

Writing Spaces at Oklahoma State University

WRITING SPACES AT OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

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WRITING SPACES AND BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE OER

Dr. Joshua Daniel

Welcome to *Writing Spaces at Oklahoma State University*, our second OER project for FYC at Oklahoma State University, which serves as the primary textbook for English 1213. While English 1113 and its corresponding textbook, *Who Teaches Writing*, introduced you to a range of genres and styles of writing with an overall focus on writing a lot and writing for different audiences, English 1213 focuses on the various processes involved in researching answers to various inquiry questions and building effective arguments within and outside academic contexts. Our curriculum takes you through the processes of listening/summarizing, asking questions, characterizing scholarly debates, and entering those debates once you have something productive to add to an ongoing conversation.

Who Teaches Writing was produced “in-house,” so to speak. We received a \$10,000.00 grant from Dr. Matt Upson and worked with OER guru/knower-and-doer-of-all things Dr. Kathy Essmiller to produce essays about important concepts for beginning writers by paying authors from Oklahoma State and other institutions to write for us. *Writing Spaces at Oklahoma State University* was produced using a different process. You’re no doubt asking yourself, “Well, gosh! *Who Teaching Writing* was uh-mazing! Why would they switch it up?” Despite your well-reasoned “if it ain’t broke don’t fix it” logic, we wanted to use another model for this textbook (and spoiler alert, more is coming) to show in every way we could there are many different ways to produce commercial free textbooks for students. So how did we do this one?

Writing Spaces is, as I like to say, the “OG” of all things commercial-free-textbooks for first-year writing. If you don’t believe me, check out the opening lines on their website:

Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing is a book series containing peer-reviewed collections of essays—all composed by teachers for students—with each volume freely available for download under a Creative Commons license. Writing Spaces aims to build a library of quality open access textbooks for the writing classroom as an alternative to costly textbooks.

If terms like “book series” and “peer-reviewed essays” or “by teachers for students” or “free” sound reminiscent of *Who Teaches Writing*, it is because *Writing Spaces* was and is the inspiration for *Who Teaches Writing*. *Who Teaches Writing* was no brain child of ours, but just the end result of us keeping up with good practice from

smart people who have been doing this work for many years. I had the good fortune to serve as web editor for Writing Spaces for a time, and I know their work well. While we borrowed their process to create our textbook, this textbook uses existing *Writing Spaces* articles and organizes them around the English 1213 curriculum, along with abstracts and introductions from our editorial team (you'll be meeting them in each section) to deliver you another commercial free textbook. Not only is it entirely possible to create free textbooks for FYC students, it has been for a while. This is because, well, *Writing Spaces* has been at it for a minute; as FYC Director, I do not believe in unnecessary textbook costs, and almost all commercial textbook costs are almost all unnecessary.

The long and short of it is this: I have no real beef with students paying some cost for textbooks. My issue is that I don't want students paying textbook costs that aren't absolutely necessary, and I think as program directors we should explore every possible alternative before making a choice to ask students to pay for materials above and beyond all the other costs associated with college. When we do ask them to pay, it should be as small as we can make it, and we should be thoughtful and purposeful about why they are being asked to pay with a clear sense of who benefits. In other words, if students are paying for textbooks, it should help everyone (them, the program, instructors, etc). If you're producing an OER, maybe you need to ask students to pay 5 or 10 bucks to compensate your authors. Do it. That's a necessary and good cost, and not prohibitive for students. Maybe you need to create a small printing fee to give a kickback to your bookstore, who is losing money from a contract with the old textbook supplier. Again, no beef. What is the cost? Is it necessary? Is it prohibitive? Who does it help? If you don't have good answers to those questions, you may have a problem. The last time we used a commercial textbook, we were always told it was only 40 bucks. It usually ended up being closer to 80 in the end, and we saw no benefit from that. No thanks. Do not pass go.

Reflections on My Father: Why Are We Doing This?

I began my job here at Oklahoma State University in the Fall of 2014. My father—unexpectedly, at the age of 56—died that November during Thanksgiving Break. My parents split up when I was 3 and they never saw eye-to-eye on much of anything, but there are two important qualities they share: 1) they were/are (yes, Mom, I know you're still alive) tremendously intelligent people; and 2) neither of them had the chance to graduate high school. My mom is one of the great storytellers of our generation, so I won't speak for her here, but I have come to realize in recent years some things about my dad's story are important to the work I do today, and I want to share them with you here.

In my dad's case, he didn't even get the chance to finish middle school and had to drop out during the 7th grade to work full time. From the age of 13 until his death at the age of 56, he worked as an electrician (a good one at that from everything I ever knew or learned about the man). Think about that for a second. My father died young after putting in 43 years of hard labor. My academic career, especially in recent years, has been in many ways shaped by these facts about my father. As part of my work directing the FYC program at OSU, I have worked closely with the Gardner Institute and their Gateways to Completion program. Recently, the Gardner Institute has been launching a new series about transforming the first 60 hours of college courses

toward accessibility, and they have stated as their goal to make “race, ethnicity, and family income no longer reliable predictors of who gets to graduate college.” For me, this is a major focus of our OER Project. No matter who you are, or where you come from, or what your family has or does not have, we can provide these FYC textbooks for free. This is a small gesture to remove barriers to education, and we are so happy to be able to do it for all of you.

You find yourself now in a college classroom, reading this, maybe thinking about your own parents and the work/opportunities you have in front of you. If you think college is hard for you or if you ever worry that maybe you aren’t good enough to succeed, know that I thought those things about myself and, if you want to know the truth about it, I still think those things a lot. Know this: you are a student in a first-year writing program that believes in you and believes in your capacity to succeed in college. If the only thing between you and a college degree is your ability and willingness to do the work, we think you have a really great shot at success.

Go get it.

To Dad: Thanks For Everything

See you on the other side.



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OUR APPROACH AND EDITORIAL TEAM

Dr. Joshua Daniel; Dr. Kathy Essmiller; Mark DiFrusio; Natasha Tinsley; Dr. Josiah Meints; Dr. Courtney Lund O'Neil; Dane Howard; and Roseanna Recchia

This textbook consists of five primary sections. Like *Who Teaches Writing*, the first four sections correspond to the first four learning outcomes in the English 1213 curriculum and are loosely organized around the current curriculum at Oklahoma State University. Additionally, a fifth section includes selected chapters on general reading, writing, and researching processes. If you are a student in an English 1213 course, your instructor will likely assign some readings from this textbook and supplement those with some selected outside readings from their own interests, research areas, and expertise. Below, you can meet our editorial team for this textbook. Each editor has provided a short introduction to the unit, along with abstracts for the readings that provide an overview of how the chapter is useful within the English 1213 curriculum at Oklahoma State University. Each chapter contains a link to the article from *Writing Spaces*, along with sample citations in MLA, APA, and Chicago Style, along with information on the volume of *Writing Spaces* where the selection appears.

About the authors



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MEET THE WRITING SPACES TEAM

Dr. Trace Daniels-Lerberg; Dr. Dana Driscoll; Dr. Mary K. Stewart; and Dr. Matthew Vetter

This page is to introduce you to the current *Writing Spaces* managing editors. For *Writing Spaces at Oklahoma State University*, we intentionally only utilized *Writing Spaces* articles from the first three volumes of the project. The purpose of this was to make clear that not only are commercial free textbooks entirely possible for First-Year Composition, they have been for many years now through the *Writing Spaces* project. The current team has already released Volume 4, and Volumes 5 and 6 are coming soon. The current editorial team is hard at work updating the new volumes with even more current work than is featured in this textbook, some of which you can read about in their Commitment to Anti-Racism Statement. Future editions of this textbook will feature articles from new volumes of *Writing Spaces*, and of course instructors are strongly encouraged to get to know the project and utilize any OER materials for their courses that are appropriate for their classrooms.

We at Oklahoma State University want to thank all current and former editors and participants in the *Writing Spaces* project, not only for their work on those volumes, but also for their help and support with this project. Go to their websites! Check out their work! Shoot them an email! They are the very best of people.

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PART I

LISTENING TO AND REPRESENTING AN ARGUMENT

Step 1: Are you listening?

Truly listening? Even now, as you read these words.

Are you listening actively, thoughtfully?

It can be trickier than it seems.

As Sherlock Holmes once admonished Dr. Watson, “You see, but you do not observe.” Explaining the distinction, Holmes notes that Watson has climbed the staircase of their lodgings at 221B Baker Street hundreds of times and yet cannot say how many steps it takes to reach the top. Observation, Holmes tells Watson, goes beyond merely seeing. To observe one must endeavor to take the measure of what has been seen.

Listening, like observation, requires that we not only hear, but take the measure of what has been heard, or read.

In **English 1213**, the **Unit 1 assignment: “Listening to and Representing an Argument”** asks students to **critically consume an argument made for a particular audience**. In other words, the first essay asks you **to listen**.

More specifically, it asks you to listen to **an argument**. Then, to demonstrate how well you have taken the measure of that argument—i.e., how well you have listened—it asks you to accurately, and fairly, explain that argument to a reader.

Throughout *Writing Spaces at OSU*, each section of this text identifies concepts and tools that will help you successfully complete the major essays in the 1213 assignment sequence. Subsequent assignments ask you to **analyze and evaluate an argument (Unit 2)**, **research a scholarly conversation (Unit 3)**, and **participate in a scholarly conversation by formulating a unique argument (Unit 4)**.

But first comes **the listening**.

Step 2: Are you still listening?

The **Unit 1 section** of *Writing Spaces at OSU* is comprised of four short chapters:

- What Is “Academic” Writing? (L. Lennie Irvin)
- So You’ve Got a Writing Assignment. Now What? (Corrine E. Hinton)
- Looking for Trouble: Finding Your Way into a Writing Assignment (Catherine Savini)
- Why Visit Your Campus Writing Center? (Ben Rafoth)

Each of these essays addresses a question or concern that students often encounter with this first assignment. For many students, the most pressing of these issues can be simply **how to begin**.

Student writers often feel some degree of anxiety, dread, or even just nervous energy when introduced to a new assignment, in large part due **misconceptions** about what **academic writing** entails. Likewise, concerns over **page length**, **due date**, and **assessment** frequently overshadow considerations of **genre**, **topic**, and **learning outcomes**. Each reading in this section offers guidance on how to negotiate these issues, as well as how to generate **topic ideas**, **develop an argument**, and make good use of the **campus writing center**.

