Thinking Rhetorically: Writing for Professional and Public Audiences

THINKING RHETORICALLY: WRITING FOR PROFESSIONAL AND PUBLIC AUDIENCES

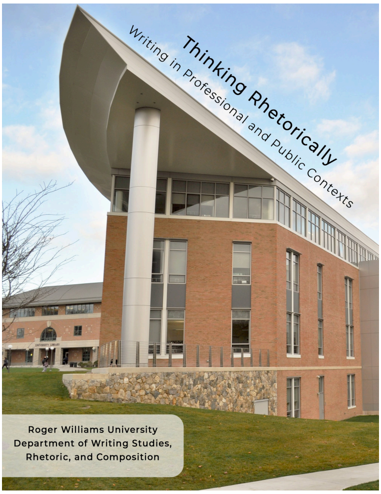
ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF WRITING STUDIES, RHETORIC, AND COMPOSITION

CONTENTS

Part III. Rhetorical Knowledge

Part IV. Genre Knowledge

Part V. Discourse Community Knowledge



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Finally, we would like to thank our students for putting their faith in us.

Kate Mele

INTRODUCTION

Writing about Problems that Matter

Jennifer Campbell

The first goal listed on RWU's "Our Vision" page is to provide students the opportunity to "work with local and global communities to address problems that matter most to society." Most academic disciplines and professional groups coalesce very directly around significant problems—Engineering seeks to improve the built environment with hands-on design/build experiences; Natural Sciences monitor and sustain vital ecosystems threatened by human activity; Cybersecurity confronts the shifting balance between privacy and security; Business responds constantly to all the factors that influence the bottom-line. The Social Sciences and the Humanities often focus directly on the toll social and cultural inequalities take on the human spirit and voice.

If part of the RWU mission is to encourage all students and faculty to be experiential learners dedicated to making a better world, then we each have to learn to approach, study, and engage all sorts of problems. A quick online search for "taxonomy of problems" reveals that people from many fields (such as education, psychology, and business, just to name a few) have organized types of problems. There are immediate problems that require "trouble-shooting," close-ended problems that indicate a "gap from standard," and open-ended problems that call for new and innovative strategies. But perhaps most importantly (and interestingly), there are "wicked problems":

> A wicked problem has innumerable causes, is tough to describe, and doesn't have a right answer... They're the opposite of hard but ordinary problems, which people can solve in a finite time period by applying standard techniques. Wicked problems often crop up when organizations have to face constant change or unprecedented challenges. They occur in a social context; the greater the disagreement among stakeholders, the more wicked the problem. In fact, it's the social complexity of wicked problems as much as their technical difficulties that make them tough to manage.... [C]onfusion, discord, and lack of progress are telltale signs that an issue might be wicked" (Camillus 100).

Understanding that the most vital "problems that matter" are often "wicked" ones, emerging from "disagreement" and "social complexity," and marked by "confusion, discord, and lack of progress," alerts us all to (at least) two realities. First, problems exist embedded in material networks of struggle; and second, speaking them into existence through layers of confusion and discord (and self-interest) is as necessary as it is difficult. No matter what the internet says, nothing about engaging with significant problems is easy or given or once-and-done.

Thinking Rhetorically: Writing in Professional and Public Contexts is dedicated to introducing students to a lifelong commitment of engaging with these problems that matter. As an academic discipline, Writing Studies' contribution to engaging with problems can be applied to all areas of study and to all types of problems because we focus on the way language itself—*discourse*—is created and exchanged in the service of engaging problems. **Writing Studies deepens students' rhetorical awareness of how the ongoing conversations between groups of people shape and express the problems that matter.** According to Aristotle, being rhetorically aware means understanding "the best means of persuasion in any given situation." It means understanding the deep logic that explains why an author has selected a particular genre to deliver a particular message to an audience. We all know writing is hard, but we commit to writing well because of the vital work it does in the world in helping humans preserve and extend our ability to come together. As theorist Anne Beaufort writes, "[w]hat writing expertise is ultimately concerned with is becoming engaged in a particular community of writers who dialogue across texts, argue, and build on each other's work" (18).

Engaging a problem through writing—through multimodal exchanges of graphical symbols of all sorts—can be a longer and more difficult task than simply "solving" a problem. Real-world "problems that matter" first must be articulated into existence, by inquiry into a topic. Notice that one of the first qualities of a "wicked problem" is simply that it is "tough to *describe*," alerting us to the importance of a writer's sense of observation, accuracy, and fairness even in simply noting "what is this problem?" The act of inquiring—of asking questions, of exploring multiple perspectives, of gathering information and locating gaps in what is known—is a necessarily messy precursor to developing the formal "research questions" that we often expect to guide us to "solutions." Curious researchers know that it takes many questions to make one question, and that one question inevitably generates more questions. While using writing to engage problems sounds like—and is!—a demanding task, it is also a path to empowerment for the writer. Writers who are determined to contribute knowledge toward the greater good by engaging in problems that matter have not only the responsibility but the *freedom* to decide which gap or which perspective or which data-set deserves another round of questions. This is the freedom that allows the priorities of the individual writer to shape and direct those of the larger community.

The task of articulating a *problem* from simply a *topic* involves adopting a perspective that can calculate harm. In other words, problems are problems because there is some sort of (measurable) harm to someone or something, somewhere in the community. Articulating the "harm" emerges in a combination of carefully chosen words and strong evidence presented by effective writing. Simply stating the fact "There are 300 car accidents a day within the city limits" is not stating a problem—certainly not for the owner of the body shop sure of her revenue stream. To say instead "There are 300 car accidents a day within the city limits in which people's injuries require trips to the emergency room" emphasizes "injury," and "emergency," which we all know, by definition, indicate problems. The writer chooses the words that allow those who may not have direct experience of the harm to understand the perspectives of those who have been directly affected. Writers extend the circle of "stakeholders" from those directly affected to those whose interest is more tangential and indirect. Perhaps as a pedestrian on the other side of town, I feel protected from the direct injury of so many car accidents. In order to garner my support, someone—some rhetorically effective researcher and writer—would need to describe and explain the other, less obvious, ways I might be affected by so many accidents. My tax burden, or the absence of ambulances on my side of town, or the lingering communal effects of so much grief and anxiety. Writers' words and their ability to evince multiple perspectives create and extend the community of stakeholders so that they may become aware of their shared human interests.

Because it is the work of writing and writers to create and sustain intentional discourse communities, this course offers practice in studying and framing problems for a range of audiences. Framing "is the process whereby communicators act… to construct a particular point of view that encourages the facts of a given situation to be viewed in a particular manner, with some facts made more or less noticeable (even ignored) than others…. Frames are central organizing ideas within a narrative account of an issue or event; they provide the interpretive cues for otherwise neutral facts" (Kuypers 182). Writers make decisions not only about which facts (and other types of evidence) to present, but about how to present them—how to "provide the interpretive cues"—by knowing the salient characteristics of the audience being asked to interpret those cues. What does the audience know? How can they be made to know something else, to want something else? What values do they hold? What sorts of words and images and evidence might encourage them to reevaluate their priorities? Being able to reach many different kinds of audiences is central to the work of the writing classroom because sustaining and changing human relationships (between writers and readers, between readers and the world, between different cohorts of readers) is the reason writing—especially writing about problems that matter—exists at all.

Writing courses for first-year students are designed to strengthen and refine the academic moves of writers long accustomed to "the essay": enter a conversation, create a strong thesis, design a logical structure, incorporate reliable sources, document scrupulously. This course builds on but moves beyond classroom writing, offering students opportunities to practice with a wider array of ideas, genres, and audiences. As its name suggests, "Professional and Public Writing," the Department's minor, promises even deeper experiences with writing effectively on behalf of professional audiences (clients, investors, supervisors, colleagues) and public ones (citizens, taxpayers, policy makers, non-profits). While honoring all the many types of disciplinary, technical and professional expertise that contribute to engaging with problems that matter, writers know that without thoughtfully researched, well-designed texts and writing that can speak to the hearts and minds of many different people, many of those problems will remain intractably wicked. We hope you enter this course with a spirit of exploration, use the course to develop an ability to connect with other people, and leave it feeling confident in your ability to contribute to the communities that need you.

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DEFINING PROFESSIONAL AND PUBLIC WRITING

As the introduction to this book emphasizes, this course will build upon your foundation in academic writing to help you practice writing for a wider array of genres, ideas, and audiences. *Problems that matter*, especially wicked problems, tend to *matter* across academic, professional, and public domains. Indeed, addressing complex problems often requires thinking about and writing for a range of stakeholders, including those from within a particular academic or professional community but also extending beyond those communities to the general public:

> *Professional writing*: contexts where writers study and engage in problems closely related to the workplace. Writers enter professional conversations for a number of reasons: to inform a professional audience about product or workplace issues, to prompt employers to take action or effect change, to educate users about products, to advance the work of the professional sector.
>
> *Public writing*: contexts where writers study and

engage in meaningful social action through written texts. Writers enter public conversations for a number of reasons: to inform a public audience about communal issues, to prompt others to take action or effect change, to educate audiences about public policy, to advance the work of the nonprofit sector.

You will need fluency in all three domains (academic, professional, and public) as you address problems in your future professional and personal lives. This course is designed to give you practice writing across these domains, so you will become more a flexible and adaptive writer who feels confident approaching the diverse writing situations you will almost certainly encounter.

PART I
CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to ***engage complex subject matter such as concepts, theories, and approaches from Writing Studies****.*

The courses you take across Roger Williams University—from General Education, such as CORE 103, to your major—all share at least one common denominator: they are designed for you to learn a specific content. ACCTG 201: Accounting I: Financial, for example, teaches the fundamentals of accounting, with an emphasis on the use of economic data in the decision-making process; CNST 100: Introduction to Construction Management analyzes the cultural context of construction, emphasizing its centrality in the evolution and expansion of the built environment. At the heart of the learning outcomes for these and every other course is the presumption that you will learn the content delivered by those courses. The same is true for courses offered by the Department of Writing Studies, Rhetoric, and Composition. We design our courses to provide opportunities for you to engage—to analyze, apply, and adapt—content knowledge from the field of Writing Studies.

The Writing Program at RWU aims to help students acquire the content knowledge—and strategies for applying that knowledge—to write purposefully, incisively, and ethically. WTNG courses at the 200-level support this goal by extending opportunities for students to practice this kind of writing in response to problems that matter for academic, professional, and public audiences. This textbook, written collaboratively by several faculty members in the Department of Writing Studies, Rhetoric, and Composition, follows the Writing Program's learning outcomes by organizing the textbook's content into six knowledge domains:

- Content Knowledge
- Writing Process Knowledge
- Rhetorical Knowledge
- Genre Knowledge
- Discourse Community Knowledge
- Metacognitive Knowledge

The essays that follow unpack some of the concepts, theories, and approaches developed by teacher/scholars in the field of Writing Studies. Some of these concepts date back thousands of years while others have been developed within the last decade. All are relevant for readers and writers seeking to understand how to communicate with others. Because this course is meant to help you extend your writing experiences beyond the classroom to professional and public situations, the authors of these essays—as teachers and scholars in this writing program—have framed their work to suggest some of the ways the concept, theory, or approach might be usefully applied in a variety of contexts, purposes and audiences.

This book, then, outlines the content knowledge we want you to learn in this class, and explains why.

PART II

WRITING PROCESS KNOWLEDGE

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to ***employ and adapt practices, including inquiry, collaboration, and sophisticated revision strategies, that writers use to achieve their goals in writing for academic, professional, or public situations****.*

You have likely learned about the importance of understanding writing as a process in previous writing courses. You are familiar with steps such as prewriting, outlining, drafting, getting feedback through peer review, revising, and editing. You know that you need to repeat these steps often. And it is true that *good writing is rewriting*. This chapter aims to build upon this knowledge to deepen your understanding of writing processes and their value when developing and articulating ideas. It will also provide strategies for thinking about writing processes in new ways.

These strategies will be especially important as you enter internships, jobs, and other contexts where you will be writing in new genres for a wide range of audiences and working to produce high-quality professional documents. You will learn to employ and adapt practices, including inquiry and collaboration, that writers use in academic, professional, and public situations. This chapter will help you understand how to use a range of sophisticated revision strategies to achieve your document's and the project's goals in these contexts.

The sections in this chapter provide new perspectives on the writing process.

> "**Writing Purposefully**" explains how to begin the writing process by asking questions like: *What do I want to do and for whom?* It explains how to use such questions about purpose and audience to guide you in making choices that will shape your project or document, such as choosing the appropriate evidence, tone, format, and related elements. This section will help you think about what your goals are and how to begin to achieve them.
>
> "**Making Effective Writerly Decisions**" shows you how moving through the writing process involves making a series of informed choices depending on your

purpose, audience, genre, and related concepts. This section will help you become independent writers who are empowered to craft arguments that will best achieve your goals no matter what the context.

"**Using Collaborative Writing to Solve Problems**" explains how working in a writing team can strengthen your writing throughout the writing process. Indeed, it highlights the importance of getting feedback and thinking through your writing choices with a group. It also explains why collaborative writing is so pervasive at the workplace and provides strategies for managing the collaborative writing process effectively.

"Generating Ideas with Visuals" offers a variety of invention exercises, using visual strategies to help you generate ideas, to "see" the relationships between those ideas, and to develop content as you use writing to address problems that matter.

1.

WRITING PURPOSEFULLY

Kate Mele

Typically, rhetorical purpose is defined by three infinitives: "to inform, to persuade, and to entertain." But we can refine those as we consider what we want to say about the problem at hand. For instance, our purpose may be to report, to inquire, to evaluate, or to offer a solution. As you work through the course, you are sure to come up with other infinitives to describe your purpose more accurately. The point is, though, that before we begin a first draft we need to ask ourselves *what do I want to do and for whom?* The text is not simply a collection of curated quotes and facts, but a means to an end—to get our audience on board with what we've discovered about the problem we're investigating—and that's why our purpose needs to be clear in our own minds and in the minds of our readers.

You can see it's hard to separate purpose from audience—because we need to recognize that our text exists for our readers. If they miss the intent of what we've written, they are likely to dismiss our ideas. So, before I talk about writing to a purpose, I'll say a bit more about the *audience* because an audience affects our purpose.

We can imagine a target audience. Those readers are the initial recipients of the message. But there are secondary and tertiary readers to be aware of, too. Think of it this way. I write an email to my supervisor that identifies a potentially damaging clientele problem. And let's say I have an easy-going, joking kind of relationship with my supervisor so I write the email informally and with a humorous tone he will appreciate. My supervisor takes my point and forwards the email on to his supervisor, who forwards it to a vice president. The VP glances at the message and wonders why it even landed in her inbox. In other words, by the time the vice president receives my email, the intent of the message has been lost. Why? Because the humor (directed to one reader) suggests the problem is not a serious one (to another reader).

That brings me back to purpose. What do I want to have happen? Sometimes, our purpose is assigned—by a professor or someone to whom we report. Other times, we arrive at our own purpose. A question might come to mind when we are doing academic reading, so we follow the thread of what others have written about the question until we know we want to contribute a new perspective on the idea. Or in our communities, we might observe certain inequities, so we dig into their root causes and research what others have done to create or solve the problem. In our workplace, we might notice something is not as operational as it could be, and we want to know why and what might be done to change the situation. In effect, we go through a process of inquiry to find out what we want to have happen, in other words, to clarify our purpose.

In my example above, I wanted the company to know the problem I have identified is significant. But before I arrived at that specific purpose, I had to figure out what made the problem big enough that my supervisor and his supervisor needed to pay attention. I had to do some reading, gather some data, play out some scenarios, crunch some numbers. Once I got a handle on the problem, I saw it was a serious one, and, just as important, I realized it was beyond my scope to solve. So, my purpose became *to alert the company leaders to a significant problem*. All of a sudden—when I thought about who has the power to make the appropriate change—the way I described my purpose became more precise and well-defined. I clarified for myself that my purpose was not *to solve a company problem* but *to alert company leaders*.

The writer's purpose, in conjunction with the audience, impacts every part of the text. The infinitive (i.e., *to alert*) sets the trajectory. What follows the infinitive (i.e., *the company leaders need to know there is a significant problem*) connects the purpose to the audience. In other words, to make a full statement of purpose I have to say my intent is *to alert the company leaders that there is a significant problem*. Once I have this statement fully in place, I can make rhetorical decisions about the types of evidence that will create a convincing case, the genre that best delivers the message, and a style and tone that reaches beyond any personal relationship I may have with the initial recipient of the message.

In essence, a writer's purpose is a GPS. Once we have clarified our intent, we can set that purpose as the final destination. There may be times in the writing process when we will have to re-route ourselves because we have gone off purpose, but keeping our intent in mind we will find our way back to what we want to accomplish. Ultimately, if the writer follows out the logic of her purpose with the right kinds of evidence, reasoning, genre, and tone, the text will carry weight because the message is clear.

2.

