach. . . . We've done more of that in the last six weeks than the entire two-and-a-half years before that, just comparing notes and learning from and by each other." These informal conversations were still typically limited to those in the same teaching group or friends. Finally, the focus groups and retreat presentation summarizing them were new additions to the repertoire, sharing these learnings more broadly among faculty from all teaching groups.

Teaching migration into Zoom and modification to better suit the new medium continued during the summer for faculty who taught in programs that met then, including the mid-career Sloan Fellows program. Most faculty teaching online in the summer had not taught during the spring, but they could learn from conversations with their colleagues who taught in the spring and from the retreat presentation in May. In addition, they had more time to revise their courses. For example, three faculty teaching Sloan Fellows at the beginning of the summer all pre-recorded mini-lecture segments (5-10 minutes of slides and voice-over) on new technical concepts and assigned students to view them before class, then used class time for discussion and breakouts about applying the material to real problems. This video lecture technique was borrowed, one of them mentioned, from the flipped classroom model (she had taken a new STS training on the flipped classroom in May), though she noted that they had not adopted the whole model.¹⁵ This modification to their normal lecture-plus-discussion teaching genre enabled them to make up some of the content loss in Zoom teaching by changing *how*, *where*, and *when* some content was presented; in addition, it changed *what* content was covered in class to make it more engaging to students. This new option significantly changed their use of teaching genres (reducing use of lecture and increasing use of discussion). Moreover, the videos themselves instantiated a new genre introduced into the course genre system.

Early in the summer, an organized opportunity for faculty discussion about teaching occurred between two groups of faculty teaching the mid-career Sloan Fellows students. The faculty and staff heads of the Sloan Fellows program convened a meeting (normally held face to face but now on Zoom) with three faculty who were currently teaching the newly matriculated class online and three who were preparing to teach these students later in the summer. Normally faculty and program administrators used the meeting (a very minor element of the teaching

15 This faculty member later told me that she had heard about the flipped classroom from colleagues in other parts of MIT, but when she participated in the STS course on it, she was overwhelmed by how extensive the recommended changes were. Since she only had a couple weeks before teaching the Sloan Fellows, she adopted only the idea of pre-recording video mini-lectures and decided to make them straightforward voice-over-slides lectures, rather than more elaborate productions with cartoons and animations as recommended in the course.

genre repertoire) to share information on the new class (e.g., identifying and discussing ways to help any international students struggling with English). This time, however, the meeting focused heavily on online teaching, expanding its role in the teaching genre repertoire. They discussed their use of the pre-recorded lectures and shared tips on making the best use of Zoom breakout rooms (e.g., creating a Google Doc for each room with instructions and open fields for students to complete) and on the value of Zoom's chat function (these students used chat to respond to questions posed by other students and provide examples from their work experience, thus supplementing classroom content or *what*). This meeting, by allowing them to share their learnings around these new teaching techniques with those who would teach the next set of Sloan Fellows courses, reinforced these modifications of classroom teaching genres and of the course genre systems across different classes delivered to this student population, as well as modifying the meeting itself, making it a more significant element of Sloan's teaching genre repertoire.¹⁶

More extensive changes in teaching genres and genre systems, and, most importantly, a major change in the teaching genre repertoire across the school, emerged in Phase 2, preparing for and teaching in fall 2020.

PHASE 2: PREPARATION FOR AND DELIVERY OF HYFLEX TEACHING IN FALL 2020

In June 2020, MIT determined that virtually all fall undergraduate teaching would take place via Zoom only, but decisions about graduate teaching were left up to MIT's schools in consultation with MIT. Meanwhile, Sloan's program directors and admissions officers were collecting input from current master's students with another year to go in their programs and from applicants who had been accepted into programs; many of these current and potential students were still deciding whether to attend or defer for a year. MBA students, especially, made clear that they considered in-person teaching and networking with classmates as key program elements, and that enrollment would fall dramatically if Sloan did not offer them such opportunities. Moreover, the many international students highlighted their need for in-person instruction to fulfill the requirements for F1 visas. On June 10, the deans met with faculty teaching group heads to explain why offering an on-campus fall experience was a priority for Sloan and to discuss how they could offer some simultaneous combination of in-person and online teaching, as well as some online-only teaching, in the fall.¹⁷

¹⁶ The teaching dean circulated a link to the recording of this meeting to all faculty shortly afterwards and invited the participating faculty to present it in a teaching and learning town hall (discussed below) in the fall.