But again... first comes **the listening**.

Step 3: So, what am I supposed to be listening for exactly?

As you read through the essays in this section, note how each emphasizes the importance of first **deciphering the assignment**. In other words, before committing a single word to the page, your first step in the **writing process** should be forming a clear understanding of the **type of writing** you are being asked to perform, and the **expectations** generated by the **rhetorical context** in which that **writing act** is situated. In other words, you need to begin by listening carefully to what the instructions ask you to do—what specific **writing tasks** are you required to perform? What **learning outcomes** is your writing expected to demonstrate?

You might think that simply reading over the assignment sheet should be enough to answer these questions. But deciphering assignments, like listening, can be trickier than it seems.

Ask any group of college freshmen to identify the **purpose** of an assignment and many are likely to answer, “to get an A.” Ask them to identify the **audience** and some will answer, “the instructor.” Ask what qualities a successful essay should demonstrate, and likely responses might include practicing good **grammar**, **punctuation**, **organization**, **style** and **flow**. While these responses may all be true, after a fashion, they also tend to be equally applicable to just about any piece of writing, and therefore a bit useless at improving your understanding of the current assignment. See my point? **Still listening...?**

One worthwhile approach to improving this understanding, it would seem, might be identifying the specific **writing tasks** and **expectations** that make each assignment **unique** rather than those things that tend to be universally applicable. For example, the first major writing assignment in English 1213 specifically asks that you **listen to and represent an argument**.

Perhaps a good place to begin then, might be simply asking yourself “What exactly does that mean—*listen to and represent an argument?*” Herein, you might think that simply reading over an argument and then **summarizing** what you have read would be enough to perform the above tasks. But learning to **listen to an argument**, like **learning to listen to music**, requires you to do more than merely hear and then repeat back what you have heard. Rather, the assignment asks that you **take the measure of the composition**, count its steps, **identify** the composition’s **component parts**, and **describe** for the reader how those parts—purpose, claims, evidence—work together to comprise the whole.

This is what it means to **listen to and represent an argument**.

First, by **deciphering the assignment** itself.

Then, by **deciphering the argument**.

And lastly, by **composing an essay** that demonstrates how well you have taken the measure of each. Your completion of the **writing tasks**, along with your **description of the argument**, reflect your understanding of what you have been asked to do, and your understanding of how to do it.

Keep in mind, it takes it a bit of **time** and **practice** to learn how to do these things.

For this reason, Unit 1 (and the accompanying readings) are geared toward helping you practice this skill set. Incidentally, this is a skill set that tends to come in handy. Not just for this course, or for your academic career, but more broadly as a life skill. Later essays in the 1213 curriculum will ask you to practice and perform additional writing tasks.

But first comes the listening. Always **the listening**.

Step 4: And now for a word about argument...

Hopefully the emphasis on **argument** in English 1213 has not escaped your attention. When we use the word **argument** in this context, like the word **critical**, it should be read with a **neutral connotation**. To present an argument does not mean a heated exchange or verbal disagreement. Instead, it conveys the act of **presenting reasons or evidence** as means of **supporting a position** for the purpose of evaluating that position's **validity**.

Likewise, our use of the word **critical** does not necessarily mean to criticize or find fault, but simply to **critique**—to offer a **detailed analysis** or **interpretation** of a text. Think of a film critic, for instance, who routinely highlights positive as well as negative aspects of a movie.

Much of the work you do in this course will be predicated on your recognition of **argument** and **critical** as **neutral terms**. Consider the **stage of your writing process** when you receive **feedback** on a draft or your finished essay. This critique of your writing may be neutral, but in some instances, it can feel very personal. Keep in mind, learning to **listen to critical feedback**, truly listen, also requires practice. And patience. Just like **writing**.

Step 5: Thank you for listening.

Please keep reading. And listening. Always the listening.

1.

LENNIE IRVIN'S "WHAT IS ACADEMIC WRITING?"

Writing Spaces Volume 1

Read the chapter "What is Academic Writing?"

In this first chapter, Irvin defines **academic writing** for students new to the **genre** and identifies some common **misconceptions** (like never using the "I" pronoun). The chapter further explores the importance of understanding the **academic writing situation** for each assignment, and the **literary tasks** students are frequently asked to perform on the college level. Irvin also provides a detailed guide for deciphering the three **major types of assignments** (**closed, semi-open, open**) along with explaining how each carries different **expectations**. This reading would be especially useful when introducing each of the major essays, as we can employ Irvin's methods to decode the assignment's specific **writing situation** and requisite **writing tasks**.

"Analysis works best when you put all the cards on the table, so to speak. Identify and isolate the parts of your analysis, and record important features and characteristics of each one."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Irvin, L. Lennie. "What Is 'Academic' Writing?" *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 1*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky, Parlor Press, 2010, pp. 3-17.

In-text citation

"Analysis works best when you put all the cards on the table, so to speak. Identify and isolate the parts of your analysis, and record important features and characteristics of each one" (Irvin 11).

APA Citation Examples

References

Irvin, L. L. (2010). *What is 'academic' writing?* In Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.), *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, vol. 1 (pp. 3-17). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

"Analysis works best when you put all the cards on the table, so to speak. Identify and isolate the parts of your analysis, and record important features and characteristics of each one" (p. 11).

Chicago Citation Examples

Bibliography

Irvin, Lennie. "What is Academic Writing?" in *Writing Spaces: Reading on Writing Volume 1*, ed. Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (New York: Parlor Press, 2010), 3-17.

In-text citation

"Analysis works best when you put all the cards on the table, so to speak. Identify and isolate the

parts of your analysis, and record important features and characteristics of each one" (Irvin, 2010, 11).

About the author

Writing Spaces Volume 1

PARLOR PRESS AND WAC CLEARINGHOUSE

<https://writingspaces.org/writing-spaces-volume-1/>

https://twitter.com/writing_spaces



edited by charles lowe and pavel zemliansky

Released in 2010, the first issue of Writing Spaces was edited by Drs. Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky. In addition to the Writing Spaces Website, volume 1 can be accessed through WAC Clearinghouse, as well as Parlor Press.

From Parlor Press

Topics in Volume 1 of the series include academic writing, how to interpret writing assignments, motives for writing, rhetorical analysis, revision, invention, writing centers, argumentation, narrative, reflective writing, Wikipedia, patchwriting, collaboration, and genres.

From WAC Clearinghouse

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2.

CORINNE E. HINTON'S "SO YOU'VE GOT A WRITING ASSIGNMENT: NOW WHAT?"

Writing Spaces Volume 1

Read the chapter "So You've Got a Writing Assignment: Now What?"

The next chapter offers guidelines for interpreting specific **assignment sheets**. Using a wide range of assignment sheets from a variety of essay types, Hinton explains how identifying the use of **directive verbs** can help students to better understand the assignment's purpose. Hinton also demonstrates how to decipher an assignment's expectations by creating a table for **what you know – what you think you know – and what you don't know**. This reading provides a useful **gateway activity** prior to distributing the first assignment sheet, wherein we practice how to read and interpret a variety of assignments.

"If you're having trouble understanding your assignment, go to the writing center for help. If you're working on a draft and you want to review it with someone, they can take a look. Your writing center tutor will not write your paper for you, nor will [they] serve as an editor to correct grammar mistakes. When you visit your university's writing center, you'll be able to discuss your project with an experienced tutor who can offer practical advice in a comfortable learning environment."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Hinton, Corrine E. "So You've Got a Writing Assignment: Now What?." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 1*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky, Parlor Press, 2010, pp. 18-33.

In-text citation

"If you're having trouble understanding your assignment, go to the writing center for help. If you're working on a draft and you want to review it with someone, they can take a look. Your writing center tutor will not write your paper for you, nor will he serve as an editor to correct grammar mistakes. When you visit your university's writing center, you'll be able to discuss your project with an experienced tutor who can offer practical advice in a comfortable learning environment" (31).

References

Hinton, C. E. (2010). So you've got a writing assignment: Now what?." In Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.), *Writing spaces: Readings on writing*, vol. 1 (pp. 18-33). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

"If you're having trouble understanding your assignment, go to the writing center for help. If you're working on a draft and you want to review it with someone, they can take a look. Your writing center tutor will not write your paper for you, nor will he serve as an editor to correct grammar mistakes. When you visit your university's writing center, you'll be able to discuss your project with an experienced tutor who can offer practical advice in a comfortable learning environment" (p. 31).

Chicago Citation Examples

Bibliography

Hinton, Corrine E. "So You've Got a Writing Assignment: Now What?" in *Writing Spaces: Reading on Writing Volume 1*, ed. Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (New York: Parlor Press, 2010), 18-33.

In-text citation

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About the author

Writing Spaces Volume 1

PARLOR PRESS AND WAC CLEARINGHOUSE

<https://writingspaces.org/writing-spaces-volume-1/>

https://twitter.com/writing_spaces



edited by charles lowe and pavel zemliansky

Released in 2010, the first issue of Writing Spaces was edited by Drs. Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky. In addition to the Writing Spaces Website, volume 1 can be accessed through WAC Clearinghouse, as well as Parlor Press.

From Parlor Press

Topics in Volume 1 of the series include academic writing, how to interpret writing assignments, motives for writing, rhetorical analysis, revision, invention, writing centers, argumentation, narrative, reflective writing, Wikipedia, patchwriting, collaboration, and genres.

From WAC Clearinghouse

Charles Lowe is Assistant Professor of Writing at Grand Valley State University where he teaches composition, professional writing, and Web design. Pavel Zemliansky is Associate Professor in the School of Writing, Rhetoric, and Technical Communication at James Madison University.

Publication Information: Lowe, Charles, & Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.). (2010). *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, Volume 1*. WritingSpaces.org; Parlor Press; The WAC Clearinghouse. <https://wac.colostate.edu/books/writingspaces/writingspaces1/>

Publication Date: June 14, 2010

3.