MAKING EFFECTIVE WRITERLY DECISIONS

Catherine Forsa

Much of your writing experience in school may have seemed as if good writing came from following rules from teachers and textbooks. At this stage of your writing experience, however, you are empowered to make informed decisions that will make your document more effective. You make these decisions based on what you know about your audience, purpose, genre, and other key elements in your rhetorical situation.

Making Decisions throughout Your Writing Process

Writing involves making decisions with each word you write, each sentence you put together, each design element you add, in addition to other large and small decisions. Large decisions include those related to your argument, what evidence to include and how to organize it, and other components that build the frame of your document. Consider also how you will present each paragraph, each sentence, and each word so that your ideas are both clear and persuasive. Consider how you will format or design your document so that your ideas are visually as well as verbally clear. There may not be one definitive right answer that you can find in a textbook; rather, there may be a range of answers that could work based on your goals.

How to Approach These Decisions

As you make these decisions, keep in mind questions about your *rhetorical situation*, which may include:

- Who is your audience? What choices will your audience respond most favorably to?
- What is your main message? What decisions will help your reader most clearly understand this message?
- What is your purpose for writing? What decisions will help your document achieve this purpose?
- What decisions make the most sense for your genre? What conventions correspond with your genre?

Pay attention to your rationale—do you have a well thought out reason for each decision? Your goal is to make it easy for the reader to understand and accept your point. This, though, can be challenging, so your decisions must be part of an ongoing writing process that involves planning, drafting, revising, getting feedback, and repeating these stages until you are confident your document is effective. As you practice this process, some of your decision-making will become more intuitive, especially as you have more experience assessing rhetorical situations.

Strategies to Make Decisions

While it can be overwhelming to consider so many decisions, you can use some strategies to ensure your decisions are effective.

Understand genre conventions: As you analyze your rhetorical situation and begin to plan your document, be sure you are familiar with the genre you will be writing. What conventions (the elements common to a certain kind of document) are typical of the type of document you are writing? A resume has certain elements that an email does not have. Find out what those elements are. You can, for example, seek out sample documents that represent the genre, which can help you see the conventions that will guide your writing. Make note of the distinct conventions shared by documents from a particular genre. Observe how writers worked with these conventions, to inform your own decision-making. Understanding your genre is one way to judge how long your text should be, what design elements to include, and what tone to adopt.

Assess your writing's effectiveness: Next, practice assessing your own writing and seeking feedback from others. Effective writers are open to revising their work since they know that their writing can always benefit from revision. You are likely familiar with this advice, but now think about it in terms of decision-making. In other words, ask these questions:

- Why did I make this decision?
- Is this the best decision I can make? Is there a better decision?
- How does this decision compare what I've seen in sample documents?
- What would happen if I made a different decision? How would the audience likely respond?

In this process, you'll see that you are empowered to make the decisions that will make your document strong.

In some cases, you may find it useful to test out your decisions. For example, if you are writing a resume, you may try several different layouts. Ask your friends or professors which one of the three would be clearest and most persuasive. This feedback can help you decide which layout to use.

Understanding that writing is an activity where you are making a series of writerly decisions can help you successfully respond to a diverse range of writing problems and situations. Your goal is not to find the "correct" answer when you write; rather, it is to think about and make the decisions that lead to an effective document.

3.

USING COLLABORATIVE WRITING TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

Catherine Forsa

Collaboration as a Useful Tool for Solving Writing-Related Problems

You have probably worked on several group projects at RWU. Faculty members often emphasize the importance of teamwork and the large part it will play in your career. Group projects require collaborative writing, the process by which a group of writers makes decisions, writes, discusses, and revises documents with a common goal. Many students report facing challenges with collaborative writing and group work in general, especially when group members fail to contribute equally or documents end up as a hodgepodge of different writing styles pieced together. The challenges are rooted largely in misunderstanding what collaborative writing is, how it functions, and how to participate in it. You can address these challenges by learning more about how collaborative writing works and why it is so important to practice.

Collaborative writing is a powerful tool with benefits for the writing process and for strategies to facilitate an effective process for your writing team.

Benefits of Collaborative Writing

Collaborative writing can strengthen your writing in the following ways:

You get multiple perspectives on strategies for addressing a problem. Often the problems you will be writing about are complex, so you will need to carefully consider the most effective strategies to approach them. Working with others allows you to collect and evaluate a wide variety of potential strategies, including those that you would not have thought of on your own. It helps you talk about and think through the usefulness and challenges of the strategies. In other words, collaborative writing provides a fruitful testing ground for gathering and thinking through your ideas. By consulting with others, you will likely discover new ways to approach a problem.

You get multiple perspectives on assessing how effectively the writing addresses a problem. Collaborative writing can lead to effective writing because it provides opportunities for feedback throughout the writing process. This involves built-in peer review and opportunities to test your writing to get different perspectives on its effectiveness. You may think that a sentence or a paragraph is clear while your group members find it confusing. Getting this feedback will help you not only to revise that sentence or paragraph but to look for similar patterns or issues throughout the document that require revision.

You have the opportunity for meaningful conversations about your writing. Collaborative writing can help you become a stronger writer. You can talk through your writing process, allowing you to reflect on your strengths. Teammates may tell you what aspects of writing you excel at. Maybe they recognize that you are great at transitioning between ideas or making sentences more concise. That knowledge can help inspire your confidence. And you can support your teammates as they strengthen this skill. Similarly if you are struggling with an area, such as using concrete language, teammates may be able to help you consider revision strategies and explain the concept so that you can grasp it more effectively.

Strategies for Managing Effective Collaborative Writing

Collaborative writing is more than chopping up a document and assigning each section to a different teammate to write. This could lead to a document without a cohesive argument, voice, and style. It could also lead to unequal contributions and a timeline that does not allow for meaningful revision. This is not effective collaborative writing.

Instead, think about collaborative writing as an ongoing dialogue about the document wherein all members provide meaningful contributions to the major decisions. This dialogue requires all team members to put in meaningful effort and to be respectful of others' time and ideas. There are many approaches to writing collaboratively, especially at the beginning of the process, when the group makes major decisions about the document's argument, evidence, and organization. Below are some strategies to consider when writing collaboratively.

Communicate and make decisions early and often. As a team, decide on a plan for your work. Initial team meetings can include conversations about the role for each team member. Such roles can include the

- team organizer, who works with other members to set deadlines and track progress on the document;
- team editor, who ensures that all members are working to produce a cohesive, consistent document; and
- team communicator, who ensures that all members have access to documents and can communicate about the document in a timely manner.

These roles may change as the writing process continues, but having such roles can help the team make decisions together.

Make a commitment and stick with it. A key part of successful collaboration is acknowledging your role in the team; you are not an individual writer but rather a contributor to a team. This requires each member to respect the others. Think about how you can contribute to *the team's* success. Such a shift may be difficult since so much of our early education is focused on individual success and grades. You may work best at the last minute under pressure, but writing collaboratively, your team members need to see your writing and hear your ideas early and often so they can help shape them. In joining a group, you made a commitment to work as a group—stick with this commitment even when it becomes challenging for you. It is helpful to continually ask yourself such questions as:

- What would my teammates say about my contributions so far?
- Where have I been a strong contributor? How can I continue to do that?
- Where have I been falling short in my contributions? How can I change that?

This process of self-reflection ensures that you are a productive, respectful team member.

Participate in group meetings. Meetings are essential to successful collaboration, especially in person where you can all look at the same document and talk out ideas. Once you schedule a meeting (or regular meetings, like every Monday at 5:00), commit to it. Team members should take detailed notes to keep track of deadlines, decisions, and plans. Team members should also decide on how, and how often, the team will communicate. A collaborative platform like Google Docs is useful to track changes and comments. If you cannot all find a time to meet on campus, consider using Facetime or other video chatting technologies so that all members can join the meeting. While email can be a useful way to address small decisions, it does not provide the same opportunity to have purposeful conversations where group members ask each other questions, offer suggestions, and build on others' points.

Use technology effectively. Technologies such as Google Docs can be useful in showing all team members all parts of the document. However, this technology can limit the number of times that students meet or talk in person, so make sure to prioritize time to get together to share updates, raise questions, talk through major challenges, set timelines, and provide feedback. Text messaging may be quick and easy, but it can become confusing and inhibit having meaningful conversations; it can also exclude others. Instead, decide on—and stick with—a consistent way to facilitate an ongoing conversation, and do not underestimate the power of talking to each other. For instance, a group of at least seven writers collaborated on this book over one year, and we met in person every week to maintain a cohesive plan for it. Always maintain a respectful tone that seeks to add constructively to the group's momentum.

Make a style guide. Since ensuring consistency throughout a collaboratively written document can be a challenge, consider using a style guide or reference guide on formatting, organization, and related areas. For example, this guide can outline the format for headings, subheadings, spacing, fonts, and other design decisions or models for citing evidence.

Seek advice when appropriate. While you should address disagreements respectfully, remember that instructors are valuable resources who can help support your team's success. Consider seeking out an instructor's advice about effective communication or means of communicating with a team member who may not be maintaining their commitment to the group.

4.

GENERATING IDEAS WITH VISUALS

When you start any piece of writing, keep two rhetorical aspects firmly in mind: audience and purpose. Every writing situation requires inquiry: What do the readers know? What evidence would best convince them? What genre fits the audience/purpose? What style? You would not want to cover "historical" information, for instance, if your reader already knows that material, so why spend time generating unnecessary content? If you are tasked to research the reasons for a particular problem, your paper had better not argue its solutions. The least important (even useless) document is one that offers the reader gratuitous information.

Granted, everyone generates ideas differently, but most novice writers fail to create enough focused ideas, thus limiting their papers' contents. Whether you brainstorm (list ideas), free-write (continuous writing with no worry about grammar), talk, research, or use other ideas-generating tactics, spend plenty of time on this step. By experimenting with different strategies, you will generate more ideas than necessary, and all those choices will provide different planning opportunities for your document's content.

Reading Actively

Often, generating ideas will require a visualization activity, such as annotation (see the "Active Reading" chapter for a more detailed analysis of *annotation* and other reading strategies). In other words, as you read an article, chapter, report, etc., put the author's points into your own words (paraphrase), note important focusing ideas, highlight evidence, ask questions, jot down reactions, even reference comparisons to other works. Through the active process of annotation, you will break a text into dozens of specific ideas (such as the headings in this chapter), which then provide you with focusing and organizing choices for your paper. When you annotate effectively, you create a visual record of your engagement with the text.

Using Tables

To channel your different analyses, try using actual visual elements, such as a table. If you know that you need to build a proposal, you could create table subtitles around that document's common sections and then fill in those four columns' cells: the Introduction, covering the issue/problem; a Methods section, explaining how you went about your work; a Results part, dealing with what happened or what you found; and a Discussion ending, summarizing the proposal and findings. For an academic assignment, you could create table columns around the direction's key terms, such as "background," "summary," "causes," "effects," etc., and for a professional one, you could turn instructions, whether written or verbal, into subtitles that reflect the paper's purpose. Whether public, academic, or professional, a common writing purpose involves explaining a subject's "problems" and "solutions."

For instance, consider that your supervisor wants you to research (both through the Web and via personal interviews with peers) potential benefits and problems involving adding a "Casual Friday" policy. While reviewing articles through various business sources and after interviewing co-workers, you gradually fill in a table like this:

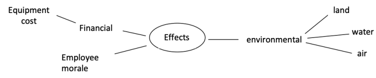
Adding a Casual Friday Policy

Pros/Benefits Creates a more easy-going atmosphere Saves wear and tear on professional attire Increases camaraderie Raises productivity	Cons/Problems Conflicts–rifts between employees over garb Expense of adding new casual clothes Competition–complaints about certain attire More socializing

Quite often, since you will become an expert on an issue only by studying it, you will need to do extensive research in order to fill in table cells, which might also contain a column for "Evidence" and perhaps for "Solutions" (depending on the assignment—i.e., on what you are tasked to do). If the table above contained a right-hand row subtitled "Solutions," then some cells could be filled by ideas like "adding details and warnings to the policy" and "communicating the policy through emails and posters." By channeling instructions into a table, you not only list a variety of comparable ideas (in a column), but also connect to contrasting ones (in the other column). You build thought links.

Creating Maps or Diagrams

If you are an especially visual learner, use maps to break down your ideas. Like multi-directional flow charts, mapping allows you to see your ideas narrowing and connections forming. For instance, say that your boss or supervisor asks you to research and report on the effects that a new technology might have on your company. At first, you focus on the financial effects since the latest equipment tends to be expensive, but then you discover positive consequences to employee morale and to the environment. Your map starts to look like this:



Through research, you also discover that while the financial effects are negative in the present, they improve with time, so you draw more map lines from "financial" to "one month," "one year," and even "far future." Then you discover a report of morale problems resulting from the new technology, so you make lines from “morale” to both “positive” and “negative.” Since most of your sources will also offer proof, you can link subjects like “negative morale” to actual evidence such as statistics and examples. As you extend the mapping from the original circled idea, you reveal the complexity of the issue, for the more you learn, the more intricate the map and thus your report becomes.

Thinking Opposites

Here’s another *viewing* tip: Think opposites. Quite often, a problem will have a dual nature, such as a financial one involving too many expenditures and not enough added revenue. Solutions ideas also might lead to interesting opposites:

Inexpensive temporary solution ⟷ Costly permanent option

For almost any rhetorical situation, you can often find two sides, such as when you argue (your opponents’ points vs your own), reflect on your own efforts (what you did well vs what you did poorly), focus on an issue (the causes of it vs the effects), or critique an argument (the writer’s successful rhetorical tactics vs his or her less persuasive ones, such as sarcasm shown in a serious argument, biased sources used, or even logical fallacies displayed). This idea of opposites can often give you a unique perspective, which you can then use to plan one body paragraph or even your entire paper.

Funneling Thoughts through Organizational Patterns

To organize your thoughts effectively, you need to group your content logically, giving readers clear paths to follow. In fact, the following common organizational patterns can even help you to generate more ideas by viewing a problem from various angles:

Classification: view through a division into parts.	What specific problems, effects, and solutions exist? Consider categories such as financial, ethical, practical, environmental, etc., and then break those ideas into narrower ones—e.g., land, water, air from the map above.
Illustration: picture according to evidence	What examples show one specific problem, effect, or solution? Perhaps quoted experts, incidents, or statistics can build one paragraph.
Compare-contrast: look for opposites	Are any of the problems, effects, or solutions contrasting ideas? Maybe one effect would be immediate, another long term.
Process: consider steps or stages	What specific process exists? Do the effects lead from one to another?
Cause-effect: think about reasons or consequences	What reasons explain a problem or solution? Maybe one cause or consequence deserves more of a spotlight.

Note how the organizational patterns guide you toward a variety of analyses. First, they lead you to break down your issue, making the ideas more specific and simpler to communicate and develop. Next, they require that you generate examples for your points, and then the varied patterns twist your analysis by focusing on contrasts, on chronology, and on reasoning. In short, by applying just one problem or solution to these five common ways of connecting information, you can generate a plethora of ideas. Remember that planning is critical thinking.

An assignment's rhetorical situation is the key starting point for generating ideas, so know what your instructor, boss, or simply the audience wants in a paper—i.e., your purpose for writing, your specific readers, your genre, style, not to mention the content for your argument. To break content into manageable ideas, you will often have to do some research (you can get some help with this complex step in the "Research and Finding Credible Sources" chapter under Discourse Community Knowledge). The ideas-generating step should be a long, sometimes frustrating, but always rewarding one (even fun!), and never forget that all writing-process stages "loop," repeat themselves, as you continually evaluate and revise your work. In fact, you might still be generating ideas even after you *finish* the document, for is a text ever really finished?

Media Attributions

- FlowChart
- Continuum

PART III

RHETORICAL KNOWLEDGE

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to ***apply rhetorical concepts (audience, purpose, exigence, kairos) to academic, public, and/or professional situations****.*

Rhetoric is not just about *what* you say or write; it is also about *how* you say or write it. As Aristotle famously noted, rhetoric is about persuading your audience (to think in a certain way, to take a particular action). In *How Writing Works*, you have learned how the rhetorical appeals work when addressing your audience. You practiced establishing your credibility (appeal to ethos) so that your audience will trust you. You paid attention to your audience's values and emotional attachment to those values (appeal to pathos) when choosing your evidence and tone. You have logically connected your claims and your evidence (appeal to logos) to achieve a clear purpose the audience can identify. Also, as academic writers, you gained some experience with assessing your rhetorical situation.

Introduction to Professional and Public writing expands your knowledge of rhetoric: you will learn more rhetorical concepts, new applications of rhetoric to your writing processes, and additional rhetorical strategies. With a greater understanding of how rhetoric works, you will effectively approach, study, and engage all sorts of problems relevant to your various fields of study.

The chapters in this section provide new perspectives on your practice of rhetoric.