¹⁷ In addition, they committed to accommodating individual choices by students and faculty

This section traces the challenges and changes in teaching genres, genre systems, and, most significantly, Sloan's teaching-related genre repertoire that emerged to enable and support this teaching mode.

Some additional important decisions were reached in the month following this meeting. To maximize the number of first year MBA students who could take core classes¹⁸ in person, cohort sizes were decreased to 55 and the number of cohorts increased. Still, Massachusetts and MIT restrictions of all classrooms to 25 people at a time—22 students plus a teacher, TA, and audiovisual technician (AV tech)—meant that one classroom could not accommodate the demand for in-person learning. The faculty/staff MBA core planning group decided that if the classroom schedule could accommodate it, they needed to offer each core section in two classrooms of 22 students each, with another dozen students attending by Zoom. Subsequently, such a schedule was developed, in consultation with student leaders, by extending classroom teaching from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. and moving some optional activities to Saturdays. By early July they had determined that they could accommodate two classrooms for all core courses (and a few popular electives) in the fall.

This 2-rooms+Zoom model created the simultaneously in-person and online teaching mode that became known at Sloan as *hyflex*.¹⁹ The professor would preside in the main classroom and a TA in the second classroom (soon designated the *tandem* room and connected with the main classroom by video feeds controlled by audio visual technicians or AV techs in each room), while the remaining students were on Zoom (shown on a screen or monitor in both classrooms) from nearby apartments or from their homes in other countries.²⁰ This configuration created multiple teaching media or *how* (in person, on live video feed, on Zoom), locations or *where* (main classroom, tandem classroom, and Zoom), and student groups or *who* (students in each of the three locations and media).

Starting July 1, the new teaching dean, supported by the staff director, led an effort to adapt fall teaching to these conditions. They established new, bi-weekly, one-hour meetings on Friday mornings, called teaching and learning town halls (T&L town halls or town halls), to share information and learnings among teaching faculty. As the teaching dean announced:

about whether to attend or teach in person or solely online.

18 During the first term of their program, MBAs took five required core courses in assigned cohorts.

19 Some elective classes would still be offered entirely via Zoom or in other hybrid configurations, but since the 2-rooms+Zoom hyflex mode was widely used and highly challenging, I will focus on it.

20 Initial visa problems were resolved more quickly than expected, and very early in the fall almost all students were settled at or near MIT.

[W]e ([staff director] and I) would like to speak to the desires by many faculty teaching this fall, both to stay abreast of progress on various relevant fronts and for opportunities for sharing knowledge and resources. To that end, starting **this Friday July 10 from 9-10am**, we will be hosting our first **Teaching & Learning Friday** town hall for faculty and for the staff who support faculty teaching. At this time, we will provide key updates (e.g., on classroom experiments, instructional technology, course support, pedagogy), and we will facilitate interactive conversations where faculty are talking to each other and sharing ideas. (Email from teaching dean to faculty, July 6, 2020).

These new Zoom meetings would regularly be attended by over 100 faculty and staff, with the majority faculty, throughout summer and fall 2020, a fact about which the teaching dean repeatedly expressed amazement and appreciation, since in the past teaching had never been the subject of so much faculty attention.²¹

Initially, anxiety about teaching in the unfamiliar hyflex mode no doubt drove high faculty attendance, but several other factors encouraged ongoing attendance. The staff director and teaching dean intentionally invited only faculty and the admins directly supporting their courses (plus a few STS leaders who could discuss technical issues), because they feared, based on past experience, that few faculty would come if attendees were primarily staff. They limited meetings to one hour on Friday mornings, a day and time at which very few faculty taught, to make attendance easy. The pandemic limitations also made personal and professional travel almost impossible, so faculty did not miss meetings because they were traveling. The teaching dean worked to make the topics of the meetings interesting, asking sets of different faculty to present at most Zoom meetings and then advertising who would be presenting and on what, to entice other faculty to attend. Attendees also got explanations of behind-the-scenes events that led to reversions to Zoom-only teaching a few times during the term.²² In addition, attendance offered faculty a way to stay in touch with the

21 The attendance number is based on the teaching dean's statements about attendance at the beginning of the recorded meetings. No attendance records remain, so the statement about majority faculty attendance is based on my recollections. To put this number in context, the Sloan School has just over 110 tenure-line faculty and slightly more lecturers plus senior lecturers. I cannot estimate the proportions of tenure-line and non-tenure-line attendees, though there were significant numbers of both. I have considered them all to be faculty here.