CATHERINE SAVINI'S "LOOKING FOR TROUBLE: FINDING YOUR WAY INTO A WRITING ASSIGNMENT"

Writing Spaces Volume 2

Read the chapter "Looking for Trouble: Finding Your Way In to a Writing Assignment"

In this chapter, Savini examines how identifying **a useful problem** can be used to develop a strong **argumentative thesis**. The chapter outlines a process whereby students locate a unique problem that they find especially meaningful, then articulate the **details** of that problem, pose **fruitful questions** related to the problem, and identify the **stakes** of the problem. Savini analyzes this process at work by examining an essay by critic **bell hooks** wherein a specific problem is used as the genesis for an **argumentative essay**. This chapter is especially helpful for learning how to **generate research topics** and **formulate original arguments**.

"Though it may seem counterintuitive at the outset, one way to diminish the considerable difficulty of getting started on a new assignment is to look for something that troubles you, seek out difficulty, find problems. All academic disciplines seek to impart in their students the ability to identify, mull over, and sometimes solve challenging problems. Not surprisingly, the benefits of a willingness and mental acuity to greet complex problems extend well beyond the classroom."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Savini, Catherine. "Looking for Trouble: Finding Your Way Into a Writing Assignment." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 2*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky, 2011, pp. 52-70.

In-text citation

"Though it may seem counterintuitive at the outset, one way to diminish the considerable difficulty of getting started on a new assignment is to look for something that troubles you, seek out difficulty, find problems. All academic disciplines seek to impart in their students the ability to identify, mull over, and sometimes solve challenging problems. Not surprisingly, the benefits of a willingness and mental acuity to greet complex problems extend well beyond the classroom." (52-53).

References

Savini, C. (2011). Looking for trouble: Finding your way into a writing assignment. In Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.), *Writing spaces: readings on writing*, vol. 2 (pp. 52-70). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

“Though it may seem counterintuitive at the outset, one way to diminish the considerable difficulty of getting started on a new assignment is to look for something that troubles you, seek out difficulty, find problems. All academic disciplines seek to impart in their students the ability to identify, mull over, and sometimes solve challenging problems. Not surprisingly, the benefits of a willingness and mental acuity to greet complex problems extend well beyond the classroom.” (Savini, 2011, p. 52-53).

Chicago Citation Examples

Bibliography

Savini, Catherine. “Looking for Trouble: Finding Your Way Into a Writing Assignment,” in *Writing Spaces: Reading on Writing Volume 2*, ed. Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemlianksy (New York: Parlor Press, 2011), 52-70

In-text citation

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About the author

Volume 2 Writing Spaces

PARLOR PRESS AND WAC CLEARINGHOUSE

<https://writingspaces.org/writing-spaces-volume-2/>

https://twitter.com/writing_spaces



Edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky

Released in 2010, the first issue of Writing Spaces was edited by Drs. Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky. In addition to the Writing Spaces Website, volume 2 can be accessed through WAC Clearinghouse, as well as Parlor Press.

From **Parlor Press**

Volume 2 continues the tradition of the previous volume with topics, such as the rhetorical situation, collaboration, documentation styles, weblogs, invention, writing assignment interpretation, reading critically, information literacy, ethnography, interviewing, argument, document design, and source integration.

From **WAC Clearinghouse**

Charles Lowe is Assistant Professor of Writing at Grand Valley State University where he teaches composition, professional writing, and Web design. Pavel Zemliansky is Associate Professor in the School of Writing, Rhetoric, and Technical Communication at James Madison University.

4.

BEN RAFOTH'S "WHY VISIT YOUR CAMPUS WRITING CENTER?"

Writing Spaces Volume 1

Read the chapter "Why Visit Your Campus Writing Center?"

This final chapter provides a series of reflections from **writing center tutors** describing how students benefit from their writing center **consultations**. Rafoth describes how students use the process of **verbalizing** their thoughts to a tutor as a means for clarifying their understanding of the assignment. The section also cites extensive research indicating how writing center visits help students to overcome their fear of sharing writing, and to improve their sense of **audience**. Most importantly, this chapter offers clear expectations for what a visit to the campus writing center entails, emphasizing its potential to be **conversational** and **generative**.

"Tutors seem to understand that writing a good paper is a team effort. The part that tutors contribute as readers is crucial because they draw writers outside of themselves to see the paper as others are likely to see it. This is a hard thing to do on one's own. We tend to step in and out of our own thoughts. But a tutor stands apart, reading the draft with fresh eyes and pointing out gaps the writer needs to fill so that ideas flow smoothly."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Rafoth, Ben. "Why Visit Your Campus Writing Center." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 1*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky, 2010, pp. 146-153.

In-text citation

"Tutors seem to understand that writing a good paper is a team effort. The part that tutors contribute as readers is crucial because they draw writers outside of themselves to see the paper as others are likely to see it. This is a hard thing to do on one's own. We tend to steep in our own thoughts. But a tutor stands apart, reading the draft with fresh eyes and pointing out the gaps the writer needs to fill so that ideas flow smoothly" (153).

References

Rafoth, B. (2010). Why visit your campus writing center? In Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.), *Writing spaces: readings on writing*, vol. 1 (pp. 146-153). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

"Tutors seem to understand that writing a good paper is a team effort. The part that tutors contribute as readers is crucial because they draw writers outside of themselves to see the paper as others are likely to see it. This is a hard thing to do on one's own. We tend to steep in our own thoughts. But a tutor stands apart, reading the draft with fresh eyes and pointing out the gaps the writer needs to fill so that ideas flow smoothly" (Rafoth, 2010, p. 153).

Chicago Citation Examples**Bibliography**

Rafoth, Ben. "Why Visit Your Campus Writing Center?" in *Writing Spaces: Reading on Writing Volume 1*, ed. Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemlianksy (New York: Parlor Press, 2011), 146-153.

In-text citation

"Tutors seem to understand that writing a good paper is a team effort. The part that tutors contribute as readers is crucial because they draw writers outside of themselves to see the paper as others are likely to see it. This is a hard thing to do on one's own. We tend to steep in our own thoughts. But a tutor stands apart, reading the draft with fresh eyes and pointing out the gaps the writer needs to fill so that ideas flow smoothly" (Rafoth, 2010, 153).

About the author



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From Parlor Press

Topics in Volume 1 of the series include academic writing, how to interpret writing assignments, motives for writing, rhetorical analysis, revision, invention, writing centers, argumentation, narrative, reflective writing, Wikipedia, patchwriting, collaboration, and genres.

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Charles Lowe is Assistant Professor of Writing at Grand Valley State University where he teaches composition, professional writing, and Web design. Pavel Zemliansky is Associate Professor in the School of Writing, Rhetoric, and Technical Communication at James Madison University.

Publication Information: Lowe, Charles, & Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.). (2010). *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, Volume 1*. WritngSpaces.org; Parlor Press; The WAC Clearinghouse. <https://wac.colostate.edu/books/writingspaces/writingspaces1/>

Publication Date: June 14, 2010

PART II

ANALYZING AND EVALUATING AN ARGUMENT

The Real-World Necessity of Analysis and Evaluation

Anyone who has been exposed to the field of writing has heard the words “analyze” and “evaluate” at some point. For anyone working in academia, these words function as a subtle but prominent mantra that shadows the subconscious every time they read or write, forcing them to dig below, behind, and in-between the words on the page to uncover some intended meaning or purpose.

However, with the rise in technological advancements and uses, everyone can encounter the potential to analyze and evaluate content every time they pick up their phone, turn on the TV, or log on to their computer. From social media feeds to ads you can’t skip on YouTube or Hulu, anyone could potentially be bombarded with countless modes of information. And it is this information that many people, especially the young, use to help them navigate through society.

From the interactions we have, to the clothes we wear, to the food we eat, we are constantly and unconsciously determining not only where we fit in but where we should fit in and where we want to fit in. In order to do that, you have to be able to judge the merit and validity of whatever is presented to you, whether it’s breaking news, a new political debate, or a new acne cream. As educators, it should be our goal and responsibility to help students understand that analysis and evaluation are normal skills that are not only obtainable but essential to their growth as adults and consumers. And that is where this section comes in.

While created by different authors, each piece functions like a spot on a map directing students through the process of truly understanding not just how to analyze and evaluate information but helping them grasp the necessity and the impact this knowledge has on their lives and their writing. In other words, the articles can be put in a type of order, one either building off the other or adding a new layer to knowledge already learned. While these articles can be placed in any order based on literary interpretation, the most logical order I have found is Jones, Cohn, Carroll, Davis, and FitzGerald.

“Finding Good Arguments or Why Bother with Logic” by Rebecca Jones comes first because it provides the students with the sledgehammer needed to break away some of the old and outdated interpretations associated with argument. Composition is not supposed to be a bloody battlefield where writers leave their words scattered on the page like dismembers limp. But rather an intelligent debate. Jones helps readers see that a well-constructed argument is not intended to be “right,” but understood. An argument is meant to be strong and durable but also malleable, seen and acknowledged by many but the skeptical eye can find the cracks and holes that can be used to denounce the claims found. Denounce not destroy for, if explained correctly, every idea will have an audience. This understanding will help students build their confidence because they will

realize that they don't have to be right, just understood, emphasizing that the foundations arguments build are not intended to support everyone, just the ones they convince to stand on them.

Once the old ideas about argument are removed, student are ready for Jenae Cohn's "Understanding Visual Rhetoric." This article helps with rebuilding the idea of rhetoric through simple yet relevant and understandable concepts. Looking at the basic design elements such as lines, color, shape, size, space, value ("the lightness or darkness of a particular element"), and texture, students can start to process how argument is formed through the visual. Since, in many ways, we live in a visual society, these ideas will be easier to grasp due to the constant exposure. Since the old beliefs about argument have been chiseled away, student can begin to process not why the information is "right" but why the information is working, which is one of the primary goals of any argument and ultimately one of the goals that instructors hope student strive for in their own work.

Now that students are moving into interpreting an arguments functionality, they can move on to Laura Bolin Carroll "Backpacks or Briefcases: Steps toward Rhetorical Analysis." Carroll reinforces Jones by reminding the reader that arguments are not built based on right or wrong but intend and purpose. Furthermore, this piece, like Cohn, focuses on breaking down the elements used to determine what the author wants to get across to the audience. However, Carroll adds on to Jones's and Cohn's pieces by providing the different ways to determine and identify the elements being used, as well as how to evaluate those different components to determine the argument's merit and validity. Basically, Carroll explains that even though a piece isn't intended to be right or wrong, it should be logical, organized, and properly supported. This piece teaches students to look for the strengths and weaknesses in others so they can learn from them, thus further building on that understanding that it's not about right or wrong, but support.