> **"Rhetoric"** gives an overview of how rhetoric works and explains its relationship to writing effective texts. This chapter also defines rhetorical terms that appear throughout the book. It sets the foundation for thinking rhetorically about problems that matter.
>
> **"Writing Your Audience into Your Text"** presents audience as something more than a passive recipient of a message. Instead, this section encourages you to have a dynamic relationship with your audience even as you begin your reading and research and then into the construction of your text. It introduces you to the idea of "stakeholders," members of the community to whom a problem matters, and then outlines a

process of question and answer you can have with a range of stakeholders impacted by the problem. By imagining what your stakeholders would say as you think through your ideas, you will create texts that stimulate response and action, rather than mere opinion, because your audience will recognize you have taken them into account as partners in the activity of problem-solving.

"**Rhetorical Situation, Exigence, and Kairos**" explains how a rhetorical situation comes into being. In previous writing classes, your rhetorical situation (purpose, audience, text, social context) was usually given to you. However, there is a backstory to any rhetorical situation—why the situation even exists. This section details the ways in which exigence (the need to speak or write) gives rise to your purposes for writing a particular type of text with a particular audience in mind. The section also discusses why exigence and kairos (the right or opportune time) together are at the source of any rhetorical situation. Knowledge of exigence and kairos are essential for writers who are engaged in inquiry and writing about complex problems: being aware of why you need to contribute to the matter at hand and why it's timely to do so will help you produce purposeful and well-focused, persuasive documents.

"**Textual Circulation**" illustrates why, in the digital age, being cognizant of where your documents go once you hit "send" is important. Using the example of memes, this section discusses how your documents can take on new rhetorical meaning when they are shared, augmented, and repurposed. It also explains how you can fine-tune the problem you are investigating if you trace the sets of texts that have been circulating about the problem. This section offers guidance about textual circulation when working collaboratively in a community or organization, particularly when creating internal as well as external documents.

"Visual Rhetoric" discusses the need for creating rhetorically sound texts through the use of photographs, drawings, symbols, charts, maps, color, shapes, typography, and white space, among others. Typically, we think of rhetoric in its written form. However, more than ever, we live in a world where images communicate meaning. This section explains that in order to be responsive to how readers receive and interact with information, writers in professional and public settings should consider designing documents that contain culturally-aware visual messaging.

"Framing" describes the rhetorical choices we make in choosing how to "frame" our problem, to ensure our readers see the problem from our perspective. Framing is more than a stylistic flourish, it is an inherently ethical consideration, as the framing we use can influence how our readers understand the problem.

5.

RHETORIC

Mel A. Topf

We commonly hear the word "rhetoric" used in a negative way, to indicate the empty, inflated or misleading language of someone who has an untrustworthy agenda. ("The governor's speech was just a lot of rhetoric.") But in your study of how writing works, you've learned rhetoric has a more significant meaning—the techniques we use to communicate effectively and persuasively. Even though many of us have developed our rhetorical knowledge, we still often make the mistake of thinking we are simply transferring information when we write or speak and, in essence, forget to consider those techniques that make our communication persuasive. In fact, whether we are thinking about it or not, we are always using rhetoric because, as Aristotle wrote, "we cannot do without it." Our communicating is rarely effective, he said, "with no help beyond the bare facts," because "the way in which a thing is said does affect its intelligibility."

Consider a corporate project manager, wanting to be sure a project stays on schedule, who says to the employees responsible for the project: "Completing this project by June

15 is important." But she could also say, "It's really, really important for all of us that we complete the project by June 15 at the very latest." The substance of both statements is the same, but the second version adds several distinct and common rhetorical devices to emphasize what is important. One, it adds "really," a word often used as an intensifier (without adding additional information). Two, it repeats the word. Redundancy is a common means of emphasis. Three, it adds "for all of us" to focus on those responsible. Fourth, it moves the point about importance from the end of the sentence to the beginning, that is, alters the "arrangement" of the sentence. Note that none of these rhetorical differences adds any substantive information. That's rhetoric at work.

Some Concepts in Rhetoric

In English literature classes you probably encountered some rhetorical concepts that apply to specific language usage. For example, *metonymy* is the name of one thing applied to another (like *the crown* standing for the Queen), or *oxymoron* (like "darkness visible"). Even metaphor, which we tend to think of as literary, comes out of the rhetorical tradition. But when we think about how writing works, we need to consider an equally important set of rhetorical concepts that apply to the *context* or circumstances within which we communicate. Here are several important ones which inform the kinds of decisions we make as writers.

Rhetorical Situation. The rhetorical situation involves the interplay among the speaker's or writer's purposes, text, audience, and academic, public, or professional context within which the communication occurs.

Framing. A frame is a way of shaping or packaging a distinct perspective on a subject that leads the audience to accept the message. Sustainability, for example, could be framed as a moral crisis or an economic opportunity. Our evidence, reasoning, tone, and style all contribute to how we frame our text so that the audience gets the message: for instance, as crisis or as opportunity.

Exigence. Exigence, or exigency, is the set of circumstances that create the demand or felt pressure for writing or speaking. (It's from the Latin word for "demand.") The circumstances create a need to fill a gap or overcome an obstacle, to meet a request, to resolve a dispute, to solve a problem, and so on. In the example given above, let's say the manager's concern about deadlines arose from some employees having missed a recent deadline, or from the contract they are working under imposing harsh financial penalties for missing a deadline. Both circumstances create an exigence that "demands" that the manager not simple notify employees of the deadline, but also emphasize how important it is.

Kairos. Closely related to exigence is Kairos—good timing. In school writing you may have little opportunity or need to make judgments about the timing of your writing or speaking, or have reason to mention it directly, since deadlines and syllabi often make the decision for you. In many real-world contexts, however, judgements about timing are crucial. Kairos is the rhetorical term for the right or opportune moment when something is best stated or done. It also refers to the expressly stated recognition of the appropriate moment to drive home an argument. As Martin Luther King asserted in his "I have a Dream Speech" of 1963, "Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy."

Audience. Audience is the recipient of a communication. There may be several audiences for a single communication, with varying or even conflicting interests. As writers, we must make clear judgments about how to address varying audiences, guided by the need to achieve the writer's purpose. The project manager's audience, for example, is a group whose members should have in common an interest in successful completion of the project.

Discourse community. This is a group with interests in common, always involving shared language practices that help achieve shared goals. It is within a discourse community that we write and speak. Students, professors, and staff at a university is one. Red Sox fans, an introductory biology course, members of a corporation, and constitutional lawyers are others. You may of course be members of many discourse communities, each using in different ways language, writing, and writing genres to achieve the community's goals.

Rhetoric and Problems That Matter

Whether we are interrogating a problem from an academic perspective, posing a solution to a problem in a professional setting, or identifying a problem that needs attention in the public sphere—whenever we write to an audience—we are using rhetoric. The more we are aware of what these concepts are and how they function, the greater facility we gain with communicating persuasively—and the more likely we are to move people toward a new way of thinking and/or acting about problems that matter.

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6.

WRITING AUDIENCE INTO YOUR TEXT

Kate Mele

When we begin to write, one of our most pressing questions is *who is my audience?* Why? Because we are not writing a person-less paper to no one. If we think about our actual readers, we often can identify them as members of our discourse community or stakeholders in other discourse communities who will be affected by the ideas we offer about the problem at hand. But how do we take these people into account when we produce a report, an argument, a brochure, a PSA, a manual, or a proposal—and the list goes on. How do we develop audience awareness for the various types of documents we might create in academic, professional, and public settings?

We know that talking out a problem with others requires us to interact—to listen, respond, and reflect, to give and to take. How often in a conversation or class discussion have you said, "I can relate" before giving your opinion? This same conversational give-and-take can be applied to situations where you dig into a pressing workplace or community problem. On the page, when we "relate"—when we approximate a lively conversation between ourselves and our stakeholders—we can write more effectively and be taken more seriously.

Stakeholders: a synonym for audience. Stakeholders are other people with the same question as I have about the problem, the people causing the problem, the people impacted by the problem, or the people who think they have a better answer than I do. They may be like-minded, hostile, of two minds, or noncommittal. However, we may not know where they stand unless we actually talk to them. While this may be possible, it's not likely that in all situations we can have a one-on-one with people who might care about what we have to say.

So, how can we write texts that include our audience in the buzz going on in our heads? Read what others have to say relevant to our problem. Our research provides a foundation for our inquiry. We can draw on others to establish the background on the problem, to discover what like-minded writers have said that can support our arguments, and to recognize what hostile writers have argued so we can respond intelligently. Entering this course, you probably already have had experience writing a research paper in this way.

As well as being an important factor in our research process, our audience is also integral to our *writing process*. In the early phase of generating ideas, we can imagine our audience into being when we use our sources as a sounding board. The person who shares our view, the person who vehemently disagrees, and the one who is on the fence—we can write directly to them, and then as our drafts unfold, we can weave that conversation into our lines of reasoning.

Often when we put together an essay or a research report we are so focused on getting the information on the page, we don't think about how the information may be received by our audience. Usually after we have done research, we summarize our sources and restate what they mean in our own words. Or we put two sources together and note the similarities and differences between them. However in the inquiry stage of unpacking a problem, we could go one more step: instead of simply adding on our opinion, what if we also *talked back* to these sources—as if they actually were sitting next to us? *I agree because. . .I take your point, but. . .*From there we could imagine how they might *talk back* to us, what we might say in return. This practice of imagining our audience's responses could lead us to find additional credible evidence, refine our reasoning, and or include visuals to illustrate the point.

I'm borrowing from Gerald Graff and Kathy Birkenstein's *They Say/I Say* (2018) in making this suggestion to "talk back" to our sources. Graff and Birkenstein suggest that we identify stakeholders who are going to say *wait a minute* as they read our text. Reviewing our early drafts, we should locate where someone would want to counter us. We can "plant" a naysayer in our text by stating their objection and then responding to them (78-9). Doing so builds our trustworthiness (our ethos) because, by acknowledging other points of view, we are being fair-minded. But I want to take this idea further and not only focus on those skeptical about our ideas.

It's just as important to get the conversation going among all of those involved in the problem we're exploring. Those asking the same question as I am. Those affected by the problem. Those who have a better solution in mind. In other words, with each passage we produce, we could pause and ask ourselves *what would each different stakeholder say about what I just wrote*? If we apply ourselves to this type of sophisticated writing process, we develop a well-conceived tapestry animated by a living-breathing writer, rather than a bunch of sources strung together by no one in particular.

That's what we're hoping for, isn't it? To make progress with our writing. But imagine a naysayer, not thinking we are on the same page, interrupting right here. *Wait a minute!* She raises her hand. *This process sounds useful for putting together a more complex research paper than I've written before, but I'm supposed to create a PSA for a non-profit organization, not do a research paper.*

If I were in class, I would say to that student, clearly a stakeholder like me who wants to solve the problem of connecting with her audience: *Good point. I have just given you some ideas for building audience awareness that you can use to write a strong academic essay—one in which you are* *effectively interacting with your sources and your stakeholders.* However, let's think about how we can apply writing our audience into other types of texts. What does that lively conversation look like?

I would start with a series of questions: What are the aims of the non-profit I'm creating this text for? Who are my stakeholders? Who am I interacting with? Why do they need this public service announcement? *What is this problem really all about?* I'd start answering these questions by reading what others have said about the problem. And there I am, just as I would be if I were assigned a research paper—engaged in inquiry, doing research, talking back to my sources, and thus developing a message more responsive to a diverse community's needs. In this situation, I would extend my research, though, to include inquiry into the genre because I'm not familiar with what an effective PSA looks like. After analyzing a variety of PSA samples, I'd test out visuals and formatting, imagining at each stage what a range of stakeholders would say and then adjust my draft accordingly.

When it comes down to it, whatever kind of document we are producing, we want our audience to take us seriously. Two basic questions can guide us: *What is the problem really about? Who cares about the problem?* From there, we can begin writing the conversation into our unfolding drafts. If our readers can locate themselves in our texts and feel as if we are co-collaborators in problem-solving, we go a long way in creating an ethos they trust.

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7.

RHETORICAL SITUATION, EXIGENCE, AND KAIROS

Kate Mele

Often when we are given an assignment, we are asked to assess our rhetorical situation: What is my purpose? Who is my audience? What type of text will achieve my purpose for my audience? What is the social context within which my text will circulate?   But, according to rhetorical theorist Lloyd F. Bitzer, there is no rhetorical situation without exigence as its source.

Exigence, simply defined, means that we are pressed to speak or write. There's a sense of urgency that comes when we experience exigence. For instance, you get a high grade on an exam you thought you blew, and you want to tell someone. Your exuberance over the grade becomes a driving force—an exigence—for contacting your best friend. And thus, your rhetorical situation emerges: your purpose (to share good news); your audience (your best friend); your document (a text that conforms to the conventions of text-messaging, including an emoji); the social context (you and your best friend always share good news with each other before anyone else). The text message—something we do every day without thinking—has a source, like a river has a source. The river has to start somewhere just as the text message had to spring from somewhere. As in the case with this example of sharing good news with your friend, exigence is at the source of any rhetorical situation.

The concept of exigence gets a little more complicated when applied to professional and public writing. In these settings, we typically feel it is necessary to speak or write in light of a pressing business or social problem. For example, the coronavirus pandemic: a problem of public health, economics, policy and politics. Many people have had their say about these problems. Politicians have weighed in on policy; scientists and healthcare workers on the medical side; economists and CEOs on the financial ramifications; food activists on the precarity of our agriculture and meat industries; religious leaders on freedom to worship; and citizens on civic rights, social inequalities, and changes to our daily lives. All these various responses are both powerful and difficult to evaluate because of the emotions impacting so many of us during the crisis. But our varied emotional reactions to the pandemic do not qualify as exigence. While exigence is emotionally and intellectually visceral, it arises from discourse, in other words, from a conversation about a specific aspect of a problem. So what's the difference between having a reaction to a circumstance and experiencing the exigence to speak or write? How do we find our exigence?

Discovering exigence is similar to narrowing a subject to a topic. Management may be your subject, but if your professor assigned you a paper in a Management course and said write about anything, your paper wouldn't be about management. You would to narrow the subject, say, to arts management or sports management—but even that would be too broad because many people have already written on these areas of your major. Once you start reading what they've said about the type of management you're interested in, your ideas begin to click. That clicking is your exigence bubbling up. Writer A has said this, and Writer B has said that, but neither of them has addressed the ideas clicking in your imagination. You see a gap in the discussion that you can fill. The recognition of this gap is your exigence. Your topic, by necessity, fills the gap: it satisfies your exigence. From that point on, you can assess your rhetorical situation.

It may be hard to imagine having our own exigence because typically our instructors have already set some parameters—a topic, a purpose, an audience. But, as I've just explained, our inquiry will lead us to find what we can contribute to the problem at hand. By reading what others have said, we might see there is something missing in the way they have described the problem, or we see a misstep in their reasoning, or their evidence doesn't hold up that well. It's likely we will see a gap we feel the need to fill. Maybe we have an alternative solution. Maybe we think the problem should be reframed. Maybe the record needs to be set straight. These types of speculations can help us pin down our exigence.

When discovering our exigence, we also have to consider the element of timeliness, or *kairos*. In addition to paying attention to a gap that urgently needs to be filled in the discourse surrounding a problem, we must ask ourselves about the window of opportunity to write or speak *now*. Let's go back to the coronavirus pandemic to see how exigence and kairos work together to bring forth a rhetorical situation.

At the beginning of the pandemic, many companies immediately reshaped their messaging: as a result of an urgency (exigence) and timeliness (kairos), they assured us that doing business with them was safe. Amazon, for example, didn't have to think about their customers' health before, but now they do. In effect, there was a gap in their messaging (their discourse) that needed to be filled. It's evident that someone in the organization asked how the public could be sure all those packages arriving on doorsteps would not spread the virus. Someone evidently replied, "A television ad." And we've seen it: A well-timed campaign that shows workers in masks preparing orders at safe, social distances and a Prime airline pilot standing near her plane as boxes of masks designated for the workers are being loaded. Those in the Amazon organization responsible for that messaging performed a quintessential rhetorical act. They recognized that the company's exigence was compounded by the need for right timing, and from there made choices based on the emergent rhetorical situation: purpose (to assure customers that the warehouses are virus-free); audience (an anxious public under stay-at-home orders); text (a television ad including assuring visuals); social context (televisions kept on 24/7 as the public waits out the pandemic). Amazon could have created a different ad, but this one addressed both a business and social problem that mattered—keeping the company productive, keeping people in their jobs, keeping the public as safe as possible.

These are the very steps you are likely to take as writers in your professional lives and serving the needs of the public. To reiterate, when you locate what you believe to be urgent for the given time, you have a rhetorical situation: you can refine your purpose, figure out who your argument impacts the most, and decide on the best type of text to reach readers who have the power to make the change you seek and under what conditions. Think of it this way: exigence and kairos are the fuel that drives our rhetorical choices forward.

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8.