22 Three times during the fall semester, Sloan's hyflex classes were moved entirely to Zoom for a few days pending testing, when evidence emerged of student get-togethers off-campus that broke MIT's and Sloan's rules. In each case, the teaching dean explained what had happened in

community during COVID-19 isolation, as evidenced by the presence of some on-leave and emeritus faculty. Although many attendees did not leave their cameras on, so their level of engagement was hard to judge, a tone of camaraderie in difficult conditions infused the presentations, questions, and interactions in chat. The T&L town hall soon became a well-recognized genre within Sloan, an addition to Sloan's previously limited genre repertoire around teaching.

The first T&L town hall meeting on July 10 set the stage for subsequent meetings. The teaching dean explained that although Sloan would continue to offer many fully remote Zoom classes, the new “Hyflex’ [classes]—with students both online and in-person—would be common” (PowerPoint slides shown at T&L town hall, July 10, 2020), especially in the MBA core and popular electives, and thus would be the focus of experiments and support efforts in coming months.²³ Given the challenges, he noted, faculty would need to prepare much earlier than usual for their fall term courses, and these meetings would help them do so. Most of the needed technology was already available in the classrooms and any needed updates or additions would be installed by fall. STS leaders reminded fall term faculty (many of whom had not taught in the spring and summer) to sign up for training workshops and practice teaching sessions and reassured them that STS would be able to support them in this mode as it had previously supported faculty who had a few EMBA's Zooming into their classes. The teaching dean noted that an additional TA would be needed (and funded) for classes taught in hyflex mode, and that teaching in this mode would require faculty to be part of a course or teaching team. Finally, a particularly good teacher who had been asked to coordinate work on the classroom experience (classroom experience coordinator) explained that he would conduct an initial classroom pilot in hyflex mode on campus later that same day and report back to the faculty on it and later pilots.

Subsequent summer town halls, supplemented by the teaching experience coordinator's email reports on three pilots, were used to assess and explain classroom technology, improve faculty understanding of the challenges of hyflex teaching, and share learnings from the pilots and from spring and summer Zoom teaching. The classroom experience coordinator focused on testing and standardizing classroom technology in the first pilot. The second pilot piggybacked on an ongoing,

town halls, information otherwise not readily available to faculty.

23 In a later meeting, he explained that he used the term *hyflex* rather than *hybrid* because he felt that hybrid was ambiguous because it sometimes refers to programs in which some courses are in person and some online. He defined his favored term, *hyflex*, as a combination of online and in-person simultaneously, within the same class. His definition could include just one classroom plus remote students on Zoom, but because in-person experiences were in such high demand, the school tried to include a tandem room whenever possible, making 2-rooms+Zoom the norm for hyflex teaching. In a few courses, students were in two classrooms, each with a TA, and faculty taught on Zoom from home.

fully remote, summer course for one of the specialized master's programs; the professor and some students living locally agreed to don masks and move into a classroom for one class while the rest of the class remained remote on Zoom. A third pilot brought all the MBA core faculty (plus a few admins who volunteered to act as students) into classrooms or onto Zoom so each could practice and observe others practicing in the 2-rooms+Zoom configuration. These three pilots provided the major source of learning about hyflex teaching before the fall term began.²⁴ One summer town hall also hosted a panel of Sloan Fellows faculty who shared learnings from their summer Zoom-only teaching experience (discussed in Phase 1). As meetings continued into the fall, the teaching dean invited panels of faculty to speak at most meetings, describing their experiences and learnings, primarily in hyflex teaching.²⁵ Early town hall topics included technology, teaching teams and roles, and techniques for hyflex teaching.

The initial focus of pilots and town halls was getting the technology configured in the classrooms and figuring out how basic aspects of teaching could be handled in hyflex mode. The first pilot tested understandability of instructors through masks, adequacy of ceiling-hung microphones to pick up student comments made through masks, and the placement and use of monitors and screens.²⁶ Based on this pilot, by late August all classrooms were provided with adequate microphones and floor monitors visible only to the instructors (in addition to existing ceiling-mounted confidence monitors), allowing them to see students on Zoom and in the tandem classroom while facing the in-person students. Front and side screens were visible to the entire classroom and could show one (when the instructor projected PowerPoint slides on the other) or both the feed from the tandem room or the Zoom gallery view. The first pilot revealed that normal blackboard writing, a common form feature in all the teaching genres, was not readable by students on Zoom and in the tandem room; by August further pilots had shown that large chalk and fewer lines of text made board use possible, if not ideal. Other faculty substituted writing on and projecting from an iPad. Both techniques became common modifications to an existing form feature (*how*) used in many teaching genres.