Upon first read, Kerry Davis's piece "Navigating Genres" sounds similar to the first three articles. This author also suggests that students must learn from others before they can truly understand what to do. So, like Jones, Cohn, and Carroll, the article suggests breaking down the works of others to determine how the piece is structure so you can better understand how the author formed their ideas and thoughts. The contribution this author makes is explaining the significance of learning the genre one is writing in. This piece is a necessary steppingstone for students as they begin the drafting process. Genres are ready-made frameworks to help guide students in the right direction when constructing their own pieces, working as a way for students to double check they are conveying the intended purpose associated with the genre they are working within. While it is often said there are no hard rules to writing, for students, it's always beneficial to know that there are guidelines they can follow until they are more comfortable with breaking the mold.

Davis's article also works as a transition, moving away from how others have done things to how the student will do them. Once this transition is made, FitzGerald's piece takes them to the next step by getting them to think about ways of making the work truly their own. "Writing with Force and Flair" is also a good shift from "Navigating Genres" because, as Davis's piece goes well with the first draft, FitzGerald's piece goes well with the revision process. First the students have to figure out what to say and how to say it. It is here where students mimic (sometimes plagiarize) the work of others to ensure they are getting their point across and achieving the

intended purpose. Now as any writer knows, whether they like it or not, the first draft should never be the final draft. Even though FitzGerald focuses on the incorporation of figurative language, the understanding is still that the goal is to make the writing better and more of the student's thoughts and interpretations. In order for students to determine what types of figurative language to incorporate, they have to stop and process what they know and understand about their work. This processing will make the writing better, stronger, and infused with their person voice.

In the end, every piece in this section helps lead students to a better grasp of what it means to analyze and evaluate the work of others as well as their own work. They are also provided with a real world rationale for why performing these skills are important and crucial as each author uses known or practical examples from information found in the public. These inclusions help student see that they are expected to piece a part and put together the world around them all the time.

As educators, analysis and evaluation should not just be a box checked off on an instructional map. These concepts should be taught to give students the tools necessary to think for themselves and navigate this world, hopefully understanding that they don't have to agree with others and others don't have to agree with them. It's not even about acceptance. It's about understanding that difference has always existed, will always exist, and should always exist. And that really is okay. Arguments are not intended to tear anyone down and destroy individuality. Arguments are an opportunity for different people to have their different and unique voice heard. Student just need to learn to process the information they encounter in a logical and intelligent way so that they are not looking for what's "right," but for what makes sense to them.

5.

LAURA BOLIN CARROLL'S BACKPACKS OR BRIEFCASES: STEPS TOWARD RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Writing Spaces Volume 1

Read the chapter “Backpacks or Briefcases: Steps Toward Rhetorical Analysis”

The article provides a definition of rhetorical analysis and a rationale for its necessity, tying the concept to real world experiences such as personal interactions and media exposure. The author focuses heavily on media content, explaining that rhetorical analysis is needed to prevent individuals from becoming blind followers of someone else's logic and interpretations. Instructors can use the real-world examples and discussion questions included to help guide students to a better understanding of rhetorical analysis and its use in everyday life. Students are taught that, while they may not know the term, they perform or are expected to perform such analysis in their everyday lives. This realization will help build students' confidence and make the concept easier to grasp and eventually perform in a more academic setting.

“Because media rhetoric surrounds us, it is important to understand how rhetoric works. If we refuse to stop and think about how and why it persuades us, we can become mindless consumers who buy into arguments about what makes us value ourselves and what makes us happy.”

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Carroll, Laura Bolin. "Backpacks or Briefcases: Steps Toward Rhetorical Analysis." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 1*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemlianksky, Parlor Press, 2010, pp. 45-58.

In-text citation

"Because media rhetoric surrounds us, it is important to understand how rhetoric works. If we refuse to stop and think about how and why it persuades us, we can become mindless consumers who buy into arguments about what makes us value ourselves and what makes us happy " (47).

APA Citation Examples

References

Carroll, L.B. (2010). Backpacks or briefcases: Steps toward rhetorical analysis. In Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemlianksky (Eds.), *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, vol. 1 (pp. 45-58). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

"Because media rhetoric surrounds us, it is important to understand how rhetoric works. If we refuse to stop and think about how and why it persuades us, we can become mindless consumers who buy into arguments about what makes us value ourselves and what makes us happy " (p. 47).

Chicago Citation Examples

Bibliography

Carroll, Laura Bolin. "Backpacks or Briefcases: Steps Toward Rhetorical Analysis," in *Writing Spaces: Reading on Writing Volume 1*, ed. Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (New York: Parlor Press, 2010), 45-58

In-text citation

"Because media rhetoric surrounds us, it is important to understand how rhetoric works. If we refuse to stop and think about how and why it persuades us, we can become mindless consumers who buy into arguments about what makes us value ourselves and what makes us happy " (Carroll, 2010, 47).

About the author

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From Parlor Press

Topics in Volume 1 of the series include academic writing, how to interpret writing assignments, motives for writing, rhetorical analysis, revision, invention, writing centers, argumentation, narrative, reflective writing, Wikipedia, patchwriting, collaboration, and genres.

From WAC Clearinghouse

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Publication Information: Lowe, Charles, & Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.). (2010). *Writing Spaces: Readings on*

Writing, Volume 1. WritingSpaces.org; Parlor Press; The WAC Clearinghouse. <https://wac.colostate.edu/books/writingspaces/writingspaces1/>

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6.

JENAE COHN'S UNDERSTANDING VISUAL RHETORIC

Writing Spaces Volume 3

Read the chapter "Understanding Visual Rhetoric"

The article explains how visual rhetoric is used by writers to help audiences obtain a better grasp of the intentions and purposes found within them. The author introduces real-world examples such as food images and menus to outline the unconscious, yet effective way visual rhetoric impacts individuals through components such as lines, colors, shapes, sizes, spacing, values ("the lightness or darkness of a particular element"), and textures. Instructors can use the discussion questions and suggestions provided by the author to create an introduction to rhetoric in general. This will be beneficial for instructors who teach more complex visual forms, such as music videos, professional advertisements, and recorded speeches. Students will benefit from a simplified explanation that can translate into more academically appropriate content as it relates to both the visual and written form.

"A picture is often worth a thousand words because it implies so much and can give us a lot of information quickly. Seeing may not always be believing, but visual rhetoric can be a pretty powerful way to help people understand an idea differently than they may have otherwise."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Cohn, Jenae. "Understanding Visual Rhetoric." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 3*, edited by Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter, Parlor Press, 2020, pp. 45-58.

In-text citation

"A picture is often worth a thousand words because it implies so much and can give us a lot of information quickly. Seeing may not always be believing, but visual rhetoric can be a pretty powerful way to help people understand an idea differently than they may have otherwise" (35).

APA Citation Examples

References

Cohn, J. (2020). Understanding visual rhetoric. In Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter (Eds.), *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, vol. 3* (pp. 18-39). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

"A picture is often worth a thousand words because it implies so much and can give us a lot of information quickly. Seeing may not always be believing, but visual rhetoric can be a pretty powerful way to help people understand an idea differently than they may have otherwise " (p. 35).

Chicago Citation Examples

Bibliography

Cohn, Jenae. "Understanding Visual Rhetoric," in *Writing Spaces: Reading on Writing Volume 3*, ed. Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter, (New York: Parlor Press, 2020), 18-39.

In-text citation

“A picture is often worth a thousand words because it implies so much and can give us a lot of information quickly. Seeing may not always be believing, but visual rhetoric can be a pretty powerful way to help people understand an idea differently than they may have otherwise ” (Carroll, 2010, 47).

About the author



Writing Spaces Volume 3

PARLOR PRESS AND WAC CLEARINGHOUSE

<https://writingspaces.org/>

https://twitter.com/writing_spaces

Released in 2020, the third issue of Writing Spaces was edited by Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter. In addition to the Writing Spaces Website, volume 3 can be accessed through WAC Clearinghouse, as well as Parlor Press.

From Parlor Press

Volume 3 continues the tradition of previous volumes with topics such as voice and style in writing, rhetorical appeals, discourse communities, multimodal composing, visual rhetoric, credibility, exigency, working with personal experience in academic writing, globalized writing and rhetoric, constructing scholarly ethos, imitation and style, and rhetorical punctuation.

From WAC Clearinghouse

Dana Driscoll is Professor of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she teaches in the Composition and Applied Linguistics graduate program and directs the Jones White Writing Center. Her scholarly interests include composition pedagogy, writing centers, writing transfer and writerly development, research methodologies, writing across the curriculum, and assessment.

Mary Stewart is Assistant Professor and the Assessment Coordinator for the English Department at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Her research, which is primarily qualitative, focuses on collaborative and

interactive learning, blended and online writing instruction, composition pedagogy, and teaching with technology.

Matthew Vetter is Assistant Professor of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and affiliate faculty in the Composition and Applied Linguistics Doctoral Program. A scholar in writing, rhetoric, and digital humanities, his research explores how technologies shape writing and writing pedagogy.

7.

KERRY DIRK'S NAVIGATING GENRES

Writing Spaces Volume 1

Read the chapter "Navigating Genres"

The article explains the importance of knowing the genre one is writing in. This knowledge helps students better structure their writing because knowing the genre means understanding the intended context and purpose their piece is supposed to convey. The article plays on this idea of not needing to "re-invent the wheel," using the already existing examples as guides and tools to learn from. While the students are still imputing original ideas and concepts into their work, they are structuring that information into a well-established and understood form. Instructors can use this article and the discussion questions to help students understand the necessity for learning and writing within the genre that instructors introduce to them in class. Students are given an easy-to-follow explanation for why they should understand the genres they are asked to write in, hopefully coaxing them into seeking out examples of assigned genre, so they can start learning effective and college-appropriate techniques to implement into their own writing.

"Knowing what a genre is used for can help people to accomplish goals, whether that goal be getting a job by knowing how to write a stellar resume, winning a person's heart by writing a romantic love letter, or getting into college by writing an effective personal statement."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Dirk, Kerry. "Navigating Genres." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 1*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemlianksky, Parlor Press, 2010, pp. 249-262.