TEXTUAL CIRCULATION

Christian J. Pulver

As citizens in the twenty-first century, we live in a networked world where texts and media of all kinds *circulate* quickly across the internet and the larger public. To think about how texts circulate in culture is to consider how they get written, how they get shared, and how the meanings they carry move with them as they travel from context to context. These days such texts often include images, sound, and video, as well as words (for example, multimodal texts), and as the internet grows and expands, the circulation of texts, genres, and meaning all speed up, changing our writing and rhetorical practices in the process.

There are many ways to think about how texts circulate, from the posts we share online, to the memos we exchange at work, to the larger world of the public internet where texts and information circulate globally. Traditional print newspapers and magazines have long tracked their circulation and subscribers. However, in the digital spaces of the global internet, our experience of how writing and rhetoric *move* has radically changed, not only in how we write and communicate with friends and family, but also in the ways ideas flow through cultures and give shape to professional and public discourse about problems that matter.

To illustrate how textual circulation works, let's look at a quick example of a genre that exemplifies how texts circulate in modern writing environments: *memes*. The term, coined by evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, is a play on the word *gene*. Analogous to genes, memes are ideas that replicate and spread through human culture as people encounter and share them. Memes may be exchanged by two people, as when a teacher explains a new concept to a student, or on a larger, societal scale when big ideas like *liberty* or *social justice* take shape over generations of people.

Modern internet memes may not always be about something as lofty as a concept like *liberty,* but they move and morph from person to person like any other meme. Nowadays, memes come in many forms and genres, but one of the most common kinds is what is known as the "advice animal image macro"—as seen in Image 1. Most of us are familiar with this kind of meme. Advice animal image macros like "success kid" are common memes that use the same image but add a different phrase at the top and bottom of the image. In the case of "success kid," the top phrase states a problem ("Get sick on Friday"), and the bottom phrase states a serendipitous outcome ("Three day weekend").

Image 1

Like all memes, "success kid" has a history of development and circulation. The original image was taken in 2007 by Lindey Griner of her 11-month-old son Sammy and posted to Flickr to share with family (Image 2). The "I hate sandcastles" image was the first image meme to be circulated that used the little boy's image (Image 3). Others soon picked up on the 2007 image and began altering it for their own rhetorical purposes. By 2008, the image was used by dozens of other people to convey either a sense of frustration, as in "I hate sandcastles," or a feeling of unexpected success, giving birth to the now well-known "success kid" meme (Images 4 and 5).

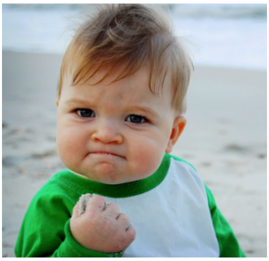

Image 2

Image 3

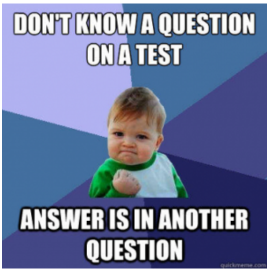

Image 4

Image 5

Today, thousands of image macros have been spun from this original image, and "success kid" memes continue to circulate online as other meme creators draw on the shared meaning of the meme in new contexts. Thus, when considering textual circulation, we are looking at how texts get composed, how they reference and borrow meaning from each other, where they go, and the meanings they carry as they circulate.

For writers researching and studying a particular problem in the public realm, understanding how texts circulate, and how to trace this circulation, can give us a better sense of the larger discourse that shapes the issue or problem we're researching. For example, in writing this entry on textual circulation, I started with a basic online search for the issue I was going to write about: "memes and circulation." One of the first results to catch my attention was an article by Angela Volpe from the online tech magazine *The Verge*, "It's Not All Pepes and Trollfaces—Memes can be a Force for Good." Written in 2018, the article explores how memes act as "emotional contagion" as they circulate in public and across social media (Image 6).

Finding a good entry text into the problem you are considering is a useful way to start tracing some of the other texts and voices that are currently circulating around an issue. Using Volpe's as my entry text into the problem of memes in public discourse, I looked closely at the texts and sources the author incorporated into the article.

In all, Volpe quotes and cites over ten different sources in the article, drawing on a range of texts and genres: an article from *The Guardian* newspaper; a study by the European Union on the influence of memes in fringe communities; a popular website on memes known as *knowyourmeme.com*;

and a book by psychology professor John Suler, *Psychology of the Digital Age*, about the social and mental health issues related to online communication. Image 6 illustrates how Volpe's article served as a good entry point to the problem I was exploring because it connected to several other texts circulating around the same issue.

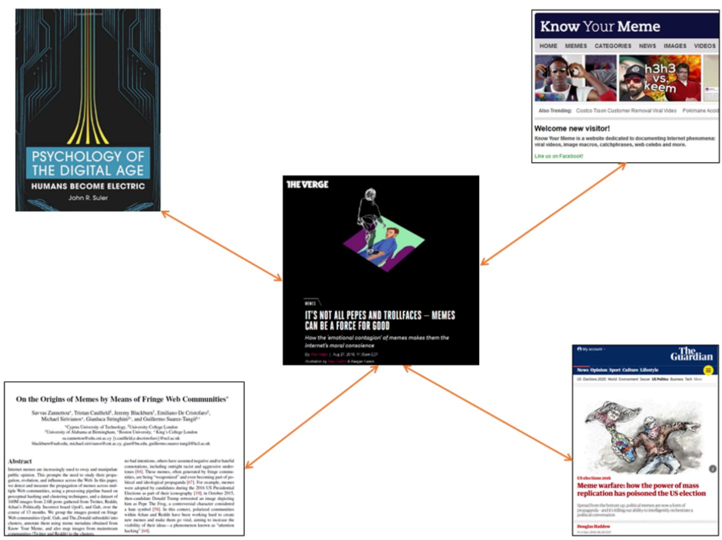

Image 6

As is often the case when tracing how texts and ideas circulate, you'll come across several kinds of texts, from popular to scholarly articles, books, websites, and video. By doing this preliminary tracing of some of the texts circulating around the problem you are exploring, you'll begin to develop a more detailed understanding of the problem and how others are thinking about it, as well as the shape and extent of the conversation. Knowing this context and the ways texts circulate around an issue will also help you as a writer understand how you might effectively enter this conversation, depending on your audiences and purposes.

External and Internally Circulating Texts within Groups or Organizations

Of course, texts circulate both online and offline, so understanding how they circulate at a more local level—in your discourse communities at home, school, and work—is another important facet of textual circulation. If the problem you are studying is related to a particular community or organization, you'll want to understand what kinds of texts are being shared and circulated in this context. What kinds of genres are circulating? How is writing being shared and for what purpose? What texts are being circulated to the public, and what types are used internally?

For the internal circulation of a group or organization, the activity of writing plays a vital role in how any particular discourse community—a business, a committee, a team—approaches a problem and how well they work together. Emails, memos, shared documentation, reports, agendas, and minutes are common genres that circulate widely through professional settings where writing and documents are being produced. If you are studying a particular community or organization, understanding how texts circulate and what kinds of texts are exchanged will help you make sense of how this group or organization shares ideas, works together, handles disputes, etc. And by mapping this out, you can create a bird's eye view of how a group or organization is communicating internally, what's working well, and what practices could be improved to help the group function better.

Circulating Writing in Collaborative Teams

You'll also want to keep textual circulation in mind when you are collaborating with a team of writers. What is the document flow like for the group? How is the team managing information and shared resources? Is the group working with shared documents, circulating drafts via email or by hand? Are the documents moving as they should and getting to readers and reviewers when they need to?

While humans have long thought about how texts circulate in our digital and collaborative environments, understanding how texts spread and move from person to person should be a part of every writer's toolbox. As a practical research strategy for understanding the context of a problem, having a sense of what texts and meanings circulate around the problem will help you see the potential ways it might be addressed.

Work Cited

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Media Attributions

- Get Sick on Friday
- Baby on Beach
- I Hate Sandcastles Meme
- Success Kid Meme 2
- Success Kid Meme 3
- Textual Circulation Infographic © Christian Pulver

9.

VISUAL RHETORIC

Dahliani Reynolds

Image 1

We live in a world saturated with images: from the images we see driving down the street (traffic signs, billboards, crosswalks), to the images we see on our screens (advertisements, memes, Kardashians), they all impart meaning. You might not have thought about it before, but something as simple as a stop sign is an example of *visual rhetoric*. The visual cue of the red octagon at the end of the street tells you to stop, even before you read the letters. While visual rhetoric may or may not be a familiar term for you, you are already a proficient visual rhetorician, simply through your daily life: you encounter and interpret visual information all the time.

Image 2

We tend to think of rhetoric as oral or written text. In other words, well, *words*. Writing is traditionally understood as alphabetic text—putting letters into words into sentences into paragraphs into pages. In recent years, however, with the rise of digital media and the internet, many writing studies, rhetoric, and composition scholars have worked to redefine and expand our understanding of writing to include a variety of *modalities*—common ways of communicating beyond alphabetic text, that include visual, audio, and digital modes of writing. Integrating two or more modalities in a given text results in *multimodal* writing.

Visual rhetoric is a form of rhetoric that uses visual information—photographs, drawings, symbols, charts, maps, color, shapes, typography, white space—to communicate, to create meaning, or, more simply, to persuade (see chapter on *rhetoric* for a longer discussion). This visual information might be used independently, as in the stop sign example from the prior paragraph. The stop sign works alone to communicate its purpose; you don't need additional information to correctly interpret the meaning. But you can also use visual images in combination with other visuals, or with other modes, to achieve your purpose. For example, an editorial cartoon might use a drawing and speech bubbles to effectively communicate its message. Or you might set a musical background to a photo essay to communicate a particular mood or tone to an audience. Regardless, whether you use a single visual image, multiple images, or integrate visual and textual information, the visual elements work together to create meaning.

It's important to keep in mind that visuals are culturally dependent. This means that some visual information may be interpreted differently across cultures. Take, for example, the color white. A white dress in western cultures signifies bridal attire; in some Asian cultures, however, white is typically worn at funerals (a clothing color we would almost never see at funerals in the United States). Likewise, some casual hand gestures in the U.S., such as an okay sign, or a thumb's up, have obscene connotations in other parts of the world. Awareness of how visual information might translate across multicultural audiences is essential for professional and public writers targeting global audiences.

Visual rhetoric is useful in many genres, particularly when we think expansively about the kinds of visual elements we might use. Professional writing might make limited use of photographs, but using white space, typography, and color helps create an appropriate ethos and strong visual design to guide and persuade readers. Writing for public audiences often uses a variety of visual elements, including photographs, charts, graphs, and maps to convey information or draw on pathos to connect with readers.

Media Attributions

- Stop_sign is licensed under a Public Domain license
- MultimodalHand © Christian Pulver is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA (Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike) license

10.

FRAMING

Mel A. Topf

We tend to think of the purpose of writing as simply transferring information or expressing our opinions. We know, however, that exigencies affect how we choose to write. Likewise, exigencies influence how we design or "frame" what we communicate. Our choice of a frame for our discussion and arguments strongly influences how our audience responds. Indeed, communicating *is* framing. Rhetorically, framing works in the same way as a picture frame does. The frame around a painting or piece of art clearly identifies the boundaries of the subject painted, but it also helps us see the painting in a particular way. The colors and textures of the frame might emphasize particular aspects of the painting and minimize others, or it might draw attention to the painting, hung on the wall amidst numerous other paintings, simply because the frame is visually "louder" than the other paintings' frames.

In writing, framing inevitably shapes a perspective on our subject—how we "see" the subject—all to help accomplish our purpose. We may frame an issue in different ways in order to affect or change the audience's response to the issue. Arguments on healthcare policy, for example, may be framed in terms of human rights, fiscal responsibility, constitutionality, or ideology. The subject of sustainability could be framed to foreground environmental damage, a moral crisis, an economic opportunity, or a political issue.

Assume a writer is considering using the two photographs below in a paper on the environment whose purpose includes increasing readers' awareness of less well known problems. One argument may be the sheer ugliness of pollution. The first photo offers a "close-up" of a discarded rusted container, framing the viewers' perception to narrowly focus on that alone. Another argument may be that environmental damage requires all of us to address the problem.

Image 1

The second photo frames the human side, singling out not environmental damage but rather human efforts to address it. Further, the scene is in a developing country, perhaps to signify the great harm done in locations less able either to prevent it or to control it.

Image 2

As writers, we choose the words to frame an issue helps our readers see the issue from a particular perspective, just as the visual elements of these photographs help viewers see—and understand—lesser known problems pollution poses to the environment.

Let's take another example relevant to college students' experience. Say a student requests a deadline extension from two professors, one who freely gives extensions just for the asking, the other extremely strict, hardly ever granting extensions. The request—the objective information—is identical in both cases, but the rhetorical situations are different. In one case the student must address the exigency of audience resistance. To the easier audience (the professor who freely gives extensions) the student may just frame the communication as a simple request. ("Professor, may I have a three-day extension to complete the assignment that's due Monday?") The rhetorical choices can be limited to the direct request, the writer judging that the purpose—getting approval for an extension—requires no further persuasion. To the more difficult audience (the professor who resists giving extensions), the student realizes that the rhetorical situation requires that the communication be framed differently. For this audience, the request is framed to establish first the student's credibility (*ethos*). The student begins by noting that they are aware of the professor's policy and how important that policy is, in essence affirming that the student is not ignorant or uncaring about the professor's standards. The student may next also make an additional appeal to engage the professor's sympathy (*pathos*): the student may offer a narrative of how difficult it has been to complete work since their grandmother died. And only then the student may make the request for an extension. By creating a logical pathway (logos) from the appeal to ethos, to the appeal to pathos, and then to the actual request, the student strengthens the persuasiveness of the message.

Note how the exigencies of the two situations—addressing audiences with opposing views on deadline extensions—require designing different frames for the request. This contrast shows how framing opens up alternate discourses to accomplish a purpose or reach a goal that the audience in a discourse community will accept and act on. In professional and public contexts especially, where the exigencies are often complex and difficult to determine, we have the problem, but also the freedom, to choose among frames. After all, as Aristotle said in his *Rhetoric*, "most of the things about which we make decisions present us with alternatives. . . . All our actions have a contingent character."

Aristotle's remark points us to ethical issues that could arise when choosing how to frame a message. This issue of ethics has always been an undercurrent of rhetoric generally and not simply a question specific to framing. Socrates equates rhetoric with flattery and says it works best on the ignorant (Plato). Aristotle says that we "cannot do without" it ("unworthy though it is") only because of "the defects of our hearers." The concept of framing may make this ethical issue especially visible. Framing, however, should not be seen merely as one of a bunch of rhetorical tricks that are "added on" to a message merely to make it more persuasive.

We frame our discourse to signal that we are writing, ethically as well as professionally, to members of a community, *as* a member of that community. We may be members of many such discourse communities: a university, for example, or a profession, a family, a congregation, a soccer team, a political party. Indeed we often seem simply to be thrown into a discourse community, into the situation where we find ourselves and where we must frame our communication (Heidegger). "Audience analysis" sounds like a pretty mechanical process, but analyzing a professional or public audience requires taking into account the complex contexts and interests of that discourse community, and requires us to frame our discourse accordingly.

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Media Attributions

PART IV
GENRE KNOWLEDGE

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to ***employ a variety of effective genres in response to recurring academic, public, and/or professional situations***.

In *How Writing Works*, you learned that a genre is a type of text that shares a common purpose and structure as well as common linguistic features. You probably learned that genre and purpose work hand-in-hand to communicate your message: readers expect to see these features when they encounter a given genre, and if the features are not in place, the purpose of the text is unclear. You are probably aware that discourse communities usually rely on certain genres in order to achieve the community's goals. You may have written a genre analysis to demonstrate your academic knowledge of this important aspect of textual production. In doing that assignment (and many others in your first-year writing courses), you worked within the conventional genre typically called the academic paper. You wrote a thesis and topic sentences, provided textual evidence, and maintained an objective, studied tone—because that is the expectation of an academic discourse community.

Introduction to Professional and Public Writing covers what you should consider when writing in genres beyond the academic paper—producing those types of texts suitable to a wide range of professional and public discourse communities. This chapter provides an explanation of what *genre* means and how a genre can serve various rhetorical functions.

The chapters in this section offer new perspectives on what it means to work within a genre.

> "**Genre**" reviews the concept of *genre* as a type of text and gives tips on analyzing and evaluating genres in preparation for writing in professional and public settings. Especially important to note: historically genres have evolved to suit the needs of different communities, and any given genre should be evaluated according to the standards of the culture that produces it.
>
> "**Style**" makes important distinctions between personal style (what we often call *our voice* in writing) and style determined by genre. This section explains

why style is a rhetorical choice. Because particular genres serve certain purposes and audiences, even such stylistic issues as sentence length and concision need to be taken into account when composing a document.

"Page Design" emphasizes that different genres have different "looks," or visual design. This section gives practical suggestions about what you should keep in mind to create a readable document, one that is attuned to your purpose and audience and is consistent with the expectations of your organization or community.