24 MIT rules did not allow faculty to be in Sloan classrooms during the summer except in these pre-arranged pilots and, in the last two weeks before classes began, in pre-scheduled practice sessions.

25 A few meetings covered topics not directly related to hyflex teaching, but relevant to teaching more broadly, such as remote executive education teaching and the student experience in the programs during this period.

26 All classrooms had two screens for projection, a monitor built into the podium, and a ceiling-mounted confidence monitor visible only to the faculty. Some classrooms also had a floor-mounted monitor visible only to faculty that had been useful when EMBA's Zoomed into classes.

Finally, the first pilot clarified that using breakout groups, which had worked well in Zoom-only teaching and had quickly become popular in all the teaching genres, was problematic in this new 2-rooms+Zoom configuration. Using random Zoom breakout groups (which required students in the classroom to have laptops open and to be signed onto Zoom) mixed the three student groups for equity, but students in the classroom needed to turn off their audio when not in breakout rooms to avoid feedback, then turn it back on when they entered the breakout room, potentially causing confusion and delay. They also needed large earphones (not the popular AirPods) to hear over the talking from nearby students in other groups. Another option was to put Zoom-only students into Zoom breakouts together and put students in each of the two classrooms into in-person breakouts with others in their rooms; the noise and required 6-foot spacing between students, however, made it hard to talk and hear within a group larger than three. Neither option was ideal, creating ongoing trade-offs around *who*, *where*, and *how* breakout or buzz groups met.

Another major focus in the pilots and town halls was the *teaching* (or *course*) *team*,²⁷ reflecting the increased number and broadened roles of those necessary to enact teaching genres in hyflex mode (*who*). The teacher role was discussed most. After the first pilot, the classroom experience coordinator reported that it was “an order of magnitude harder to handle three audiences than to teach on Zoom” (PowerPoint by classroom experience coordinator from July 17, 2020 T&L town hall meeting), and that he believed faculty would need not just one additional TA, but a TA for each of the three class locations (*where*)—main, tandem, and Zoom. For example, teachers could not see raised blue Zoom hands on the overhead or floor monitors showing Zoom attendees, nor could they keep track of raised physical hands in the tandem room, so they would have to coordinate with TAs in both locations. In the final, August pilot, each core instructor initially found the 2-rooms+Zoom configuration very disorienting. In the subsequent town hall discussion, one expert in-person teacher recited a litany of problems he encountered, including that chat was overwhelming, that cold calling was *terrible* because of the long pause before the unsuspecting student could unmute and answer, and that his laser pointer could not be seen outside the main room so he would need to learn to annotate slides on an iPad. He and others also highlighted the need to coordinate with TAs more closely (discussed further below). Summarizing the third pilot, the classroom experience coordinator emphasized that hyflex teaching was very different from Zoom teaching or in-person teaching and that each professor teaching this way should

²⁷ These terms only came into common use at Sloan during this period, with *teaching team* focusing on those in the classroom and *course team* also including admins, who were not typically present in the classroom.

practice in the classrooms and on Zoom with the entire teaching team before the first day of class. At minimum, he noted, faculty needed to decide how they wanted to run discussions, another tradeoff. They could have every student sign into Zoom and encourage them to raise blue hands only (which was good for equity among the three sets of students but required laptops and Zoom open in class and demanded excellent TA coordination) or answer questions from students in the main room based on raised physical hands but pause at intervals to solicit questions from the other two sides (which allowed better flow in the main room but risked making the other students feel left out and still required coordination with two TAs to manage questions from the tandem room and Zoom students). Although all teaching involves some tradeoffs, experienced faculty are comfortable with the familiar tradeoffs, though novice teachers often find them stressful. Hyflex teaching, with its three media, locations, and student groups, required faculty to balance unfamiliar tradeoffs for every aspect of the class, making everyone a novice teacher in this new teaching mode.²⁸

The expanded TA role was also discussed frequently in town halls. After the first pilot and the teaching coordinator's assessment that more TAs were needed, faculty teaching in hyflex mode were allocated resources for one extra *facilitator TA* (with a smaller appointment and less pay) for each additional side in the hyflex classroom, resulting in two facilitator TAs and a regular TA for the 2-rooms+Zoom configuration. The regular TA was responsible for normal out-of-class TA activities (e.g., office hours, grading, running recitations); in-class activities (e.g., monitoring chat for questions, alerting faculty to questions in the three locations, recording participation, managing polls or breakouts on Zoom) were divided among the regular and facilitator TAs. The faculty needed to train and coordinate with all the TAs in meetings outside of class, since a smooth-running class depended heavily on their skills. For example, faculty noted that if they were going to respond adequately to student questions, TAs sometimes needed to interrupt them, something that TAs hesitated to do without training and frequent reminders. The TA focus groups conducted after the fall term ended revealed that, even with additional facilitator TAs, the regular TAs thought their class preparation work had expanded enough that they deserved additional compensation.