In-text citation

"Knowing what a genre is used for can help people to accomplish goals, whether that goal be getting a job by knowing how to write a stellar resume, winning a person's heart by writing a romantic love letter, or getting into college by writing an effective personal statement " (253).

APA Citation Examples

References

Dirk, K. (2010). Backpacks or briefcases: Steps toward rhetorical analysis. In Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemlianksky (Eds.), *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, vol. 1 (pp. 249-262). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

"Knowing what a genre is used for can help people to accomplish goals, whether that goal be getting a job by knowing how to write a stellar resume, winning a person's heart by writing a romantic love letter, or getting into college by writing an effective personal statement " (p. 253).

Chicago Citation Examples

Bibliography

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In-text citation

"Knowing what a genre is used for can help people to accomplish goals, whether that goal be getting a job by knowing how to write a stellar resume, winning a person's heart by writing a romantic love letter, or getting into college by writing an effective personal statement" (Dirk, 2010, 47).

About the author

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8.

WILLIAM T. FITZGERALD'S WRITING WITH FORCE AND FLAIR

Writing Spaces Volume 3

Read the chapter “Writing With Force and Flair”

The article explains how figurative language is necessary to create quality writing in academia, suggesting that a writer who can effectively incorporate such ideas demonstrates their expertise, much like a painter or chef. It provides definitions and examples of rhetorical figures such as expression and patterns, using historical writings to demonstrate their effectiveness. Instructors can use the article, the discussion questions, and the activities provided by the author to help students understand that there is no set definition for academic writing. The author offers suggestions for ways students can generate this kind of writing, using techniques such as Fieldwork, Analysis, Imitation, and Copia (Plenty). The information indirectly introduces students to this idea of voice and that their work, while still must convey a purpose, should be written in a way that demonstrates their own unique writing style and ability.

"If we are not careful, writing with force and flair comes across as mere show—in the useful figure of cliché, all hat and no cattle. Or as any cook can tell you, a little nutmeg goes a long way. To extend this culinary analogy, rhetorical figures may be likened to a spice rack, without which writing cannot be anything but bland. What is needed is the right combination of spices as a matter of both taste and tradition."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Fitzgerald, William T. "Writing With Force and Flair." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 3*, edited by Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter, Parlor Press, 2020, pp. 52-64.

In-text citation

"If we are not careful, writing with force and flare comes across as mere show—in the useful figure of *cliché*, all hat and no cattle. Or as any cook can tell you, a *little* nutmeg goes a long way. To extend this culinary analogy, rhetorical figures may be likened to a spice rack, without which writing cannot be anything but bland. What is needed is the right *combination* of spices as a matter of both taste and tradition" (57).

APA Citation Examples

References

Fitzgerald, W.T. (2020). Writing with force and flair. In Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter (Eds.), *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, vol. 3 (pp. 52-64). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

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Chicago Citation Examples

Bibliography

Fitzgerald, William T. "Writing With Force and Flair," in *Writing Spaces: Reading on Writing Volume 3*, ed. Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter, (New York: Parlor Press, 2020), 52-64.

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About the author

Writing Spaces Volume 3

PARLOR PRESS AND WAC CLEARINGHOUSE

<https://writingspaces.org/>

https://twitter.com/writing_spaces



Released in 2020, the third issue of Writing Spaces was edited by Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter. In addition to the Writing Spaces Website, volume 3 can be accessed through WAC Clearinghouse, as well as Parlor Press.

From Parlor Press

Volume 3 continues the tradition of previous volumes with topics such as voice and style in writing, rhetorical appeals, discourse communities, multimodal composing, visual rhetoric, credibility, exigency, working with personal experience in academic writing, globalized writing and rhetoric, constructing scholarly ethos, imitation and style, and rhetorical punctuation.

From WAC Clearinghouse

Dana Driscoll is Professor of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she teaches in the Composition and Applied Linguistics graduate program and directs the Jones White Writing Center. Her scholarly interests include composition pedagogy, writing centers, writing transfer and writerly development, research methodologies, writing across the curriculum, and assessment.

Mary Stewart is Assistant Professor and the Assessment Coordinator for the English Department at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Her research, which is primarily qualitative, focuses on collaborative and interactive learning, blended and online writing instruction, composition pedagogy, and teaching with technology.

Matthew Vetter is Assistant Professor of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and affiliate faculty in the Composition and Applied Linguistics Doctoral Program. A scholar in writing, rhetoric, and digital humanities, his research explores how technologies shape writing and writing pedagogy.

9.

REBECCA JONES'S FINDING THE GOOD ARGUMENT OR WHY BOTHER WITH LOGIC?

Writing Spaces Volume 1

Read the chapter “Finding the Good Argument OR Why Bother With Logic?”

The article explains the negative connotations associated with written arguments and how those connotations have impacted the concept's interpretation. Essentially, the article explains how argument has been compared to the Western connotation of war and the belief that there is a “right” side and “wrong” side, a “good” side and a “bad” side. The article explains the unrealistic nature of this interpretation, asserting that arguments are intended to be logical explanations supported by facts and reasoning that are intended to be understood, not absolute. Instructors can use the different ways for breakdown and understanding an argument's structure that are included in the article to help students properly analyze and evaluate arguments for their strength and validity. Students will understand that an argument is not based on right or wrong, but logic, reason, and support. This will help them judge an argument based on its components, not on their feelings and personal beliefs. In turn, they will learn how to better structure their own arguments, relying on evidence, explanation, and logic to convey their beliefs and assumptions.

*“Rather than an either/or proposition, argument is multiple and complex. An argument can be logical, rational, emotional, fruitful, useful, or even enjoyable. As a matter of fact, the idea that argument is necessary *and therefore not always about war or even about winning) is an important notion in a culture that values democracy and equity.”*

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Jones, Rebecca. “Finding the Good Argument OR Why Bother With Logic?.” *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 1*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemlianksky, Parlor Press, 2010, pp. 156-179.

In-text citation

“Rather than an either/or proposition, argument is multiple and complex. An argument can be logical, rational, emotional, fruitful, useful, and even enjoyable. As a matter of fact, the idea that argument is necessary (and therefore not always about war or even about winning is an important notion in a culture that values democracy and equity” (160).

APA Citation Examples

References

Jones, R. (2010). Finding the good argument or why bother with logic? In Charles Lowe and Pavel

Zemliansky (Eds.), *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, vol. 1 (pp. 156-179). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

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Chicago Citation Examples

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In-text citation

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About the author

Writing Spaces Volume 1

PARLOR PRESS AND WAC CLEARINGHOUSE

<https://writingspaces.org/writing-spaces-volume-1/>

https://twitter.com/writing_spaces



edited by charles lowe and pavel zemliansky

Released in 2010, the first issue of Writing Spaces was edited by Drs. Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky. In addition to the Writing Spaces Website, volume 1 can be accessed through WAC Clearinghouse, as well as Parlor Press.

From Parlor Press

Topics in Volume 1 of the series include academic writing, how to interpret writing assignments, motives for writing, rhetorical analysis, revision, invention, writing centers, argumentation, narrative, reflective writing, Wikipedia, patchwriting, collaboration, and genres.

From WAC Clearinghouse

Charles Lowe is Assistant Professor of Writing at Grand Valley State University where he teaches composition, professional writing, and Web design. Pavel Zemliansky is Associate Professor in the School of Writing, Rhetoric, and Technical Communication at James Madison University.

Publication Information: Lowe, Charles, & Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.). (2010). *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, Volume 1*. WritingSpaces.org; Parlor Press; The WAC Clearinghouse. <https://wac.colostate.edu/books/writingspaces/writingspaces1/>

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PART III

DESCRIBING AND EXPLAINING A SCHOLARLY CONVERSATION

Introduction

Entering into a conversation of any kind can be tricky if you are new to a group of people, topic, or even the tone of the conversation. If you don't pause and listen to what people are saying for a moment before speaking, you can repeat something someone else has said, come across as speaking in bad faith, or strike up the wrong tone entirely. The same is true for engaging with a conversation within an academic discipline or topic of scholarship. To become a member of their scholarly community and enter the conversation, you may need to spend some time catching up on what people have said before you. While deciding when you have listened or read enough is going vary from topic to topic and assignment to assignment, the research process utilizes many concrete techniques and practices that can help you reach those goals. In this section of readings, you will read about some of those techniques and how they can serve you as a researcher and writer.

Questions and Arguments

Research is often described as a linear process, but it is often anything but. While there are recognizable phases and strategies, in extended research projects you can often find yourself doing certain tasks repeatedly, adjusting the scope of your research, changing your terms, or even discovering a related but functionally new topic that interests you more. In many ways, this makes sense because what we know can teach us what to ask. If you learn a lot about particle physics, for example, you begin to see what we don't know and what would merit further study. "Listening" to the conversation doesn't just teach you more about what to say, but also about how to listen even better.

Often our understanding of a topic starts broad and digs down into a particular group of ideas or applications, which is how some broad disciplines like engineering have vastly different subfields that deal with aerodynamics, construction, efficiency, computer software and hardware, chemicals, and many other areas. Our understanding of how manipulate and craft the world around us may have begun with general concerns, but the more we learned about the world, the more specific our questions have become. A computer engineer may spend the majority of their time examining how sound signals are processed and transmitted and may never even examine the particular chemical makeup of a pesticide that targets certain species but is virtually harmless to others, and yet both of those concerns fall under the umbrella of engineering. Similarly a historian who studies ancient Persia may never spend meaningful time considering the cultural impact of TikTok and other social media apps, but both topic could be considered to be part of the humanities or even the social sciences. In a similar way, your understanding of a concept may start off very broad, and so your initial questions about that topic may start equally broad, but as you learn more and gain a deeper understanding of

a topic, your questions will change and become far more specific. Your questions will evolve from learning the definitions of terms and concepts to applying those terms to situations to test them out. So while early on in your research, you may have broad questions, if you allow these questions to evolve and change as you learn more and more about a topic, you will find your ability to research the topic improve as you go.

Similarly, when you are looking for a stance or argument to make on a topic for an assignment, you may find this stance evolve as you learn more about a topic. A topic that had initially seemed extremely simple to you at first may grow more and more complex as you delve into the research, which will likely make your argument more specific and granular. Or, alternatively, a topic which seemed hopelessly complicated may become much simpler to you as the true point of controversy becomes clear in the midst of a large and messy conversation. Or your argument may change in a dozen other ways. Regardless, allowing your stance to change along with your questions will not only help you better understand your topic, it will also help you better explain your perspective.