11.

GENRE

Brian Hendrickson

“Wanna go to a movie this weekend?” a friend asks you. “One just came out in theaters that everyone’s talking about.”

You like movies. Who doesn’t? You also like watching movies in the theater. Popcorn, soda, candy, jumbo screen, and those comfy leather reclining chairs at the new theater—what’s not to like?

Still you ask, “What’s the movie?” because you might not want to pay the theater price if it’s not the kind of movie you enjoy. And maybe some movies are the kind you’d see in the theaters on a date, but not with a friend. Maybe you’re a loud crier or easily startled and don’t like making a scene, in which case you might choose to see cry-or scare-inducing movies at home.

In any case, before your friend has even had a chance to respond, you’ve already begun assigning a complex set of expectations to deciding whether or not you will go to this movie with your friend, and you have constructed that set of expectations over a number of years and across a diverse range of movie-watching experiences.

So when your friend says they can't remember the exact name of the movie, you might respond by asking, "Well, what type of movie is it?"

"It's a horror movie," they reply and, depending on your interest in or knowledge of horror movies, you might respond, "What sort of horror movie?" After all, horror movies can be broken down into slashers, hauntings, or psychological thrillers, to name a few. What makes them all horror is they're all supposed to scare you, though the kind of fear they induce might differ. But despite their variations, they do all follow a similar plot: a protagonist transgresses some invisible boundary—a woods they shouldn't have camped in, a door they shouldn't have opened—and encounters a force that defies the laws of reason, nature, ethics, and/or religion. That force, whether a deranged killer or evil spirit, challenges the protagonist's understanding of their own reality to such an extent that they risk losing their mind, if not their life. To survive with body and mind intact, the protagonist must make sense of that which appears to defy sense-making and restore order.

When your friend finally reveals that the movie they're recommending the two of you go see is a haunting, you pretty much know what to expect—even down to how you expect to be surprised. However, if the movie takes a completely unexpected turn and ends up not being a haunting at all but an alien invasion, it's possible that if done in just the right way, you might appreciate how the creators of the movie played with your expectations.

Regardless of how the movie turns out, your expectations were all grounded in your understanding of *genre*: the typical set of functions and features that form when communication occurs within a similar set of circumstances over time. Movies, after all, are a form of communication, and they are viewed and riffed upon by filmmakers and movie watchers alike, all within particular cultures with their own values and beliefs. Even if you aren't a fan of horror films, you still probably know quite a lot about the genres and subgenres of horror movies because they are such an important part of popular culture.

As with movies, you also know a lot about genres of writing. In *How Writing Works*, you already started thinking about what you were reading and writing in terms of genre. Before then, you were likely familiar with literary genres, whether dystopian novels like *1984*, tragic plays like *Romeo and Juliet*, or epic poems like *The Odyssey*. But as you probably discovered in *How Writing Works*, genres don't have to be works of art, and most of the writing you do is not meant to display your artistic genius. Texts, tweets, grocery lists, menus, resumes, lecture notes, reports, and research papers—these are all genres of writing, too. Each possesses a typical set of functions and features that accomplish particular goals within particular contexts. And they all have formed over time to meet the rhetorical and communicative needs and expectations of particular discourse communities.

So if you're designing a menu for, say, an upscale Asian fusion restaurant, you're probably thinking about what sort of menu design would most effectively capture the spirit of the restaurant and appeal to the kinds of patrons you want to attract. Furthermore, even if you've eaten at hundreds of Asian fusion restaurants before, you would probably spend some time researching their menus online, analyzing and evaluating each one to identify the features that work and the ones that don't. Afterward, you're likely to try to emulate the best qualities of the best menus while nevertheless trying to design a menu that looks uniquely your own.

By now, you can see that analyzing and evaluating genres to effectively communicate your purpose is something everyone does almost instinctively. But watching and understanding a movie is not the same thing as knowing how to direct a film. Writers, like directors, need to know the components of the genre they are working with so they can to put those components together in recognizable ways.

The point is, when it comes to much of the writing you will be doing in academic, professional, and public contexts, learning to write well means learning to recognize different genres of writing, their various shapes and purpose, and the audience expectations that come with them. Whether it's an email, report, resume, blog post, tweet, or essay—composing any type of text begins with genre awareness.

Some Tips on Analyzing and Evaluating Genres

- An analysis explains how something works by breaking it down into its component parts, and genre analysis is no different.
- You can't explain how a genre works by considering only its features. You also have to consider its functions, or how particular examples of a particular genre are "taken up" by particular people for particular reasons within particular cultural and historical contexts.
- You're not just analyzing the text of the genre but the context: the values, beliefs, and material conditions that shape a genre's features and functions over time.
- A genre is in many respects a complex living organism that exists in a dynamic relationship with its environment. Your analysis of a given genre should take that relationship into account, and it should keep in mind that like any other organism, a genre either evolves to respond to changes in its environment, or it dies.
- Sometimes, it's difficult to understand how something works until it stops working. Consider that you probably don't think much about your pancreas, unless your pancreas isn't producing enough insulin to help your body process sugar. In fact, you might not even know that's what your pancreas does unless you have diabetes. Similarly, it can be helpful to look not just at effective examples of a particular genre but at ineffective

ones, too. This is where evaluation comes into play: it can help you understand not just how a particular genre works but why, or, in the case of an ineffective example, why not.

12.

STYLE

Dahliani Reynolds

When you get dressed to go to class, what's your go-to attire? Do you automatically grab sweats and a t-shirt? Do you have an internship later in the day, requiring that you aim for business casual? Whatever your go-to style, it probably feels comfortable as part of your daily life—almost a part of your identity. We tend to think of personal style as, well, personal. It's YOUR style, after all. You get to choose it. Of course, it's also true that your stylistic choices are almost always influenced by others. Your style has likely changed over time, due in part to fashion trends, what others decree are *in style*. Sometimes your stylistic choices are determined by the situation. For example, when you dress to attend a fancy wedding, you'd likely make clothing choices that you wouldn't make if you were going to class, or to the grocery store. In all of these clothing situations, your sense of style is formed not only by situation but by a variety of factors including your own preferences and what others find fashionable and/or appropriate to the situation.

These same stylistic considerations for your clothing choices apply to your writing choices. Many of your writing choices contribute to your writing style. The tone you adopt is a stylistic choice. Likewise, your choice of vocabulary, sentence structure, and syntax all contribute to style. These are your choices to make as a writer—but your choices are often influenced by how you expect your readers to perceive them. You probably wouldn't include emojis on your resume because you could reasonably expect potential employers to be unimpressed by that stylistic choice. On the other hand, if you are writing a lab report for your chemistry professor, you would choose to avoid first-person pronouns, because you know your prof will expect the appearance of scientific objectivity in your language (style) choices. Notice how in each of these examples, ***audience***, ***purpose***, and ***rhetorical situation*** influence style.

Writing style is sometimes defined as the way you write, the things that make your writing identifiably *yours*. When we think about style in terms of personal style, we often consider *voice*. Does the writing *sound* like you? Voice can be a useful consideration for some genres and purposes, but it can be a limiting metaphor when we think of voice only as an expression of self. The voice you produce on the page doesn't have to "sound" like you—and, in fact, sometimes it shouldn't. If you are working in a genre that privileges objectivity, that de-emphasizes the writer in favor of the information (think a scientific study or business report), then a conversational voice or colloquial tone will not serve you well. Your readers won't care that the text "sounds" like you; in fact, it could potentially devalue the information if it does because it conflicts with genre conventions.

Broadening how we think about style—beyond the "voice" metaphor—opens the door to the other sorts of stylistic concerns noted above: vocabulary, sentence structure, and syntax. Many writing guides frame style advice in terms of clarity and concision, suggesting that style requires clear and concise writing. This is generally good advice. Writing should be clear; readers should understand what you are trying to communicate. Of course, as you know, readers from different discourse communities have divergent sensibilities regarding clarity. For example, using key terms from business would be very clear in a business report written for industry professionals, but not in a literary analysis for digital humanities scholars. Clarity, like most writing considerations, is contingent on *audience*, *purpose*, and *genre*.

Concision (often paired with clarity) is likewise dependent on these same kinds of variables, and is also predicated on the scope of your project. Concision is often confused with brevity; in other words, in order to be concise you must be brief. This is a little misleading though, because it really depends on the necessary level of detail to achieve your purpose. If your purpose is to create a one-page fact sheet outlining major challenges to students transitioning from face-to-face to online instruction, the level of detail expected is significantly less than if writing a white-page paper on the same subject. Expectations for the level of detail in these two genres will vary substantially. With both texts you should aim for concision: that is, conveying what you need to convey with the minimum number of words, but the "minimum" will not be the same for both texts.

There is copious style advice available online and in print textbooks. Key to all recommendations is to focus on the sentence level. Working on style requires close reading of your own writing, going sentence by sentence to test different options. How might the effect of a sentence change if you use a semicolon or a dash? What if you replace this word with that? Cut an adverb? Combine two sentences into one? Convert from passive to active voice? These are important editorial questions to address in later stages of the writing process. Tackle them too early and you're likely to have difficulty generating text; forget to take them on in the revision and editing stages, and you're likely to end up with a text that does not pass the "style" test in your readers' eyes.

13.

PAGE DESIGN

Mel A. Topf

> *If you think good design is expensive, you should look at the cost of bad design.* -Ralph Speth, CEO, Jaguar Land Rover, qtd in Podmajersky

We spend so much time and effort generating content that will connect with our audience that we may forget about the "look" of our document. Yet how the content appears on the page or on the screen must also be taken into account. When thinking about our audience, we should consider the document's readability, in other words, how we might guide our readers through the text. We know that transitional devices do this work. Transitions are essential for making a text easier to follow, but they aren't always sufficient, particularly for many professional genres. Another important way to increase your document's readability is to keep in mind the *visual or page design* of your writing. Design elements such as fonts, captions, lists, bullets, and white space are important to readers: they signal organization and highlight important points, allowing the reader to scan the document easily.

Headings

Headings are effective ways of revealing structure. Vague headings like Introduction, Results, and Discussion are useful in giving readers a sense of a document's major sections. Specific headings, however, increase the document's readability. They can better tell your readers about your position on the topic of a given section. For example, instead of a vague heading like "Recommended Policy," write one that sums up the section: "Improved Performance under the Recommended Policy." In addition to being more specific, the revised heading connects to the reader's interest in the topic.

Another important consideration is the way experienced readers go through a document. Experienced readers tend to scan on first reading to get a sense of the document's contents. Headings, and the white space they naturally create, make scanning easier. Word processing programs allow you easily to produce levels of headings, so that the headings act as a kind of outline making structure clear. For example:

IMPROVED PERFORMANCE UNDER THE RECOMMENDED POLICY

1. **EMPLOYEE EFFECTIVENESS**

2. **CONTRACT COMPLIANCE**

    - **DEADLINES**
    - **BUDGET ALLOCATIONS**
    - **PROJECT QUALITY ASSURANCE**

3. **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT**

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PART V

DISCOURSE COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to: ***1) identify and analyze discourse communities; 2) engage in inquiry-based research, locate and evaluate evidence, and document sources, all in accordance with discourse community expectations and standards.***

In *How Writing Works*, you were introduced to the concept of discourse communities, groups of people who come together with common goals and purposes, and share a specialized discourse, or ways of communicating. You may have even written a discourse community analysis, studying a specific discourse community to understand how its members communicate with other members, or perhaps with those outside the discourse community. *Introduction to Public and Professional Writing* aims to deepen your understanding of how discourse communities operate, looking not only at the idea of community-specific discourse, but also at how different kinds of discourse communities engage in research, select evidence, and document sources.

Understanding some of the discourse community theories and concepts presented here will be especially important as you write in new contexts beyond the classroom. You will learn how to apply your knowledge of academic discourse communities to writing for audiences from professional and public discourse communities. The chapters that follow will help you adapt research practices for finding and evaluating different kinds of sources, integrating those sources into your own writing, and citing or attributing those sources according to the standards and expectations of different discourse communities. As you know, meeting the expectations of the discourse community to which you are writing—whether or not you are yourself a member of the discourse community—is essential to achieving your goals for a given project or text.

The chapters in this section provide new perspectives on discourse community knowledge:

> "**Discourse and Discourse Community**" explains the concepts of discourse and discourse communities

to show how discourse is shaped within a community. It provides an overview of how discourse communities coalesce around shared goals and a common language, or discourse. It also highlights the sometimes adversarial nature of the communicative style embraced by discourse communities and demonstrates the potential conflict that might arise through one's membership in multiple professional and public discourse communities.

"Linguistic Diversity, Linguistic Justice" critiques the notion of a "standard English," offering instead a more comprehensive understanding of the benefits of linguistic diversity. Understanding languages as living things that change over time, and that such changes contribute to the diversity, abundance, and overall health and life-sustaining capabilities of dynamic cultures is vital to writing for academic, professional and public audiences.

"**Research and Finding Credible Sources**" shows you how moving through the inquiry and research processes involves a range of methods from primary to secondary research, library databases, and digital search engines. The choice of method is determined by the problem you are interrogating, as well as your purpose and intended audience. In college, research for academic writing is typically understood as searching for "new" information. In professional and public contexts, however, research is understood differently: as a rhetorical strategy, to support what is *already* known or believed, and to do so in ways rhetorically acceptable to a given discourse community. To be persuasive, lawyers, for example, will research and cite earlier cases, not to find new information but to find "old" information, that is, cases where courts have already decided in agreement with the lawyer's argument. This is accepted as persuasive because one convention of this discourse community is that judges must rely on precedent. This essay will help you think about locating and evaluating evidence, expanding your understanding of what it means to say a given piece of evidence is "credible" within a given discourse community.

"**Citations and Attributions**" highlights the process of citing sources not just to avoid charges of plagiarism, but also to ethically and responsively engage others' words, images, and ideas. The chapter emphasizes understanding citation practices as guidelines rather than rules: guidelines that evolve over time, in accordance with new technologies and discourse communities' changing needs. Additionally, this essay emphasizes the similarities and differences between citation and attribution, as they are variously used by writers integrating multimodal sources in writing for academic, professional, or public audiences.

14.

DISCOURSE AND DISCOURSE COMMUNITY

Christian J. Pulver

The term *discourse community* combines two key concepts—*community* and *discourse*.

Generally speaking, *community* refers to the local groups we live and work with, our neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces. While living in proximity with other people is an important aspect of community, other aspects beyond location play an important role. Those aspects have to do with our shared ways of using language and the common values and beliefs that emerge from how we communicate with each other. Such shared language practices are called *discourse*, and people who share similar ways of talking and thinking, and do it frequently together, are part of a *discourse community*.

Conventionally, we can think of *discourse* as the exchange of words and ideas among those who share a common purpose for continually interacting. We discourse about the weather, last night's game, politics, and art. Discourse is like conversation, but conversation is just one way that discourse is exchanged within the larger language and communication patterns that we engage in, from our local discourse communities to the larger public. Discourse is also shared through written texts, videos, podcasts, and other discursive genres. So, not only does our proximity to each other shape the communities we are a part of, discourse communities also share particular genres, styles, and accepted ways of communicating with each other, and they tend to gravitate around particular problems that are of shared concern.

Though the word *community* is often thought of as people who get along well, not all discourse communities get along, and members don't always like each other. That is to say, discourse communities come in all shapes in sizes, and the language practices that occur within them can vary widely as a result. Some discourse communities can be confrontational or argumentative (legal discourse, for example), and others might be more intimate and caring (parent-child discourse, for example). And discourse communities don't exist in a bubble—they are embedded in the larger public and cultural discourses that include entertainment, national politics, and public debates that circulate broadly via mass and social media. The discourse communities we are part of at work or in college, with family and friends, are always embedded in these larger discourses.

Understanding the shape of a discourse and the problems that matter to a discourse community are vital to understanding the nature of the particular problem you are considering and how to solve it. To achieve this kind of understanding, it is always useful to map out the basic contours of the discourse by looking at the *where, when, what, who, how,* and, *why* of that discourse.

Mapping the Discourse of a Problem or Controversy

Mapping a discourse in these ways is an ongoing activity that will help you develop a richer, broader understanding of the problem you are exploring. Not only will it help you understand the nature and nuances of the problem, it will help you understand how to enter the conversation and contribute towards its solution (what is known as *discourse competence)*.

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15.

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY, LINGUISTIC JUSTICE

Brian Hendrickson

One of the most important characteristics of a healthy environment is biodiversity. We humans–especially those of us living in industrialized nations–have learned this the hard way, as our efforts to engineer a better world have frequently backfired. Let's take, for instance, the effects of industrialization on New England's largest estuary, Narragansett Bay. An estuary is a dynamic place where marine and riverine ecosystems overlap in a manner highly conducive to biodiversity, and in turn, abundance. For this reason, prior to (and for a little while after) European contact, the Eastern Algonquian-speaking Indigenous peoples who lived along the shores of Narragansett Bay were the most populous and powerful in the region.