AV techs, new additions to teaching teams, were mostly contract workers or new hires. In the main room they focused a camera on faculty, boards, PowerPoint slides, and students asking or answering questions, as appropriate, so students in the tandem room and on Zoom would be able to see what was going on in the main classroom (the tech in the tandem room needed to focus on students asking or answering questions in that room). To do that successfully, they

28 I'm grateful to my colleague Lori Breslow for this insight.

needed to know what elements the class would include (e.g., lecture, discussion, breakouts, guest speakers) and when. Based on the pilots, the classroom experience coordinator recommended that faculty share such information with AV techs before each class. During fall term town halls, faculty talked about huddling with the techs before class or sending them annotated class outlines ahead of time. In addition, the techs needed some in-the-moment coordination. For example, when teachers or TAs called on students in the main or tandem room based on raised blue Zoom hands, students needed to raise their physical hands before speaking so the tech would know where to point the camera.

Finally, faculty admins were part of the course team, broadly defined, though they were typically less visible to students. During the summer they compiled the reading lists and set up Canvas sites for fall courses as usual. Beyond that, their involvement in hyflex teaching varied greatly, depending on faculty desires and admin skills. On the high end of involvement, for example, the admin for the organizational processes core course played a critical role in a special, Zoom-only double class with a complicated experiential exercise that required non-random 6-person breakouts of almost 500 students in 6 sections and multiple teaching times, with different materials distributed to each student in a breakout room. She worked for several days in advance to set up breakout group assignments and to prepare Canvas to release the appropriate material to each student at the correct time. She was also on Zoom during all class times, fixing some minor glitches that occurred in some sections. Some tech-savvy admins regularly helped faculty manage the Zoom side of classes or substituted for TAs when needed. Admins, like TAs, formerly played more limited roles in teaching; now, faculty were dependent on them and on the added facilitator TAs and AV techs in new ways that were more visible to the faculty and students, requiring faculty to train and manage their teams if they wanted to enact any of the teaching genres successfully.

Other discussions in the T&L town halls addressed techniques for teaching in hyflex mode (*how*). Many faculty panelists spoke about their methods for calling on students (e.g., using all blue hands or calling on students in the main room by raised physical hands), making students in the tandem room feel more included (e.g., one professor always visited the tandem room during the class break), and using blackboards (e.g., one faculty member wrote on the board with regular, not large, chalk, but had a TA transcribe what he wrote onto an iPad so students in the other two rooms could see it).²⁹ Some faculty tried to escape particular tradeoffs of hyflex teaching by experimenting with alternative configurations. For example, faculty for the organizational processes core course

29 In both the fall and spring semester, attendance in the tandem rooms fell off as the semester progressed with some students staying home and attending via Zoom.

led a case discussion with students in one room for the first 30 minutes of class while the regular TA led an experiential exercise in the other room; then the professor and TA switched rooms and each did the same in the other room (Zoom participants were grouped with one of the rooms), followed by a concluding 10 minutes with faculty addressing both rooms and Zoom, a plan that required exact timing and skilled TAs. None of the faculty who spoke at the town hall meetings about their techniques claimed to have successfully solved all the challenges of hyflex teaching, but by sharing their experiences, they gave other faculty new ideas as well as reassurance that they were not alone in struggling with teaching in this mode.