While research can be a tedious process, the goal is not simply to prove you deserve to speak about a topic, but to understand your topic as clearly as you can. By cultivating a deep understanding of a topic, you are better equipped to describe and demonstrate your stance on that topic. If someone is explaining why a business regulation should be stronger but they can't clearly explain the details of the regulation, it is more difficult to follow the point they are making even if it is a good one. They may be completely right, but having as deep a knowledge about the regulations surrounding this business will help them select the best information to share and focus on the most important points of the conversation. While research can build your credibility as a writer, its greatest power is in how it builds your ability to write in the first place.

Engaging with research can do a lot of things for us as writers, learners, and people. Not only does it allow us to better understand the world around us, it also helps us to better position ourselves within that world and decide what we want to do about it. Not every research project may change your mind in a deep way, but every research project is an opportunity to better understand the world and yourself as a part of that world, and the readings that follow should help provide you with tools to do just that.

10.

GITANJALI DASBENDER'S "CRITICAL THINKING IN COLLEGE WRITING: FROM THE PERSONAL TO THE ACADEMIC"

Writing Spaces Volume 2

Read the chapter "Critical Thinking in College Writing: From the Personal to the Academic"

The concept of "critical thinking" can be intimidating and nebulous even to people experienced with academic writing and research. However, the process of critical thinking can be one with concrete steps and stages that lead a reader to a thorough understanding of a text (or piece of media), and eventually help that reader create a piece of writing about that text. By approaching critical thinking as a process we all perform and can improve upon, Gita DasBender helps us to see how we are all critical thinkers and writers.

"While critical thinking may be subject-specific, that is to say, it can vary in method and technique depending on the discipline, most of its general principles such as rational thinking, making independent judgments, and a healthy skepticism of what is being read, are common to all the disciplines."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Dasbender, Gitanjali. "Critical Thinking in College Writing: From the Personal to the Academic." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 2*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky, Parlor Press, 2011, pp. 37-51.

In-text citation

"While critical thinking may be subject-specific, that is to say, it can vary in method and technique depending on the discipline, most of its general principles such as rational thinking, making independent evaluations and judgments, and a healthy skepticism of what is being read, are common to all disciplines" (Dasbender 38).

References

Dasbender, G. (2011). Critical thinking in college writing: From the personal to the academic. In Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.), *Writing spaces: readings on writing*, vol. 2 (pp. 37-51). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

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Chicago Citation Examples**Bibliography**

Gitanjali, Dasbender. "Critical Thinking in College Writing: From the Personal to the Academic," in

Writing Spaces: Reading on Writing Volume 2, ed. Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (New York: Parlor Press, 2011), 37-51.

In-text citation

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About the author

Volume 2 Writing Spaces
PARLOR PRESS AND WAC CLEARINGHOUSE
<https://writingspaces.org/writing-spaces-volume-2/>
https://twitter.com/writing_spaces



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From **Parlor Press**

Volume 2 continues the tradition of the previous volume with topics, such as the rhetorical situation, collaboration, documentation styles, weblogs, invention, writing assignment interpretation, reading critically, information literacy, ethnography, interviewing, argument, document design, and source integration.

From **WAC Clearinghouse**

Charles Lowe is Assistant Professor of Writing at Grand Valley State University where he teaches composition, professional writing, and Web design. Pavel Zemliansky is Associate Professor in the School of Writing, Rhetoric, and Technical Communication at James Madison University.

11.

KAREN ROSENBERG'S "READING GAMES: STRATEGIES FOR READING SCHOLARLY SOURCES"

Writing Spaces Volume 2

Read the chapter "Reading Games: Strategies for Reading Scholarly Sources"

Engaging with academic texts can be challenging especially when the intended audience is other academics and not readers who are new to a topic or conversation. While being an outsider to an academic topic can be difficult, Karen Rosenberg describes their own experience with reading difficult texts and how we can approach the process practically. Even if we don't fully understand everything we read in an unfamiliar topic, by employing a clear reading strategy we can come away from every difficult text with a greater understanding of the topic and questions that can guide us as we synthesize the material.

"If your reading assignments confound you, if they send you into slumber, or you avoid them, or they seem to take you way too long, then pay attention. Based on my experience as a frustrated student and now as a teacher of reading strategies, I have some insights to share with you designed to make the reading process more productive, more interesting, and more enjoyable."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Rosenberg, Karen. "Reading Games: Strategies for Reading Scholarly Sources." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 2*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky, Parlor Press, 2011, pp. 210-220.

In-text citation

"If your reading assignments confound you, if they send you into slumber, or you avoid them, or they seem to take you way too long, then pay attention. Based on my experience as a frustrated student and now as a teacher of reading strategies, I have some insights to share with you designed to make the reading process more productive, more interesting, and more enjoyable" (Rosenberg 211).

References

Rosenberg, K. (2011). Reading games: Strategies for reading scholarly sources. In Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.), *Writing spaces: readings on writing*, vol. 2 (pp. 210-220). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

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Chicago Citation Examples

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Rosenberg, Karen. "Reading Games: Strategies for Reading Scholarly Sources," in *Writing Spaces: Reading on Writing Volume 2*, ed. Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (New York: Parlor Press, 2011), 210-220.

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12.

DAN MELZER'S "UNDERSTANDING DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES"

Writing Spaces Volume 3

Read the chapter "Understanding Discourse Communities"

When you complete a writing assignment, deciphering the goals and expectations of that assignment is one the most important and difficult steps in that writing process. One way to better understand what an assignment, a class, or even a job is asking from is to examine the assignment in the context of its "discourse community." In this chapter, Dan Melzer not only describes what a discourse community is but also how understanding that concept can aid us as writers and beyond.

"You can write in a journal alone in your room, just like you can play guitar for yourself along in your room. But most writers, like musicians, learn their craft from studying experts and becoming part of a community. And most writers, like most musicians, want to be a part of community and communicate with other people who share their goals and interests."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Melzer, Dan. "Understanding Discourse Communities." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 3*, edited by Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter, Parlor Press, 2020, pp. 100-115.

In-text citation

"You can write in a journal alone in your room, just like you can play guitar just for yourself alone in your room. But most writers, like most musicians, learn their craft from studying experts and becoming part of a community. And most writers, like most musicians, want to be a part of community and communicate with other people who share their goals and interests" (102).

APA Citation Examples

References

Melzer, D. (2020). Understanding discourse communities. In Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter (Eds.), *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, vol. 3* (pp. 100-115). New York: Parlor Press.

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Matthew Vetter is Assistant Professor of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and affiliate faculty in the Composition and Applied Linguistics Doctoral Program. A scholar in writing, rhetoric, and digital humanities, his research explores how technologies shape writing and writing pedagogy.

13.

JAMES P. PURDY'S "WIKIPEDIA IS GOOD FOR YOU!?"

Writing Spaces Volume 1

Read the chapter "Wikipedia is Good for You!?"

Doing research and creating writing from that research can be a complex, daunting process, especially when some of the most readily available resources like Wikipedia are often banned from academic writing assignments. However, in this chapter James P. Purdy outlines what we can learn as researchers and writers from Wikipedia. Wikipedia is not only a useful tool at the beginning of a research project, it can also model some of the key concepts and stages in the research writing process.

"Because of their open participation, unreliability, and (potentially) shallow topic coverage, you generally should not cite Wikipedia as authoritative sources in college-level writing. This does not mean Wikipedia is not useful, or that you cannot read it, or that you should not cite it if you do use it. It does mean that Wikipedia is better used in other ways."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Purdy, James P. "Wikipedia is Good for You!?" *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 1*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky, Parlor Press, 2010, pp. 205-224.

In-text citation

"Because of their open participation, unreliability, and (potentially) shallow topic coverage, you generally should not cite Wikipedia articles as authoritative sources in college-level writing. This does not mean that Wikipedia is not useful, or that you cannot read it, or that you should not cite it if you do use it. It does mean that Wikipedia is better used in other ways" (Purdy 209).

APA Citation Examples

References

Purdy, J.P. (2010). *Wikipedia is good for you!?* In Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.), *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, vol. 1 (pp. 205-224). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

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Chicago Citation Examples

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About the author



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PART IV

ENTERING AND PARTICIPATING IN A SCHOLARLY CONVERSATION

I've always found the final unit in the composition sequence to be exhilarating. This final unit has student writers participate fully in a scholarly conversation. When I have taught this unit, I have had students discover new majors, career paths, and mostly, I have come to watch students beautifully find their voices. Hopefully, the research topic chosen is one student writers are excited about and invested in. If you are a student writer here, you have made it through Composition 1 and are now ready to finish Composition 2. And you are ready to finish on a strong note.

My hope is by the time student writers have arrived at this unit, where one will most likely produce an original research paper, they have found their passions and voices. Voice is something that bends, adapts, and builds on one's identity, life experience, ethics, and beliefs. Voice is something inherent to you, as well as something you mold and create on the page. Voice is something not to be left out of research or academic writing. My hope is that you remember this as you end this final unit in Composition 2 and complete the rest of your undergraduate degree. My hope is that these chapters in the text help guide you as you produce writing and conduct research in this unit, and beyond.

In "Googlepedia: Turning Information Behaviors into Research Skills," by Randall McClure, you'll learn that it is okay to Google, but you'll also learn the importance of knowing how to conduct serious research through your university library. You'll come to understand most of us use both. Marjorie Stewars, in "Weaving Personal Experience into Academic Writings," will show you how blending who you are and your personal narrative with research can only strengthen your writing. You'll learn about exigency and how a reader can spot your passion for a topic in "Exigency: What Makes My Message Indispensable to My Reader" by Quentin Vieregge. Finally, in "Everything Changes, or Why MLA Isn't (Always) Right" by Janice R. Walker, you will understand the ethical importance of giving credit to other voices when credit is due.

My goal is that these four chapters help guide you to produce a final product you are both happy with and proud of. These chapters will push you to consider various methods of research. It will also challenge you to reflect on who you are, what your beliefs contain, and how you plan to influence readers through your writing. Words hold power. Research and storytelling hold infinite power. In these chapters, you will unearth what shapes your own identity, as well as others' identities around you. Never turn your back on anyone. Your voice, your words, and research all hold the future. And I anticipate your writing will add a unique perspective and diverse voice to our ever-changing world.