Image 1: Wampum beads made out of quahog (purple) and whelk (white) shellfish by Elizabeth James Perry (Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head-Aquinnah). Wampum were traditionally used by Eastern Woodlands tribes for storytelling, ceremony, treaty-making, and economic exchange.

Although European colonists documented in detail the correlation between the thriving Indigenous communities of the Bay and its abundant natural resources, they failed to recognize the consequences of their attempts to harness those resources. Textile mills earned the Blackstone River, a tributary of Narragansett Bay, its recognition as America's hardest-working and also most polluted river. The dams that powered the mills took from fish like the river herring their ancestral migration routes, and in return, the mills gave back to the Bay the industrial waste they generated. The cities that emerged around the mills dumped their own waste into the Bay, along with the fertilizer used in the monocrop agricultural practices needed to maintain their growing populations. Human development also led to the destruction of marshland habitat capable of filtering contaminants from the water, and overfishing then decimated the populations of whatever marine life was able to survive these disruptions.

Image 2: A Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management sign denoting a coastal area too polluted for shellfishing.

The result is a far less biodiverse and abundant Narragansett Bay than the one known to the Narragansett and Pokanoket.

At this point, you might be wondering, "Why am I reading about estuarine biodiversity in a textbook chapter on linguistic justice?"

Because languages are living things. They thrive, evolve, proliferate, and in doing so contribute to the diversity, abundance, and overall health and life-sustaining capabilities of dynamic cultures. Languages are wild things. They have lives of their own, and efforts to tame them by imposing artificial rules on their development tend to fail, if not backfire.

That's not to say that language, like other living things, can't be utilized as a resource. Of course it can. Can you imagine your life without recourse to language? Part of knowing how to use language involves learning the rules. When we grow up with a language, we often learn the most fundamental rules–semantics (meanings), grammar (rules for combining basic meaning-making units), and phonology (sounds and symbols)–without even realizing we're learning them. These rules operate like linguistic DNA. Languages that share a common ancestry tend to possess common rules. For instance, French, Italian, and Spanish all use the articles la and un. That they use definite and indefinite articles at all suggests that they belong to the same branch of the same language family. English uses definite and indefinite articles as well, but different ones (the and a, respectively), which suggests English is part of the same family, but it's more like a cousin than a sibling. By contrast, Chinese, a group of languages branching off of a completely different language family, doesn't use articles at all.

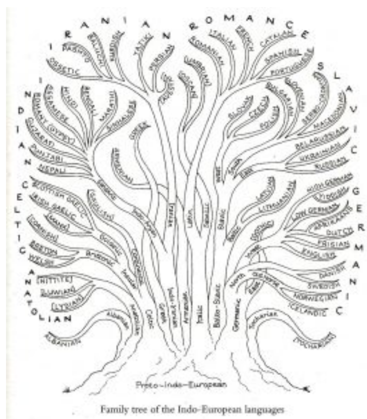

Image 3: Family tree of the Indo-European languages

But as languages interact with one another and with other environmental factors, their rules mutate, producing new species and subspecies, or varieties, of language. English, after all, began around the 5th century as a mashup of the Indigenous Celtic languages of what is now Great Britain with the various Germanic languages of mainland European invaders. When the Normans invaded in the 11th century, bringing their own dialect of Old French, Old English mutated into Middle English. What we call Modern English arose out of a series of events including war, plague, and the invention of the printing press, but if you ever had to read one of William Shakespeare's plays, you'll know that the 16th century's Early Modern English is very different from the English spoken just about anywhere today. To make matters more challenging, Shakespeare constantly invented his own words, often by manipulating word forms, such as by turning nouns into verbs.

As English spread all over the world through trade and conquest, it begat a plethora of different Englishes, or regional or social varieties called dialects, with their own unique grammatical, lexical, and phonetic flourishes. Consider for a moment the example of African American Vernacular English, or Black English. Although it shares quite a lot in common with what is problematically known as Standard English (we'll get back to why it's problematic in a moment), including a common history, Black English possesses characteristics that render it distinguishable as its own dialect.

That doesn't mean it's less sophisticated than Standard English, and it certainly doesn't mean it's less "correct." If speaking correctly means following a language's basic rules, then those of us who speak Black English naturally know how to do that. And if sophistication entails complexity, flexibility, and innovation, then it could be said that Black English is more sophisticated than Standard English. After all, it is actually more grammatically complex, involves more style shifting across contexts of use, and is more innovative in terms of generating new meanings for words, reclaiming unused words, and sometimes inventing entirely new words, as sociolinguist and African American studies scholar Geneva Smitherman has demonstrated across numerous articles and books, including Talkin' and Testifyin': The Language of Black America (1977), Black Talk: Words and Phrases from the Hood to the Amen Corner (1994), and, more recently with linguistic anthropologist H. Samy Alim, Articulate while Black: Barack Obama, Language, and Race in the U.S., where the authors show how President Obama's ability to seamlessly and strategically styleshift from Standard to Black English is one of the hallmarks of his rhetorical skills.

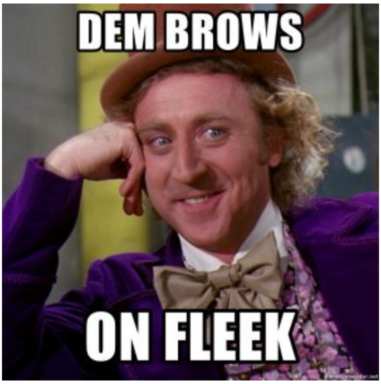

Image 4

Even if you haven't read Smitherman or Alim, rhetorically analyzed Obama's speeches, or grown up speaking or surrounded by speakers of Black English, you've probably noticed just how many new words or phrases enter into our everyday speech via Black English speakers utilizing popular media. Take, for instance, on fleek, popularized in a 2014 Vine video by Peaches Monroee and a runner-up in the 2015 American Dialect Society's Most Likely to Succeed category; or hot girl summer, popularized by Megan Thee

Stallion (and perhaps coined by her fans on Twitter), and a runner-up for the American Dialect Society's 2019 Slang/Informal Word of the Year.

And while the examples above evidence that Black English carries quite a bit of social capital in certain popular contexts, in most of your classes, and indeed in many professional contexts, speaking or writing in Standard English tends to be associated with higher socioeconomic status, intelligence, and ability than Black English, and it's entirely possible that you might be penalized for not using Standard English, either by receiving a lower grade or being denied a career opportunity. Why? To answer that question, we'll need to consider how Standard English became the "standard."

Calling a language "standard" can be both a value judgment and an objective description. As a value judgment, we might call a variety of English the "standard" because it is the dominant variety, or the one by which we hold every speaker or writer to account. As an objective description, however, Standard English has definitely been standardized by all of the rules that have been imposed upon it, not least of which in writing classes like the one you're very likely taking right now. So really, these two understandings of "standard" go hand in hand. Once the social group who holds the most power deems their particular dialect the superior one that all speakers and writers of a given language should adopt, that group imposes all sorts of rules upon their dialect in order to maintain the characteristics by which it is distinguishable as superior–because, you might recall from earlier, language varieties, even “standard” ones, are wild, living things that do not take readily to artificially imposed restrictions.

But why would anyone want to artificially designate a single dialect of English as superior? For the same reason people identify certain skin tones or zip codes as superior even when there is nothing objectively superior about them: to assign particular people power and deny that same power to others. And just as denying people access to opportunity based upon what they look like or where they live can operate as forms of racism, so too can one be complicit in linguistic racism by denying opportunities to people who do not speak or write in Standard English. Recognizing how linguistic value judgments can operate as a form of racism is the first step in beginning to dismantle the systems of linguistic oppression that have been constructed to maintain white supremacy. That’s why, in her book Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy (2020), April Baker-Bell refers to Standard English as White Mainstream English, thereby explicitly calling out the privileging of Standard English as a form of white supremacy.

You might be asking yourself at this point, “Does requiring those who might not have grown up speaking Standard English to learn how to do so really deny them access to opportunity, or is it helping them access opportunity? Don’t we all benefit when we all understand each other better because we speak and write the same way?”

Well, no and no.

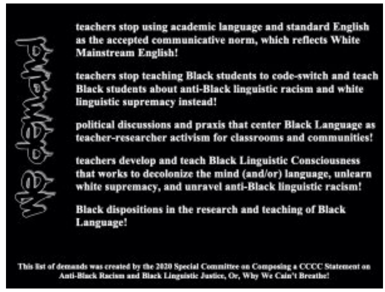

Image 5: List of demands created by the 2020 Special Committee on Composing a Conference on College Composition and Communication Statement on Anti-Black Racism and Black Linguistic Justice, Or, Why We Can't Breathe!

Because, as previously mentioned, those of us who have grown up speaking Standard English learn the fundamental rules at an early age and without much effort, whereas those of us who have not grown up speaking and listening to speakers of Standard English have to work that much harder to speak it, let alone write it. This is the first injustice. The second injustice comes from denying people access to opportunity because they can't or won't adopt Standard English in speech or writing. The third injustice comes from requiring that all professional, academic, and civic activity be conducted in Standard English, which means that other varieties of English–let alone other completely different languages, such as Eastern Algonquian–are disconnected from systems of knowledge, commerce, and governance, much in the same way that the building of a dam disconnects the river herring from their ancestral spawning grounds. Meanwhile, we all lose out on not learning from those who have been excluded from public discourse because they do not speak Standard English or do not speak it "good" enough.

Ultimately, as with the degradation of Narragansett Bay, this tendency toward linguistic homogenization is a form of injustice that negatively impacts us all. It leads to us engaging less people and ideas in conversations that involve less creative expression. Less variety ultimately means less evolution, leaving us as a culture vulnerable to changes in our environment both small and large, such as learning from Indigenous peoples how to build more sustainable relationships with our lands and waters. Like languages, humans are resilient. As a species, we might be able to survive in a toxic, overfarmed, and overfished environment, though such factors will surely lower everyone's quality of life, especially those of us who, because of the color of our skin or the zip code we were born in or the language we grew up speaking, don't have access to the same opportunities as others.

But is that what we really want?

Just as maintaining biodiversity is a matter of environmental justice for all of an ecoysystem's organisms, us included, linguistic diversity too is a matter of linguistic justice. More important than learning the "correct" way to write or speak English, then, is celebrating, learning about, and cultivating linguistic diversity, while devoting equal energy to calling out and unlearning the intentional and unintentional ways we unjustly judge ourselves and others for speaking and writing in non-dominant varieties of English. After all, had the

English colonists spent more time learning and listening to the Pokanoket and Narragansett in their own varieties of Eastern Algonquian–from which we nevertheless adopted into English a number of words including moose and squash–and less time trying to force English language and culture upon them, we might know a far more biodiverse, abundant, and life-sustaining Narragansett Bay today.

As a step toward adopting a linguistic justice lens, take a moment to reflect upon the meaning of this course's discourse community knowledge learning outcome, which asks you to articulate connections between discourse community goals, typical rhetorical situations, preferred genres and writing processes, and expectations for "good" or effective writing.

- Notice the quotation marks around "good." Why do you think that is? How might a linguistic justice lens raise questions about how discourse communities determine what makes "good" writing "good"? How might the concept of linguistic justice call to question assumptions we might make about a discourse community's shared values, goals, and writing practices, including who we write for, how we write, and why? Who actually gets to belong to a given discourse community, who doesn't, and why?
- In what ways might the very existence of a "standard" English be questionable? How has Standard English changed over the past 20, 50, or 100 years, and what's

caused those changes? If Standard English is always changing, what exactly makes it "standard"? If Standard English is just a myth used to deny certain groups of people access to opportunity, what does that mean for how we provide feedback on one another's writing and create guidelines to guide the feedback process; for how we make decisions about hiring and promoting people at work; and for whom we elect to serve as our legislators and judges? What are we doing when we evaluate, grade, or otherwise judge someone's writing or speaking, and how might that make us complicit in perpetuating linguistic injustice?

- Do you ever shift between different dialects, languages, or even registers (levels of formality) in the same conversation or written text? If so, when, with whom, and why? Are there situations in which you feel you can only use one dialect, language, or register, and if so, why? Are there words or ways of speaking or writing that you can or can't use because you do or don't belong to a particular discourse community? Is that right or fair?
- Assuming that you are a valued and respected member of your discourse community–whether you define that community as your class, major, university, town, or profession–how might you contribute to a more equitable set of values, expectations, and practices regarding how members of your discourse community write and speak? How would you enact them in and

across your community's preferred genres and writing processes and typical rhetorical situations? How would doing so transform what counts for your community as "preferred" and "typical"?

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16.

RESEARCH AND FINDING CREDIBLE SOURCES

Christian J. Pulver

Everyday Research

We rarely call what we do every day "research," but when we go online to search for news and information, we are engaging in everyday research. Everyday research has become a basic skill as the internet has expanded in scale and speed. In many cases, when we search for information, we want to understand a "problem" we've encountered—to search for medical advice about a sore throat we have, or to learn more about a product we want to buy. We'll read articles, reviews, and watch videos; we'll compare brands and prices. Indeed, whether we're trying to diagnose why we're feeling sick or trying to understand why our phone's battery won't hold a charge, the first place we usually turn to is the internet to help solve the problem. Of course, this kind of everyday research is just one kind of information seeking, but it's a good place to begin when starting a larger research endeavor to write about a problem that matters to academic, professional, and public audiences. In this course you'll build on these everyday research skills to develop more formal academic research strategies for collecting your own data and finding, evaluating, and selecting sources.

To be sure, problems come in all shapes and sizes, from minor to major, including what we called "wicked problems" in the book's introduction. Wicked problems are problems that may have "innumerable causes, [are] tough to describe, and [don't] have a right answer..." (Camillus 100), and they often emerge from rapid social and technological changes. Such problems, due to their far-reaching effects and the tensions they can cause among people and groups, require a more intentional and formal approach to their study. And as your own inquiry into a problem takes a more formal shape, the standards and ethical expectations grow for how the research is conducted, how data is collected, and the credibility of the sources you draw on.

Identifying and Exploring a Wicked Problem

When first inquiring about a problem you're interested in, a general internet search is a good start. Visiting Wikipedia, reading popular articles, and watching media related to the problem will help build your understanding of the discourse that surrounds the problem—how others are talking about it, different sides of the issue, and its history and context. Since these early stages are exploratory, you'll want to keep an open mind and slow down as you research. As you dig deeper into a problem, the more complicated and nuanced it will become.

Google, Bing, and other commercial search engines are useful tools for everyday research and you'll use these throughout the research process. Keep in mind though, they have their limitations and generally they are not enough for researching a wicked problem. In fact, when we use Google or any other commercial search engine, we really only have access to about 4% of the information that circulates on the internet (Devine and Egger-Siger; "Ultimate Guide").

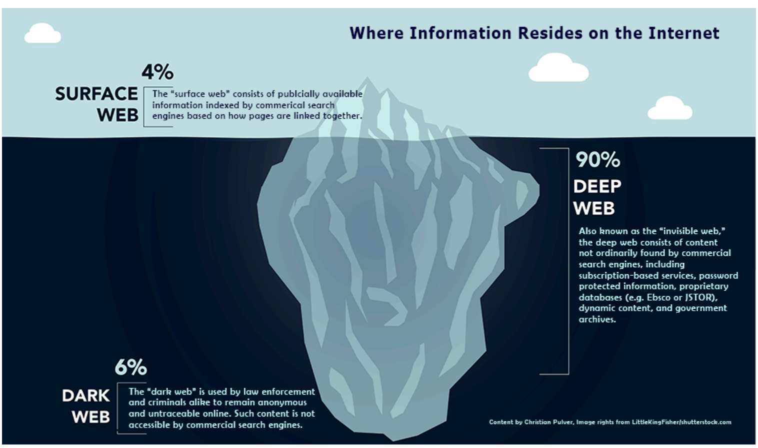

Image 1

As you can see from Image 1, when studying a difficult problem, curious researchers have to go beyond the surface web and commercial search engines to build a deeper understanding of the problem they're researching. Understanding a problem at a deeper level means accessing sources that are often password protected or require subscriptions to enter—academic databases, government archives, scientific reports, legal documents, and other sources that commercial search engines may not have access to. While commercial search engines are always improving and finding more resources on the deep web (Google Scholar, for example), they usually just point to where a resource is located rather than providing access to the resource. From a researchers perspective, the main thing to keep in mind about the deep web is that commercial search engines are limited in their scope. Not only are they unable to find and index the majority of the information that exists on the global internet, the way they filter and personalize searching based on our previous searches, and the way they rank search results, all narrow what we see and limit our access to a wider variety of information. Researching a wicked problem will require a dive into the deep web and the use of more sophisticated research strategies that include using more precise search terms and using specialized databases for scholarly research, government archives, and industry/trade publications.