After the fall term ended, the staff director organized another set of focus groups (of faculty, TAs, and students) to extract learnings to help those teaching in the spring 2021 term. In a January 2021 town hall he reported the findings, which covered Zoom-only and hyflex teaching. Overall, he summarized, “Those who felt good about what they accomplished” (staff director’s PowerPoint slides, T&L town hall, January 15, 2021; subsequent quotations from same source) put a great deal of preparation into the effort and learned a lot. Efforts included everything from refining course objectives to learning that “Making minute choices—about what appears on which screen and which ‘side’ of the class you direct a question to in what moment—matters. Working out these choices is complex and iterative and can’t be done by oneself.” Faculty reported that they felt things went better than they initially expected, because of the additional training and resources (TA and AV), as well as the town halls. Faculty were generally less satisfied with the teaching experience than normal, even when they were satisfied with what they accomplished, because dealing with three sides “pushed the limits of manageability.” Still, the staff director reported that at least one professor highlighted a long-term pedagogical gain: “Hyflex teaching forced us to be really crisp on our objectives and how we were allocating pre-class and during-class time to meet those objectives. So in many ways I felt that the hyflex situation forced us in very positive ways to be innovative in our pedagogy and I’m grateful for that opportunity.” This quote suggests that at least some faculty refined and sharpened the *why* dimension of the teaching genres for their courses, as they shifted the distribution of material between classroom teaching and pre-class preparation (e.g., by creating video mini-lectures).

Beyond these general reactions, the focus groups revealed considerable variance in practices for the hyflex blending of Zoom with in-person teaching. Techniques around raised hands, chat, breakout groups, and use of pre-recorded lectures all varied, rather than converging on best practices enacted by all faculty. Consequently the report did not recommend any standard practices, instead simply summarizing what the staff director and teaching dean saw as four

significant course adaptations: reduced content; the use of pre-recorded lectures; using techniques such as polls, chat, and breakouts to increase participation of and get feedback from students; and assigning student reflection papers on cases or readings, due before class, to guide the instructor in calling on students in class. The reduction of content (*what*) was common to most teaching faculty and genres, but not by choice. The significant course adaptation was how to manage that reduction, not the reduction itself. The use of classroom techniques such as polls and breakout groups (*how*) was a continuation of a trend that began in Phase 1, though these features were harder to enact in the hyflex than the Zoom-only classroom genres. Two of the listed Phase 2 innovations involved changes in the course genre systems as well as classroom genres. The summer Sloan Fellows faculty talked about creating pre-recorded lectures to replace some lost content as well as to improve student engagement in the classroom. This technique, an addition to the course genre system, had evidently spread to multiple courses, because student focus groups both praised the technique and complained that it was used in so many courses that cumulatively it added too much screen time to their out-of-class preparation. Assigning student reflection papers before class for faculty to use to improve in-class discussion, another change in the course genre system, must also have been adopted by additional faculty in the fall, since some students in the student focus groups complained about insufficient feedback on their reflection papers. These changes added to or substituted for other out-of-class preparation in course genre systems, with the ultimate intention of improving learning in and around the classroom genres.

The introduction of the T&L town halls to Sloan's teaching genre repertoire was probably the most significant change in Phase 2. These meetings drew faculty attendance from teaching groups across the school, and that attendance remained substantial (though certainly not universal) throughout the fall term, suggesting that many faculty found the meetings useful in their transition to hyflex teaching. The Town Hall genre's focus on and sharing of ideas about teaching among Sloan faculty was a major development in the community's teaching genre repertoire, perhaps signaling a change in its culture

REFLECTIONS ON CHANGES IN TEACHING-RELATED GENRES, GENRE SYSTEMS, AND GENRE REPERTOIRE

What does a genre perspective bring to this story of teaching and organizational change in a specific educational setting facing COVID-19 restrictions? And are the observed changes temporary, or will some become permanent? In this section I will focus on classroom teaching genres, course teaching systems, and finally Sloan's teaching repertoire as I reflect on each of these questions.

First, focusing on Sloan's teaching genres and their dimensions gives us a way of systematically viewing the changes in classroom teaching initiated by the pandemic. In Phase 1, faculty—with the support of STS training, TAs, and admins—migrated existing teaching genres into the new Zoom medium (*how*), initially with only the minimum necessary changes in other dimensions—less content coverage (*what*) and expanded TA and admin roles (*who*). The focus group report on spring term teaching demonstrated that some faculty members, recognizing that students were suffering Zoom fatigue and needed more engagement, made further changes in *how*, adding Zoom features such as polls and breakouts to the lecture and discussion teaching genres to keep students involved. The Sloan Fellows summer meeting revealed that a few weeks more of preparation time enabled additional faculty experimentation, most significantly taking lectures on technical concepts out of the combined lecture and discussion classes and putting them into video mini-lectures for viewing outside of class. This change allowed them to allocate more class time to discussing applications, a more engaging activity and a significant change in the *how* and *what* dimensions of their lecture and discussion teaching genres.