14.

RANDALL MCCLURE'S "GOOGLEPEDIA: TURNING INFORMATION BEHAVIORS INTO RESEARCH SKILLS"

Writing Spaces Volume 2

Read the chapter "Googlepedia: Turning Information Behaviors into Research Skills"

In this chapter, McClure addresses the common habit of student writers to turn to both Google and Wikipedia to begin their research. Over the years, instructors of writing have dismissed this method of research as being appropriate for the writing classroom. However, McClure discusses ways to make space for composition students to begin at these sites of interrogation and move to more academic spaces to conduct deeper research, such as the university library. McClure asserts that students need support and direction to understand the benefits of researching at the university library. This chapter offers a blend of case study, narrative, reflection, and questions for both instructors and student writers to consider when developing their own research habits. A takeaway from this chapter will be how students in first-year writing classrooms might take a blended approach to research—from both Googlepedia and the university library.

"I admit that finding information quickly and effortlessly is certainly alluring. But what about the reliability of information you find? Do you ever question if the information you find is really accurate or true? If you have, then please know that you are not alone in your questions. You might even find some comfort in my belief that conducting sound academic research is more challenging now than at any other time in the history of the modern university."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

McClure, Randall. "Googlepedia: Turning Information Behaviors into Research Skill." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 2*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky, Parlor Press, 2011, pp. 221-241.

In-text citation

"I admit that finding information quickly and effortlessly is certainly alluring. But what about the reliability of the information you find? Do you ever question if the information you find is really accurate or true? If you have, then please know that you are not alone in your questions. You might even find some comfort in my belief that conducting sound academic research is more challenging now than at any other time in the history of the modern university" (McClure 222).

References

McClure, R. (2011). Googlepedia: Turning informatoin behaviors into research skills. In Charles

Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.), *Writing spaces: readings on writing*, vol. 2 (pp. 221-241). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

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Chicago Citation Examples

Bibliography

McClure, Randall. "Googlepedia: Turning Information Behaviors into Research Skills," in *Writing Spaces: Reading on Writing Volume 2*, ed. Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (New York: Parlor Press, 2011), 221-241.

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About the author

Volume 2 Writing Spaces

PARLOR PRESS AND WAC CLEARINGHOUSE

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From **WAC Clearinghouse**

Charles Lowe is Assistant Professor of Writing at Grand Valley State University where he teaches composition, professional writing, and Web design. Pavel Zemliansky is Associate Professor in the School of Writing, Rhetoric, and Technical Communication at James Madison University.

15.

MARJORIA STEWART'S "WEAVING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE INTO ACADEMIC WRITINGS"

Writing Spaces Volume 3

Read the chapter "Weaving Personal Experience into Academic Writing"

Personal experience may be something first-year writing instructors or students don't see as an asset or a part of academic writing. However, one's personal experience can richly aid in developing one's academic writing and research on a topic. In this chapter, Stewart does not debate whether narrative is "appropriate" for academic writing. Rather, she addresses how personal narrative is powerful, and offers tools on how to best integrate it. Stewart's goal in this chapter is to model to students various ways that she, as well as student writers, can best weave personal narrative into research and academic writing. When personal experience and research overlap, a space for self discovery emerges. Personal narrative can successfully become a framing device, an example, or point of context for academic writing.

"Many of you have been taught not to use the word 'I' in your academic writing; not to include anything that does not directly relate to that mysterious thing called a 'thesis statement;' and not to include anything personal in your writing. The opening of this essay has broken all of those so-called rules."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Stewart, Marjorie. "Weaving Personal Experience into Academic Writing." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 3*, edited by Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter, Parlor Press, 2020, pp. 162-174.

In-text citation

"Many of you have been taught not to use the word "I" in your academic writing; not to include anything that does not directly relate to that mysterious thing called a "thesis statement;" and not to include anything personal in your writing. The opening of this essay has broken all of those so-called rules" (163).

APA Citation Examples

References

Stewart, M. (2020). Weaving personal experience into academic writing. In Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter (Eds.), *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, vol. 3* (pp. 162-174). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

"Many of you have been taught not to use the word "I" in your academic writing; not to include anything that does not directly relate to that mysterious thing called a "thesis statement;" and not to include anything personal in your writing. The opening of this essay has broken all of those so-called rules" (p. 163).

Chicago Citation Examples

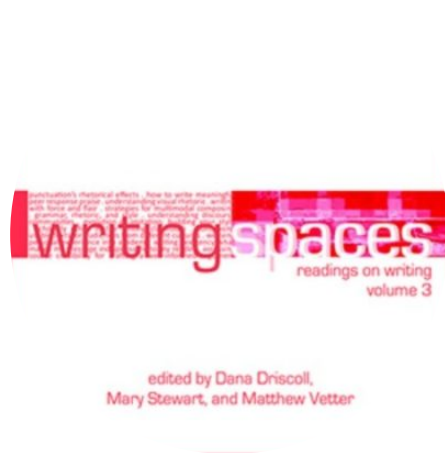
Bibliography

Stewart, Marjorie. "Weaving Personal Experience into Academic Writing," in *Writing Spaces: Reading on Writing Volume 3*, ed. Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter, (New York: Parlor Press, 2020), 162-174.

In-text citation

"Many of you have been taught not to use the word "I" in your academic writing; not to include anything that does not directly relate to that mysterious thing called a "thesis statement;" and not to include anything personal in your writing. The opening of this essay has broken all of those so-called rules" (Stewart, 2020, 163).

About the author



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<https://writingspaces.org/>

https://twitter.com/writing_spaces

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From Parlor Press

Volume 3 continues the tradition of previous volumes with topics such as voice and style in writing, rhetorical appeals, discourse communities, multimodal composing, visual rhetoric, credibility, exigency, working with personal experience in academic writing, globalized writing and rhetoric, constructing scholarly ethos, imitation and style, and rhetorical punctuation.

From WAC Clearinghouse

Dana Driscoll is Professor of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she teaches in the Composition and Applied Linguistics graduate program and directs the Jones White Writing Center. Her

scholarly interests include composition pedagogy, writing centers, writing transfer and writerly development, research methodologies, writing across the curriculum, and assessment.

Mary Stewart is Assistant Professor and the Assessment Coordinator for the English Department at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Her research, which is primarily qualitative, focuses on collaborative and interactive learning, blended and online writing instruction, composition pedagogy, and teaching with technology.

Matthew Vetter is Assistant Professor of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and affiliate faculty in the Composition and Applied Linguistics Doctoral Program. A scholar in writing, rhetoric, and digital humanities, his research explores how technologies shape writing and writing pedagogy.

16.

QUENTIN VIEREGGE'S "EXIGENCY: WHAT MAKES MY MESSAGE INDISPENSABLE TO MY READER"

Writing Spaces Volume 3

Read the chapter "Exigency: What Makes My Message Indispensable to My Reader"

In first-year writing classrooms, an instructor may seem like a captive audience for a student writer, but this should not be where a student writer stops when developing exigency within their paper. According to Viregge, exigency "concerns itself with subject matter, and its successful invocation makes readers care." Arguably, when a student writer cares deeply about a topic or issue, this investment has the potential to leave a stronger impact on a reader. In this chapter, Viregge offers various techniques for student writers to use exigency in their own writing. These methods include exigency through an audience's concerns or needs, exigency through a gap in research, exigency of reframing, and exigency through a radical reinterpretation of knowledge or experience. This chapter will leave student writers with new ideas on how to find passion, urgency, and purpose within their research and writing.

"It's the writer's job to clarify a text's relevance. Rhetoricians sometimes refer to this concept as a text's exigency, which may be defined as the circumstances and reasons why something matters—not only generally, but specifically at this moment, in this place, for this group of people (presumably one's readership)."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Vierегge, Quentin. "Exigency: What Makes My Message Indispensable to My Reader." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 3*, edited by Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter, Parlor Press, 2020, pp. 175-188.

In-text citation

"It's the writer's job to clarify a text's relevance. Rhetoricians sometimes refer to this concept as a text's exigency, which may be defined as the circumstances and reasons why something matters—not only generally, but specifically at this moment, in this place, for this group of people (presumably one's readership)" (Vierегge 176).

References

Vierегge, Quentin. (2020). Exigency: What makes my message indispensable to my reader. In Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart and Matthew Vetter (Eds.), *Writing spaces: readings on writing*, vol. 3 (pp. 175-188). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

"It's the writer's job to clarify a text's relevance. Rhetoricians sometimes refer to this concept as a text's exigency, which may be defined as the circumstances and reasons why something matters—not only generally, but specifically at this moment, in this place, for this group of people (presumably one's readership)." (Vierегge, 2020, p. 66).

Chicago Citation Examples

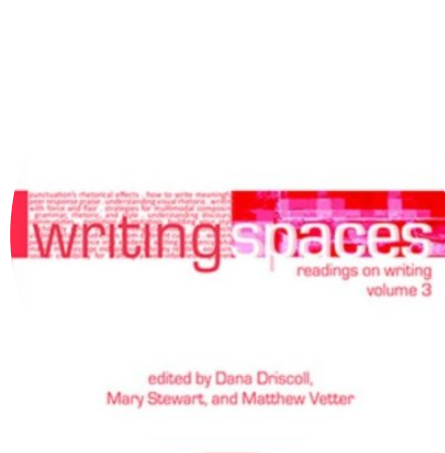
Bibliography

Vierегge, Quentin. "Exigency: What Makes My Message Indispensable to My Reader," in *Writing Spaces: Reading on Writing Volume 3*, ed. Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter (New York: Parlor Press, 2020), 65-85.

In-text citation

"It's the writer's job to clarify a text's relevance. Rhetoricians sometimes refer to this concept as a text's exigency, which may be defined as the circumstances and reasons why something matters—not only generally, but specifically at this moment, in this place, for this group of people (presumably one's readership)" (Vierегge, 2020, 176).

About the author



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17.