These kinds of sources, whether on the surface or deep web, are *secondary data* or *secondary research*. Secondary data are texts and research that has been created by others who are also interested in some facet of the problem you are looking into. Articles, essays, research reports, documentaries—any source you use that has been composed by someone else is a secondary source of data.

Where to Find Credible Secondary Sources on the Deep Web

1. Google Scholar
2. Government databases
3. Non-profit research organizations (e.g. Pew Research Center or the American Cancer Society)
4. Library catalogues and research databases

Primary Research

Depending on the context of the problem they are writing about, many researchers will conduct their own research, what is known as *primary data* or *primary research*. Primary research comes in the forms of conducting interviews, taking observation notes, running surveys, focus groups, and experiments where data is collected and analyzed. Researchers often mix both primary and secondary research, depending on the kind of the problem they are investigating. If you are researching a more local context like a group or organization trying to solve a particular problem, you might conduct your own interviews and surveys of the participants to understand the perspective of the group better. Your instructor can help you figure out what kind of primary research may be suitable for the problem you are looking at, as well as some of the ethical concerns you'll need to keep in mind when doing primary research.

Common Ways to Conduct Primary Research

- Archives and historical documentation
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Observation notes
- Experiments

Ethics of Primary and Secondary Researching

Equally important when discerning the quality of your sources and managing your research is to consider ethical questions that may arise in doing both primary and secondary research. In primary research and data collection, researchers must be completely transparent about their intentions to those who might participate in a study, and should obtain written consent from all participants when necessary. Universities that support research have an Institutional Review Board (IRB) that reviews all research projects to ensure they are safe and will not unintentionally hurt people, animals, or the environment. Your instructor can help you think through these ethical questions if you decide to undertake primary research that includes human participants.

In secondary research, ethical questions are ones a researcher must ask themselves, both in how they choose their sources and in the way they quote and reference the sources they draw on. This raises the important question of plagiarism and working with sources in ways that inform your research without overly relying on any one source or using the source's words as if they were your own. Remember, when you're researching and writing about a problem, your final goal is to add something new to the larger conversation already going on. Your contribution doesn't have to be groundbreaking, but it should offer productive discussion and emerge from your critical and ethical synthesis of the sources you have selected.

Assessing Information and Evaluating Sources

In your secondary research, it's important to bring a critical lens to your sources. Being critical, in this sense, doesn't mean "negative"—it means *studied discernment* of the sources. Studied discernment means that you know a source well enough to understand whether or not it's credible *and* how it fits into the larger discourse about the problem. To gain this depth of understanding requires active reading practices and intentional assessment (including fact-checking) of the source.

In today's world of information abundance, such discernment is needed more than ever. With the rise of twitter bots, filter bubbles, personalized search, and the polarizing effects of social media, the spread of disinformation and misinformation has become its own wicked problem. Both disinformation and misinformation are having profound effects on our political, social, and economic lives, and they only increase the need for researchers to be critically minded and sharper discerners of the quality and veracity of the information they encounter. Thus, the very first thing you'll want to know before you begin your research is whether or not the problem you are concerned about is really a problem at all and not another misleading headline, conspiracy theory, or junk science.

The following table is a brief list of questions you can refer to as you assess your secondary sources for their credibility, their stance and bias, and how they fit into the larger discourse of the problem you are exploring:

Evaluating the Veracity and Credibility of your Sources

When you come across a source that may be relevant to the problem you are studying, assess how credible and trustworthy it is. The following steps are a useful guide to figure out the type and quality of a source, and to judge whether you should use it in your research. These aren't necessarily linear steps, and the questions are ones you should ask as you read and re-read your sources.

Step 1: Scan the source for your initial impressions.

- Does the information seem far-fetched?
- Does the source distinguish between opinions and facts?
- Does it use charged language and take an extreme viewpoint?

If a source makes claims that seem questionable or extreme, or makes claims that aren't supported by independent research, that is a red flag. If this is the case, it doesn't mean you need to dismiss the source altogether, but you won't want to use it to support your own claims and research. If your initial impression of the source feels trustworthy, then move to the questions in Step 2.

Step 2: Ask basic questions about the source.

- Who is the writer/publisher? Why are they qualified to write about this subject matter?
- When was the source published?
- Who is the intended audience? What stance does the source take? Do you notice a bias?
- What is your bias and how is it impacting your reading/assessment of the evidence?
- Does the author clearly explain the methods by which they arrived at any statistical data used in the source?

Step 3: Read laterally.

Understanding these questions may take some time, and as you work through them, you'll want to start reading more *laterally* (Caulfield). Reading laterally is the process of reading across a wide range of sources to look for patterns of argument and evidence present across that group of resources. Once you have a good sense of the basic markers of a credible source, you're ready to read more laterally and begin locating the source in the larger discourse and textual circulation that surrounds it.

- What types of sources (primary and secondary) are referenced and cited in the source and how are they used?
- Can you trace and verify these sources? Try pulling them up in different tabs so you can bounce between them.
- When looking at arguments, claims, and the evidence used to support claims in the source, are you able to cross-reference these claims with other sources and research? If not, the claims may not be trustworthy.
- What other sources do these secondary sources cite? This will give you a broader sense of the network of texts and research circulating about the problem and give you ideas on where to go next in your research.

Managing and Organizing Research Through Writing Tools

In addition to sharpening your critical abilities to discern credible information, another important skill you'll be building on in this and other writing courses is your ability to manage and organize your sources and research data. One of the great challenges of information abundance is managing the amount of available information. From bookmarking relevant websites, to keeping a running bibliography, to writing a literature review, and organizing your research notes, there are a range of digital tools that you can use to help manage a research project like the one you're exploring in this course. We can't cover all the tools available here, but we'll introduce a few that you may find useful in your own research endeavor.

It probably goes without saying that the *activity of writing itself* is central to the process of managing and organizing your research and sources. We tend to think of writing as simply the stuff we do when we draft a text. But experienced researchers use writing throughout the entire research process, from beginning to end, moving back and forth through the stages of the writing process—brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and repeating this process until the research is finished (or a deadline arrives). A common genre that you may want to try out as you research your problem is the *research memo*. Research memos are notes researchers make as they go through the process of researching, taking notes on both primary and secondary research. Writing like this throughout your research process will help you explore your thinking and articulate your ideas more clearly. Research memos can be done in a conventional notebook, or they can be done using a Google Doc or blog tool that could be shared with classmates and collaborators.

Other key skills and genres for doing research that you may already be familiar with are *bibliographies* and *literature* *reviews*. Bibliographies are lists of sources you are using in your research, usually in a particular style such as MLA or APA. Annotated bibliographies include short descriptions of a source and its relevance to your research. A literature review is a thorough summary of all the sources and research you've read about the problem you are exploring. Literature reviews are useful in helping readers see how your research fits in with the larger context and conversation going on around it.

Here are a few guidelines to help your research stay on track and organized as you dig deeper into a wicked problem:

- Timeline: Keep the calendar and due dates in mind and develop a research schedule that will allow you to easily meet those deadlines.
- Managing your sources: There are several online tools you can use to manage your bibliography (Easy Bib, RefWorks). Other tools like Evernote and MS OneNote can help you organize your research in folders, take notes on sources, draft sections, and collaborate with others. Bookmarking tools like Diigo and Pocket can be useful also in managing sources you find online, annotating, grouping them through tagging.
- Planning and "slow" research: Because the problem you are studying will take time to understand, be patient with the process. You'll want to stay flexible and open to the research process, continually reflecting on your own biases and stance as you learn the nuances of the

problem you are studying. Over time, as you expand your understanding of the problem and the discourse that surrounds it, you'll be able to write about it with more authority and insight. That kind of engaged writing can only come through intentional and prolonged thinking, researching, and writing about the problem.

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17.

CITATIONS AND ATTRIBUTIONS

Dahliani Reynolds

We often think about writing as a solitary act, of putting one's thoughts into words, and then inscribing our words on the page. And it is. But not really. Whether we write alone or collaboratively, our thoughts are never just our own. We are always responding to something or someone else, *especially* when writing to explore and solve problems. In *How Writing Works*, we often talk about academic writing as "joining a conversation." When you sit down to write, you are not writing out of nowhere. You are writing in response to something that happened and to what others have already said about what happened. In other words, you write to join an already existing conversation—which means you have to familiarize yourself with that conversation. If you want others to listen to your contributions to the conversation, you have to demonstrate your awareness of what others have already said. This means that most of the time, your writing is rarely a record of only your own words; it is almost always going to include other voices.

As you know, if you use someone else's words, you have to cite them, or give them credit. Failing to do so constitutes plagiarism, which is a kind of intellectual theft or academic dishonesty. You also need to give credit when you draw on other's ideas, even if you are putting them into your own words. You are probably already familiar with these ideas about citing your sources, and likely have at least some practice using at least one of the most common citation systems.

Academics use various citation systems to cite their sources. Modern Language Association (MLA) and American Psychological Association (APA) are two of the most common systems, but there are others. It's important to understand that these citation systems are disciplinary in nature. They have been developed by the discourse communities that use them to provide consistent practices for citing sources and conveying the most important information about those sources to readers.

Keep in mind that what constitutes the most important information differs across discourse communities, and citation systems reflect this difference. For example, in the social sciences, cutting edge research is valued, which means that sources need to be as current as possible. As a result of this priority, APA places the date of publication immediately after the author's name—so it is one of the first pieces of information readers get about the source. In the humanities, however, date of publication is not as important, and so the date is listed later in the citation. Similarly, the conventions in all citation systems change over time, as the kinds of sources available (or valued) in different disciplines have changed. For example, both MLA and APA now have a preferred format for citing a website—a format (and a kind of source) that didn't exist not so long ago. As a writer joining these various discourse communities, you probably need not master the nuances of multiple citation systems, but it *is* important that you understand the disciplinary nature of these systems, and learn how to find information about the correct format for each system.

As a writer who has probably had years of education devoted to learning about academic writing, you might be surprised to know that citation systems like APA and MLA are rarely used in writing for professional or public audiences. Though you will likely not need to use the same kind of citation practices when writing for professional or public audiences, the same ideas about giving credit to others still apply. The methods for doing so are less formalized and rely more on attribution than citation. Attribution and citation are both about giving the writer/artist credit for their work, or "attributing" the words or artistic creation to their composer. Citation is simply a formal, stylized version of attribution, used by specific (often academic) discourse communities. This distinction is particularly important in writing for professional and public audiences, because you are likely to draw on a greater range—and certainly different—kinds of sources than you might when writing for an academic audience. Instead of relying almost solely on academic scholarship, writing for professional or public audiences might also include sources drawn from popular literature, digital content, multimodal resources, etc. It is thus very important to pay attention to the kinds of copyright governing the sources you use in your writing.

Copyright

Copyright is a legal method for protecting one's intellectual property, whether it be a written text, a photograph, a music composition, etc. If you write a short story, it is your intellectual property—which means no one else can use or reproduce or sell it without your permission. The protections afforded by our legal copyright system are automatically granted to your story, even if you don't register it for a formal copyright license. Obviously, copyright is an important legal protection to keep others from "stealing" your work. On the other hand, as a system that evolved decades before the proliferation of digital and self-publishing opportunities, it is not always efficient for current writing situations. If you are creating a video and want to use a song by Lizzo for the soundtrack, you are legally required to request permission to do so. Failure to secure written permission would result in copyright infringement, punishable by law.

In the absence of written permission to use Lizzo's song, you have two ethically and legally permissible options. The first option is to apply "fair use" principles. Fair use allows you to use copyrighted material—without written permission—under certain conditions:

1. Your purpose for using the copyrighted material
2. The nature of the copyrighted material
3. The amount of the copyrighted material you use
4. The effect of your use on the market value of the copyrighted material

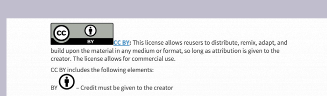
All four conditions impact fair use decisions, but they are also all subject to the court's opinion. For example, if your purpose in using Lizzo's song is to serve as the soundtrack to a video you are making for educational purposes, or if you are using it for a transformative purpose such as a parody, then it would lean in the favor of fair use. However, if you are creating a video to sell your line of skin care products, it might not, because of the commercial motive. If you plan to use just a single verse instead of the whole song, that too leans in favor of fair use; but if you want to use the chorus—the most recognizable part of the song—that can be problematic. Likewise, if your use of the copyrighted material will impact Lizzo's future revenue from the song, that brings up significant questions as to the "fairness" of your use.

The second ethically and legally permissible option is to find out if Lizzo's song is licensed through a creative commons license. Many digital sources (images, music, video, websites) are copyrighted through a creative commons license, which means while they remain copyrighted, the writer or artist has already granted permission for others to use their work without asking for permission. Creative Commons licenses carry certain restrictions about usage:

1. If you need to attribute the work to the original author/artist
2. If you are allowed to adapt the work (change or excerpt or remix it)
3. If you are allowed to sell it
4. If you are required to use the same creative commons license in your work

As illustrated below, the six different licenses utilize different combinations of these restrictions, with a seventh option offering free access through public domain.

The Creative Commons License Options Listed from Most to Least Permissive: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BY – Credit must be given to the creator

SA – Adaptations must be shared under the same terms

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It includes the following elements:

BY – Credit must be given to the creator

NC – Only noncommercial uses of the work are permitted

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BY – Credit must be given to the creator

ND – No derivatives or adaptations of the work are permitted

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NC – Only noncommercial uses of the work are permitted

ND – No derivatives or adaptations of the work are permitted

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CC0 (aka CC Zero) is a public dedication tool, which allows creators to give up their copyright and put their works into the worldwide public domain. CC0 allows reusers to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format, with no conditions.

When you use something licensed with a creative commons license, your attribution for those sources must note those restrictions, as well as provide the author's name and title of source.

When you integrate multimodal sources, best practice is to place your attribution on the page next to the source (typically, just below the picture, sound clip, video player, etc.), or in a list at the end of the text (as is the case in this book). Your attribution would not be formatted using APA or MLA citation systems, but would include information about the author and creative commons license. Typically, an attribution would include:

1. title
2. author/artist's name
3. source
4. license

Additional information about best practices for attribution can be found on the Creative Commons website. Additional information about current guidelines for MLA and APA citation systems can be found on the Purdue OWL website.

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PART VI
METACOGNITIVE KNOWLEDGE

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to produce texts that demonstrate the ability to **engage in thoughtful, reflective, and ongoing self-assessment of writing processes and products**

Metacognition means that you are aware of your learning and thought processes. Through metacognitive reflection, you can explain what you learned, how you learned it, and why it is meaningful. This awareness is important because it helps you apply what you learned to future contexts. In writing, metacognition means that you know *what* you are doing when you write and *why* you are doing it. It involves being alert to your writing processes, concepts, and techniques so that you can figure out what to do when you face new writing situations, including those outside of your writing courses. Metacognition is key to developing confidence and fluency in your writing.

You have experience writing reflections on your drafts and assessing your writing for its strengths and addressing its weaknesses. For example, in *How Writing Works*, you probably wrote a reflective portfolio where you explained what you learned in the course and how your writing demonstrates this learning. The following chapters build on this prior experience to help you deepen your understanding of the metacognitive processes that occur throughout the writing process—ranging from reflecting on decisions that other writers make to anticipating how you will apply concepts to future, as yet unknown, contexts like other courses, jobs, internships, and occasions when you will be writing.

The chapters in this part of the book will help you better understand metacognition in new ways:

- "**Active Reading to Understand a Problem**" explores what happens when you read and why it is so important for writers to pay attention to reading. It provides strategies for paying close attention to texts by taking notes, asking questions, thinking about what the author is saying, making connections to other texts, and a range of other important activities. These activities enrich our capacity to understand what we read, which allows us to develop vital, transferable skills that we can apply to other mental tasks and challenges—like writing—that we will inevitably face in other classes and at work. Reading helps you think about and make sense of writing. Skilled readers always participate in metacognition by thinking about what they are reading and how they can learn from it.

"**Transfer**" explains how important it is to connect what you learned in your writing courses to contexts outside of the writing classroom. It guides you on applying what you learned in these courses to diverse future projects. Metacognition is an integral part of transfer because you need to understand what you learned in order to apply it to a variety of situations. Since transfer does not happen automatically, you must be aware of what you learned, when you need to draw on that learning, and how you can apply it.

18.

ACTIVE READING TO UNDERSTAND A PROBLEM

Christian J. Pulver

> *"If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time (or the tools) to write. Simple as that."*
> -Stephen King

Understanding all the sides that make up a problem you are exploring depends on your ability to *read actively*. As we'll cover in this chapter, reading actively entails many things, but here's a good starting definition: Active reading is the practice and skill of *making meaning* through deep engagement with a text or other composition, using the basic techniques of *re-reading*, *annotating*, *responding*, and *sharing*. Though we may think of reading as a separate activity from writing, active reading emphasizes how the two work together to create deeper learning experiences. As world-renowned writer Stephen King suggests in the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter, writing well depends on taking the time to read.