In Phase 2, the genre dimensions highlight why the move from Zoom-only to hyflex teaching was so challenging. Enacting classroom teaching genres required simultaneously using multiple media (*how*); interacting with multiple student groups (*who*) defined by their multiple locations (*where*); and coordinating even larger course teams (*who*). Hyflex teaching also reduced the content faculty could cover (*what*) and changed one aspect of timing (*when*) by extending the hours during which classes met into the evening. In enacting the genres in this new mode, only class purpose (*why*) initially remained the same. Hyflex teaching required the instructor to balance tradeoffs in all details of teaching.

The genre lens also enables us to look at changes in genre systems. By following Bazerman's (1994) emphasis on genre systems, and how multiple genres interact to coordinate actions over time and space, we can bring into focus changes in the course genre system, which coordinates teaching and learning over the semester and includes classroom teaching as just one element. For example, in Phase 1 a faculty member tried to improve her in-class discussions by requiring students to submit reflection papers a day before class and then using the information in them to improve in-class discussion. These new assignments not only changed the content and flow of the discussion teaching genre, but also added new assignments and student responses to the course genre system, pushing students to prepare more carefully and enabling faculty to improve class discussion quality by calling on students who had thought in advance about specific issues. Similarly, when Sloan Fellows faculty shifted conceptual material into short, pre-recorded videos that students viewed in advance, they added a new pre-class

genre to the course genre system as well as improving the classroom teaching genres. They found that the tightly scripted video mini-lectures conveyed the conceptual content very efficiently and helped them limit the reduction of content in the classroom. In Phase 2, these video mini-lectures were added to more courses (hyflex and Zoom-only).

In the Phase 2 lead-up to fall term hyflex teaching, the teaching coordinator's strong recommendation to faculty to conduct practice sessions in the assigned classroom with the full teaching team added another genre, the practice class, to the course genre system. Faculty also had to coordinate with the AV techs, whether through annotated class outlines, huddles before class, or by other means, requiring more additions to the course genre system. Looking at the course genre system highlights that faculty out-of-class preparation increased significantly during this period, and student preparation in some cases increased (writing reflection papers) and in others shifted from reading to viewing (video mini-lectures). Changing the media of teaching genres induced changes in the more extensive course genre systems through which teaching and learning were enacted over a semester.

The changes in Sloan's genre repertoire around teaching more broadly were perhaps the most important changes of all. Before the pandemic Sloan did not have many regular venues for formally or informally discussing and sharing learnings about teaching, and most involved sharing between or among faculty in the same teaching group. This situation began to change slightly in Phase 1. A faculty focus group comment quoted earlier indicated that informal discussions about teaching between and among faculty increased greatly over the Zoom-only period. Moreover, the focus group meetings and the report itself were new additions to the teaching repertoire, with the report presented in the Zoom retreat where faculty across all teaching groups had the opportunity to discuss it further.³⁰ In addition, the summer Sloan Fellows meeting, an existing genre that took on an expanded role, spread teaching techniques and learnings among faculty across disciplinary lines but teaching in the same program.

The most significant change in the teaching-related genre repertoire was the teaching dean's introduction of the T&L town hall meetings in Phase 2, just in time to support the move into hyflex teaching. These meetings provided a venue for and encouraged faculty-to-faculty discussion of teaching. High faculty attendance throughout the year and since suggests that many faculty felt they benefited from learning about how others were managing teaching in the new media. The meetings also triggered further one-on-one or small group conversations (often suggested in chat at the end of faculty town hall presentations) as well as

30 In the past, Sloan retreats typically did not focus on detailed discussions of teaching.

classroom experiments. This addition to the genre repertoire around teaching supported faculty during a difficult year and seemingly catalyzed a change in Sloan culture around teaching during this period by making discussions about teaching common and accepted. This apparent cultural change showing that analysis of changes in an organization's genre repertoire can help us better understand organizational change more broadly (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994).

Will the changes in teaching genres, genre systems, and the genre repertoire survive the return to the classroom? Many of the new techniques developed specifically for teaching genres enacted in these media will undoubtedly disappear with a return to face-to-face teaching, but some may remain or evolve. For example, using breakouts in Zoom-only and hyflex teaching genres in almost all courses showed that breakouts could improve student engagement. In the future, we might expect faculty to continue to use them more broadly and extensively based on this experience. The faculty focus group statement that teaching during this period forced faculty to make objectives crisper, quoted earlier, suggests that some changes will improve teaching genres beyond the pandemic period because they refocused attention on the purpose or *why* dimension. In some cases we can already see evidence of ongoing influence. One faculty member who created video mini-lectures in the Sloan Fellows summer course so she could change how she used class time noted recently that faculty who teach the MBA core version of the same course are doing the same thing in fall 2021, even though classes are now face to face. They are all finding that this shift of lecture out of the classroom allows them to be more interactive (and thus to engage students more) in their in-class teaching. In at least some cases, changes in teaching genres adopted to deal with the exigencies of Zoom or hyflex teaching seem to be living on in face-to-face teaching.