Before turning to the basic strategies for active reading, let's consider the role that **discourse** plays in understanding a problem we are trying to address. When starting to make sense of a problem, we first must make sense of the discourse that surrounds it. How are others writing and talking about the problem? What terms and concepts are common and shared in this discourse? What kinds of assumptions and beliefs are part of this discourse, and how do they frame the problem you are looking at? What arguments are made and what kinds of evidence are used? The purpose behind understanding the discursive and textual context of a problem is two-fold: first, it will help you understand the nature and nuances of the problem; and second, it will help you understand how to enter the conversation and contribute to its solution. In this way, active reading is not simply reading for information—it's reading to learn how to think *in a particular discourse about a particular problem.*

Image 1

From a cognitive and neurological perspective, reading actively is like lifting weights for the brain. Active reading creates neuronal pathways in our brains necessary for thinking and writing in that discourse. We often call this process "learning," but, more specifically, when we read actively we are building a storehouse of concepts, ideas, words, logic, and meaning that we'll need to know if we hope to understand a problem we are researching. In enriching our capacity to understand what we read, we are likewise developing immensely useful and transferable skills that we can apply when learning other discourses and solving other problems in different contexts.

Four Stages of Active Reading

In active reading, reading is more of a staged process than a single event. This process entails re-reading and common note-taking strategies like annotating, underlining, defining terms, and responding to passages you find relevant to the problem you are studying. The four stages of active reading are as follows:

1. Introductory reading

2. Participatory reading
3. Analytical reading
4. Lateral reading

Introductory reading is the stage where we systematically skim a text to get an initial feel for it based on the genre, title, sections, images, headings, length, author, and publisher. If we're reading a longer text, we would also look over the table of contents or scan the basic layout and links of a website. In introductory reading our goal is to familiarize ourselves with the reading task in front of us and start priming our minds to undertake a more in depth participatory and analytical reading of the text.

In the *participatory* stage of active reading, our first full time through, we want to make sense of what the writer and the text are trying to communicate to us. What are the basic ideas in the text? What stance has the writer taken? Is there a thesis or another explicit purpose in the text? In this second stage of reading, start to annotate and take notes. Underline interesting quotes or passages, note your questions and reactions in the margins, and circle or otherwise mark key words and concepts.

After a participatory reading, the next stage is *re-reading*. This time we read with a more *analytical* eye, asking questions about how the text is organized and arranged. What rhetorical appeals are in play? Who is the intended audience? Is the text making an argument? What outside sources does the text draw on? In the analytical stage of reading we are thinking more rhetorically about how effective a text is, about its purpose, audience, organization, and style. Annotating, underlining, and responding should all be used in this stage as we re-read and deepen our understanding of both the meaning of the text and the discourse it is a part of.

Another important note-taking strategy for active reading that should be used in both participatory and analytical stages is *double-entry notes* (Image 2). In double-entry notes, the reader pulls out quotes or ideas they find interesting in a text and places them in the left column of a table. Then, in the right column, the reader explores their response by writing about their understanding/reaction to the quote/idea and why it's significant. These responses might be personal reflections or questions, or they might help to work out the meaning of the passage by putting it in the words of the reader. Whatever the response, double-entry notes are a simple and effective way to deepen your engagement with a text, explore your thinking about it (metacognition), and develop a deeper understanding of the problem you are trying to address.

Quote or idea from reading/assignment	**Reactions, thoughts, questions about quote or idea**
"Reading, explains Wolf, is not an instinctive skill for human beings. It's not etched into our genes the way speech is. We have to teach our minds how to translate the symbolic characters we see into the language we understand. And the media or other technologies we use in learning and practicing the craft of reading play an important part in shaping the neural circuits inside our brains" (Carr, "Is Google Making Us Stupid," 58).	Even though this article was written over a decade ago now, it was raising questions we are still trying to understand about the problem of how the internet affects our brains and our reading. I'm curious about how we read different media differently. I generally prefer to read hard copy texts, but when I think about it, it really depends on what kind of text or genre it is whether I prefer to read on screen or not. Certainly, emerging studies I've read seem to point to a rise in anxiety, attention deficit disorder, and depression associated with greater internet use in teenagers.
Next passage or idea here	Next reading response here

Image 2

Lateral reading is the fourth phase of reading, where we start to place the texts we've read within a group of other circulating texts and compositions that are considering similar questions or problems. In this stage, readers are trying to understand the larger context the text is a part of and how it is in conversation with a network of other texts and media.

As you work through the four stages of active reading, you are developing the interpretive structures in your brain, allowing you to write more fluently about the problem you are exploring and, thus, to enter the conversation more effectively in the process.

Reading and Annotating on the Screen

You will develop your own process for reading actively, but here are some guidelines to get you thinking about your own reading practices and how to use writing as a way to read more actively on a screen.

- Try out a variety of tools and media when reading to see what works best for you. For example, many people reading on the screen take notes with pen and paper on their reading. Old technology like pen and paper continue to be useful tools for learning. Familiarize yourself with the various outlining and annotating tools now common in all word processing applications and learn about popular online writing and note-taking tools like Google Docs, Evernote, OneNote, or online research tools like Diigo and RefWorks. The choices are many, so find the tools that work best for your learning.
- The bigger the screen the better. Though many of us may not have access to a large computer screen, opening up a reading in a two-page spread and enlarging the text can create a much more comfortable and open reading experience than reading on a phone or tablet. Being able to see two pages will help you develop a more coherent sense of a text and how it's organized.
- Change the background to black and the text to white. This is an easy technique to minimize eye strain if you are reading on the screen for long periods of time. All e-readers have this capability, as does Microsoft Word.

Image 3

Summary of Active Reading Strategies

- **Find a space where you can focus and minimize distraction.** Consider silencing your phone and putting it away (in a bag or drawer) for a set amount of time while you are actively reading. Start with 15-minute sessions and add 15 minutes every few reading sessions until you can read uninterrupted for 60 minutes. This kind of incremental process will help you grow as a reader and greatly improve your concentration and focus.
- If the reading is confusing or feels dense, **physically slow your eyes down** and take the words in smaller,

slower chunks until they make sense to you. Again, this is part of the intellectual training involved in active reading. As you slow down to read, you are training your brain to read more carefully and comprehend more quickly. Over time, your reading and comprehension speed will increase. While there is a time and a place for "speed-reading," active reading, as we've defined it here, is slower and more intentional.

- **Read in stages and re-read**. As we've traced in this chapter, moving from introductory to participatory, analytical, and lateral readings will help you engage, understand, and remember what you read.
- **Annotate and trace your thinking**. Marking up the text, underlining key passages and concepts, noting your reactions, confusion, surprise—all of these kinds of annotations are central to reading actively and reading well. Such annotations will help you remember what you read, what was interesting to you, and give you ideas to draw on as you work through the problem you are researching.
- **Read out loud and talk about your reading with others**. Reading out loud may feel funny at first, but it's a simple way to increase your comprehension by taking advantage of your ability to hear as well as see. Sharing what you're reading with others and talking to them about it, or dialoguing about a question you have, is another easy way to deepen your understanding of text

and your ability to "talk" the discourse it is a part of.

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19.

TRANSFER

Dahliani Reynolds

Earning a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree from Roger Williams University demands that you fulfill a number of different curricular requirements in addition to the courses required by your major(s). Some of these courses will clearly build on each other. For example, BUSN 100: Enterprise introduces students to key concepts in business that they then build on in upper-level courses, and PSYCH 100: Introduction to Psychology provides an overview of key psychological concepts and theories that are the foundation for advanced work in the field . Other courses may seem less connected to each other, or to your interests, or to your major area of study.

Often, some courses you take to fulfill a requirement feel disconnected. If you are not personally interested in the subject matter, and if it does not serve as a critical building block for your major, it is easy to see the course as a stand-alone class—to be taken and quickly forgotten. However, the problem with this approach is that it means you are failing at one of the most fundamental principles of education: knowledge transfer.

Knowledge transfer involves transferring the knowledge and skills acquired in one class to other classes or learning situations. It is probably not hyperbole to say that this transfer is fundamental to the whole enterprise of education. Certainly, if you are getting a degree in civil engineering, you will need to transfer the knowledge and skills you gain through your coursework to the work you do as a civil engineer after graduation. Likewise, if you are an anthropology major, you will rely on what you have learned about methods and methodology to conduct ethnographic studies on the job. In these situations, if you do not transfer knowledge and skills acquired in your coursework, once in the workplace, you'll likely be thinking you wasted time and money by not paying attention to how the building blocks of your education fit together.

As a key concept in education, transfer is often broken down into near and far transfer. Near transfer occurs when you transfer the knowledge gained in one situation to another, similar situation. For example, learning to drive involves learning a variety of skills: how hard to press the gas or brake pedals, looking in the side and rear view mirrors, using a turn signal, etc. Once you have learned those skills—and they have become habitual to your driving practices—it is relatively easy to transfer them to the "near" situation of driving a manual transmission vehicle. There are some differences between driving an automatic and a stick, but they're pretty close.

Far transfer means transferring knowledge and skills from one situation to another, more distantly related situation. For example, learning to play chess and directing actual military operations. Yes, chess is a game of chess, and you learn some things about strategy, teamwork, and sacrifice. The game is not really anything like actual warfare, yet warfare and chess rely on similar sets of skills and attitudes, and, in effect, the mastery of the game would allow you to cultivate those skills and attitudes to then adapt and deploy in other situations like warfare.

Writing classes, like all your classes, are intended to facilitate knowledge transfer. We want you to transfer and apply what you learn in one class to other classes and writing situations. In other words, what you learn *in Writing for Business Organizations* should be transferable to *Advancing Public Argument*, but also to *Operations Management*, and to your Communications internship. Likewise, what you learn in this class should be transferable to future writing situations, in other classes and in your life post-graduation, as you continue to engage problems that matter in your communities. Even though it might seem like writing in one situation is similar to writing in another situation (near transfer), sometimes it might feel more like far transfer. After all, writing an essay on feminism in the workplace for a publication like Bitch Media (which could be an assignment for this course), is pretty different from writing a feasibility study for your engineering co-op.

Noticing differences in writing situations is important because transfer doesn't happen automatically—especially far transfer. Those engaged in warfare may not immediately recognize they are making chess moves unless someone draws their attention to the similarities. Likewise, with general education writing courses and writing on the job, you may not make the connection unless you have *learned to recognize* that issues of audience, purpose, genre, and style are relevant to all writing situations—and that you have *practiced transferring* this knowledge from one setting to the next.

Since we can't possibly teach you how to write all the genres you might encounter in your major or field, this course (like all writing courses at RWU) is designed to facilitate transfer. If transfer doesn't happen automatically, that means it has to be *intentional*, and *applied metacognition* is the best way to create such intentionality. The metacognitive activities you will do throughout the semester are aimed at helping you think about your writing processes and choices, to consider why you are making the choices you are. Being deliberative and aware of what you are doing as a writer—and why—allows you to achieve both near and far, and forward and backward-reaching transfer. If near and far transfer refer to the degree of similarity between two writing situations, forward and backward-reaching transfer refer to how you draw on prior knowledge or hypothesize future applications of knowledge:

> Forward Transfer: thinking metacognitively about how the writing knowledge and skills you are obtaining might be transferred forward to future writing situations (for example, considering how the knowledge you gain from this class might be useful in the internship you've obtained for next semester).
>
> Backward Transfer: thinking metacognitively about how writing situations you have previously experienced might be of value in a current situation (for example, how the knowledge and skills you developed in WTNG 102: How Writing Works might be usefully translated and applied to this class).

RWU WRITING PROGRAM GLOSSARY

Audience

Audience, loosely defined, is the recipient for the communication. In most rhetorical situations, there are multiple audiences. There are the audience addressed, the audience invoked, a hostile audience, a supportive audience, an unintended audience, etc. The key to understanding audience is that it is never everyone. You must, as author, make choices and in making choices you shape your message to the audience you believe most likely to achieve your purpose.

Coherence

Coherence is the logical connection that readers or listeners perceive in a written or oral text. Coherence is the trait that makes the paragraph easily understandable to a reader. You can help create coherence in your paragraphs by creating logical bridges and verbal bridges.

Discourse Community

A discourse community is a group whose shared language practices work toward a shared goal or goals. An introductory course in biology, a family, a group of Red Sox fans, New Historicist critics of Shakespeare—each of these social networks can be considered a discourse community. The discourse community's shared goals influence the genres it typically uses, its specialized terminology, and its expectations for effective communication.

Epistemology

Epistemology, a branch of philosophy, is the study of how we acquire knowledge and justified belief. In studying rhetoric as social-epistemic (acquiring and constructing knowledge in communities), we come to see knowledge and justification as situated in complex contexts and relationships. As readers, writers, and thinkers, we must unpack the complex situations and acknowledge our own limited access to knowledge and our own situated-ness in building justifications. We must also understand that no knowledge is free from the ideologies that produce it.

Exigence

Exigence, or exigency, is the need to write or speak—the need to fill a gap, to communicate what the (rhetorical) situation demands. The perspective of the author (as she defines the rhetorical situation) will frame how the need is interpreted and met—one author, for example might see a crisis while another sees an opportunity.

Framing

A frame is a way of shaping or packaging a perspective on an issue or subject that leads to a (presumably) preferred reading. A disparate series of events may be framed differently to condense or hide significant differences for the purposes of shaping the audiences response to those events. Sustainability, for example, could be framed as a moral crisis or an economic opportunity.

Genre

A genre is a kind or type of text. Lab reports, business plans, lesson plans, literature reviews, research proposals, annotated bibliographies—each of these genres, and many more—are taught across the university. Being aware of a genre's purpose, structure, content, and style can help one generate a text that responds to the rhetorical situation and advances discourse community aims.

Ideology

An ideology is a set of beliefs, shared by members of a group or collective movement, organized into a doctrine that guides thinking and behavior. An ideology circumscribes thinking and entails commitment; hence an adherent will usually find it difficult to escape its grip. Our own ideologies are often "invisible" while the ideologies of others are blatantly obvious.

Inquiry-based Teaching and Learning

Inquiry-based teaching is predicated on the idea that projects begun with questions, curiosities, or puzzlements, rather than with a focus or thesis statement, encourage learner investment and encourage them to go beyond what they already know, making it more likely they will explore and learn something new.

Kairos

Kairos is the right or opportune moment. Kairos in rhetoric is the ability to recognize and seize the opportunity to drive home an argument. Rhetoricians are taught to read and respond to changing circumstances and conditions and to employ the necessary and available means of persuasion in order to make use of these moments.

Metacognition

Literally thinking about thinking, metacognition is our ability to assess our own skills, knowledge, and learning.

Reading

Reading is the active decoding of any text in a way that reveals or produces meaning. When the text being encountered is particularly complex (or new), active and sustained practice at fully decoding it—rereading—is necessary.

Recursive Writing Process

Recursive writing means "to write again:" when we talk about a "recursive process," we are acknowledging the necessity of revisiting what has already been drafted in order to move to the next, better articulation of the idea being expressed. The recursive process always takes place over time, sometimes in collaboration, sometimes individually or in conference with the instructor.

Revision and Editing

Revision is a process of drafting and re-drafting in order to develop and refine ideas. Extended over time, revision enables students to participate in sustained critical reflection and synthesis. Editing and proofreading are ideally final steps in this extended process, taking place only after the text has achieved adequate unity and development of the main idea.

Rhetorical Appeals

Rhetorical appeals, or persuasive strategies, are used in arguments to support claims and respond to opposing arguments. A good argument will generally use a combination of all three appeals to make its case. ***Logos*** or the appeal to reason relies on logic or reasons supported by appropriate evidence. Logos often depends on the use of inductive or deductive reasoning. ***Ethos*** or the ethical appeal is based on the character, credibility, or reliability of the writer. ***Pathos***, or emotional appeal, appeals to an audience's needs, values, and emotional sensibilities.

Rhetorical Purpose

Rhetorical purpose refers to the primary intent or goal of a text. The most commonly cited rhetorical goals are to explore, to inform, to analyze, to synthesize, and to persuade. A student text that includes multiple sources pulled together to solve a problem or prove a point is a synthesis; a student text that reports on the procedures and results of an experiment is informative.

Rhetorical Situation

The rhetorical situation involves the interplay between the speaker or writer's purpose, her text, her audience, and the social context within which the communication occurs.

Sources/Standards of Evidence

Acceptable sources and standards of evidence vary depending on criteria of the relevant discourse community, including, more specifically, disciplinary and genre conventions. Personal examples have no currency in most formal academic papers, but they can be highly valued in blogs. Numeric evidence is seldom appropriate to literary analysis; citing patterns of metaphors is equally rare in lab reports written for chemistry.

Stance

Stance is your attitude toward your topic. The way you express that stance—your tone—affects the way you come across as a writer and a person.

Visual Rhetoric

Visual Rhetoric is the study and practice of using images or visual elements (including photographs, illustrations, charts, graphs, and typography) on their own and/or in collaboration with written texts to create an argument designed to move a particular audience.