We can ask the same question about changes in the course genre system. Practice teaching sessions with the (presumably reduced) teaching team seem unlikely to survive. In contrast, faculty who required students to write reflection papers on readings or cases before the class discussion and found that doing so improved class discussion seem likely to continue to use this assignment. Similarly, creating video mini-lectures for students to watch before class added an important new pre-class genre to the course genre system. In doing this, faculty rethought the distribution of in-class and out-of-class materials to achieve their goals over the course. Initial evidence that faculty are continuing to use this genre system modification in the return to in-person teaching suggests that it is very likely to survive.

Finally, and most importantly for Sloan as an organization, will the changes in the school-wide genre repertoire around teaching survive? The focus groups seem unlikely to continue with the return to in-person teaching. The seemingly

culture-changing T&L town hall genre, which was critical to Sloan's successful adaptation to hyflex teaching and continued use of Zoom-only teaching, is a more important and potentially ongoing addition to Sloan's previously limited teaching repertoire. It provided an institutionally supported place for faculty to discuss teaching techniques and learn from each other at a time when they needed such support. It was also offered at a convenient time and (virtual) place. Gauging its odds of survival requires understanding this and other reasons it was so successful during the pandemic. In conversations and interviews, several people noted that the teaching dean's credibility and style of conducting the meetings (*who*) was another important factor in their success. He recognized that faculty, for better or for worse, were more likely to listen to and learn from peers than from educational specialists, and he made it easy for faculty to attend the meetings and to share their experiences without feeling that they had to be experts. He himself made no claims to expertise in teaching; rather, he recruited a classroom experience coordinator known for good teaching to organize the teaching pilots. He also assembled and introduced panels of faculty from different teaching areas, enthusiastically commented on the new methods and techniques they presented and expressed appreciation to them afterwards. Also important but less visible was the staff director, who suggested topics, did necessary behind-the-scenes work, and organized the two rounds of focus groups. As he summarized in his January 2021 focus group report, the town halls "have been invaluable for creating comfort with the craziness but more importantly for showcasing how our instructors can thrive and innovate with supporting resources in place" (staff director's PowerPoint slides presented in January 15, 2021 T&L town meeting).

What will happen to the town halls going forward? The genre has been well institutionalized over the past year, but circumstances around COVID-19 are changing and faculty are teaching students face to face again, albeit masked. The teaching dean announced during the summer of 2021 that the meetings will continue at least through the fall of 2021, and they have done so, in Zoom format, in the first month of the fall term, as I complete this paper. Attendance dropped from over 100 to a still substantial 70+ attendees at the first three meetings. The drop is not surprising since the return to in-person teaching reduced teaching anxiety and increased faculty travel and other faculty priorities somewhat. The content has also shifted away from teaching in the Zoom or hyflex configurations and towards more general teaching topics such as course development and Sloan teaching partnerships with international schools around the world. The teaching dean has made it easy for faculty to attend by continuing to have them in Zoom on Friday mornings, so faculty can stay home if they do not teach on Friday. Another test of the new genre's persistence in the repertoire will

come when the teaching dean goes on sabbatical in January 2022, highlighting that *who* enacts this genre matters. Will another faculty member step into his role and continue the town hall meetings in a way that will encourage continued faculty attendance and focus on teaching? Will they evolve in a different direction under different leadership? Or will faculty attendance gradually decrease until the town hall meetings die out? The apparent cultural change that has made discussing teaching so important in this pandemic year makes me hopeful (though not confident) that the town halls will survive or other new genres will emerge to perform the same purpose of encouraging ongoing and Sloan-wide discussion of teaching.

Although the next chapter of teaching-related genres, genre systems, and genre repertoire at Sloan remains to be written, applying Bazerman's innovative ideas around genre to the school's pedagogical practices during the pandemic crisis yields valuable insights about the social and educational dynamics at Sloan. The same is, no doubt, true of pandemic teaching at other academic institutions. Bazerman's work on genres and their interactions is as relevant today as it was when I first read it over three decades ago.

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