JANICE R. WALKER'S "EVERYTHING CHANGES, OR WHY MLA ISN'T (ALWAYS) RIGHT"

Writing Spaces Volume 2

Read the chapter "Everything Changes, or Why MLA isn't Always Right"

In this chapter, Walker conducts a deep dive into the rhetoric of MLA citation. This chapter is useful for student writers to read through when developing a broader and deeper understanding of the historical context of citations, current challenges and dilemmas regarding when to use citations, the necessity for citations, and how to implement them well. Furthermore, Walker offers the four main elements one will need to cite their work, such as: author information, title information, edition and version information, and access information. She ends the chapter with a call for student writers to check a MLA Works Cited page to guide them in understanding who is speaking and when they are speaking.

"Academic writers . . . are held to the highest standards of reliability for sources. Thus, academic citation formats include information that will not only help a reader to locate a given source and give credit to others for their work, but that will also help a reader to determine a source's credibility."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Walker, Janice R. "Everything Changes, or Why MLA Isn't Always Right." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 2*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky, Parlor Press, 2011, pp. 257-269

In-text citation

"Academic writers . . . are held to the highest standards of reliability for sources. Thus, academic citation formats include information that will not only help a reader to locate a given source and give credit to others for their work, but that will also help a reader to determine a source's credibility" (Walker 261).

References

Walker, J.R. (2011). Everything changes, or why mla isn't always right. In Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.), *Writing spaces: readings on writing*, vol. 2 (pp. 257-269). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

"Academic writers . . . are held to the highest standards of reliability for sources. Thus, academic citation formats include information that will not only help a reader to locate a given source and give credit to others for their work, but that will also help a reader to determine a source's credibility

" (Walker, 2011, p. 261).

Chicago Citation Examples**Bibliography**

Walker, Janice R. "Everything Changes, or Why MLA Isn't Always Right," in *Writing Spaces:*

Reading on Writing Volume 2, ed. Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (New York: Parlor Press, 2011), 257-269.

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PART V

SELECTED ESSAYS ON WRITING PROCESSES

There is a famous quote by Neil Gaiman that talks about “the tyranny of the blank page.” Gaiman refers to the difficulty of getting started with writing, and that one of the hardest parts of writing is just getting started. His advice is to just start getting words down on the page, regardless of shape in order to break the blankness and get the process started. This is good advice, and advice all writers should take to heart. However, I believe there are other aspects of the page that can be equally frustrating to writers, and one is the shape of the page itself. Take for example the essay. Most students have come up against and battled the traditional essay many times: the same five paragraphs, the hook, the dreaded thesis statement. First year writing students pick up their assignment sheets and immediately flashback to all the frustrations associated with getting past essays into the same mold. It can feel a lot like trying to get a square peg in a round hole (if you’ll excuse the cliché). The solution? Change the shape and change the form. The readings in this section will explore not just different ways of writing, but different ways of thinking about writing. Through these changes in perspective, it is my hope that students learn to confront, if I may borrow from Gaiman, the “tyranny of the page.”

The obstacle we face in the First Year Composition classroom is engagement. There is nothing inherently wrong with the form of the essay. It is a tried and true means of putting down thoughts and ideas together in order to convey specific purposes, and it has been working for years. The problem is that students have been writing them for years. Writing takes work, and when it becomes monotonous, any type of work becomes a chore. That is when the anxiety sets in, along with the fear and the boredom. The assignment becomes just another obligation put on a student, with all the familiar pains of plunking away at the keyboard to reach that end goal of creating something that will be considered passable by a teacher. The result is not a labor of love, but instead a labor of procrastination, cut corners, and repeated scans of the assignment sheet or attached rubric in order to just meet the bare minimum of requirements. This is not engagement, and it is certainly not fun. This does not access that creative part of the brain where our best ideas and improvisations lie. It doesn’t connect us to our writing, or bring about the joy that writing can elicit under the right circumstances. How can we learn to fully grasp the importance of creating when something feels like everything else? How can we stop from seeing writing assignments as just another grain of sand on the beach of an academic career? One way is reimagining and reconstructing what we think of when we think of writing. We can engage by completely changing tack and rethinking the framework. With enough heat, we can turn that sand into glass.

One word that comes up in many writing classes is revision. This usually comes at the end of a writing project, where the drafting process has already begun and writers are polishing up their drafts to make them as strong as possible. However, revision can be mean so much more. If we break down the word and consider its

etymology in Latin, it literally means “to see again” or “to look at again”. This means more than just reading something over again, but instead means to truly try and look at something in a new way. A piece of revision advice some writers swear by is to print out documents usually seen on a computer screen, or to change fonts and font sizes on the document. The idea is to disrupt the familiar so that our brains can break out of the grooves and habits formed by reading the same thing in the same way. This allows us to see our writing anew. That is precisely what I’m proposing we do with our writing in general. We need to revise the way we approach writing assignments so that we can see writing as a whole anew. That is why it is important to break those deeply formed grooves and habits in order to see writing as something more than what we’re used to.

The readings in this section explore different possibilities in how one might revise their way of looking at writing by providing techniques for writers to change their perspective on writing and composition. In “An Introduction to and Strategies for Multimodal Composing” by Melanie Gagich, you’ll learn the ins and outs of creating a multimodal project. The reading will explore how composition is not necessarily limited to the genre of the essay or even purely textual, but instead can be engaged through many different modes and genres. This can include the aural, the visual, and other ways of conveying information. In “Why Blog? Searching for Writing on the Web,” Alex Reid discusses their own journey through blog writing and demonstrates the many benefits students may find in blogging. You’ll learn how focus, audience, and attitude towards subject matter can make all the difference in engagement. In “Collaborating Online: Digital Strategies for Group Work” by Anthony Atkins, you’ll learn how to reexamine your preconceived notions of working on a group project in the writing classroom. Atkins also provides several tips and techniques on how to get the most out of group work while also utilizing digital spaces in order to get the most out of your group members as well. In “Composing the Anthology: An Exercise in Patchwriting,” Christopher Leary discusses a different way of thinking about how we engage with the texts we read. You’ll learn to shift your perspective towards texts by thinking about readings as parts of a larger thread rather than individual texts with no connections. Leary also provides insights on how this approach can help students think differently about how their writing interacts with the writing of others.

The readings in this section should provide you with a new way of thinking about writing, and ultimately help put you on a path to reenergizing and rejuvenating the creative parts of your brain to help inspire that engagement. By taking your writing into new directions, by pushing back against that “tyranny of the page,” your views on writing will change, and the dread of work will develop into focusing less on the task at hand, but rather having fun trying to figure out the best way to say what it is you want to say.

18.

MELANIE GAGICH'S "AN INTRODUCTION TO AND STRATEGIES FOR MULTIMODAL COMPOSING"

Writing Spaces Volume 3

Read the chapter "An Introduction to and Strategies for Multimodal Composing"

Students are often shocked or confused when confronted with the task of creating a multimodal composition in a First-Year writing class. The reason for this hesitancy often stems from how the multimodal composition deviates from the typical expectations of the page so often associated with the word composition. Gagich pushes back on the traditional concept of text and defines it as "a piece of communication that can take many forms." With this in mind, Gagich lays out in detail what considerations make up multimodal compositions, from the Five Modes of Communication to the benefits to students' literacy both in and out of the classroom. Gagich also breaks down for students how to begin a multimodal project and lays out several considerations for students to remember as they begin creating texts. This chapter aims to demystify the multimodal composition and provide students with a framework for rethinking composition as just merely words on a page.

"While some students are thrilled to compose something other than an academic essay, others struggle to understand why they are required to create a multimodal text in a writing class. I assure my students that although they may not be familiar with the concept of multimodality, it has a long history in composition (e.g. writing studies)."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Gagich, Melanie. "An Introduction to and Strategies for Multimodal Composing." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 3*, edited by Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart, and Matthew Vetter, Parlor Press, 2020, pp. 65-85.

In-text citation

"While some students are thrilled to compose something other than an academic essay, others struggle to understand why they are required to create a multimodal text in a writing class. I assure my students that although they may not be familiar with the concept of multimodality, it has a long history in composition (e.g. writing studies)" (66).

References

Gagich, M. (2020). An introduction to strategies for multimodal composing. In Dana Driscoll, Mary Stewart and Matthew Vetter (Eds.), *Writing spaces: readings on writing*, vol. 3 (pp. 65-85). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

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struggle to understand why they are required to create a multimodal text in a writing class. I assure my students that although they may not be familiar with the concept of multimodality, it has a long history in composition (e.g. writing studies)." (Gagich, 2020, p. 66).

Chicago Citation Examples

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19.

ALEX REID'S "WHY BLOG? SEARCHING FOR WRITING ON THE WEB"

Writing Spaces Volume 2

Read the chapter "Why Blog: Searching for Writing on the Web"

A major roadblock many students encounter in writing courses is their writing assignments. The motivation for writing for most assignments focuses on either how to follow instructions to complete the task, or what the student needs to do in order to get an A. Reid suggests that the rigidity of the writing-intensive classroom assignments are often what hold students back from achieving real practice as writers. An alternative to these narrow topics is to allow students to begin writing blogs. According to Reid, "a blog is an excellent opportunity for exploring and developing intrinsic motivations for writing" because the student controls "the subject matter, the length, the format, the timing of your posts, and all the other characteristics of your writing." This chapter continues to explore to define what blogging is, as well as show the benefits of blog writing to students. This advice is supplemented with Reid's own experiences creating and establishing his own blog. Reid also provides practical advice on how students might come up with and create their own blogs that they can personally engage with and will encourage them to keep writing. This chapter aims to help students gain essential writing practice by tapping in to individual motivations and drives.

"As a student in a first year writing course, you may not envision yourself as a writer. It is understandable that you may not want to dedicate yourself to the 10,000-hour journey toward expertise. However, you might want to dedicate yourself to a more modest goal. You might want to be among the best writers in your major or among the applicants for the graduate school or job that you'll be pursuing when you graduate."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Reid, Alex. "Why Blog? Searching for Writing on the Web." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 2*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky, Parlor Press, 2011, pp. 302-319.

In-text citation

"As a student in a first year writing course, you may not envision yourself as a writer. It is understandable that you may not want to dedicate yourself to the 10,000-hour journey toward expertise. However, you might want to dedicate yourself to a more modest goal. You might want to be among the best writers in your major or among the applicants for the graduate school or job that you'll be pursuing when you graduate" (304).

References

Reid, A. (2011). Why blog? searching for writing on the web. In Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.), *Writing spaces: readings on writing*, vol. 2 (pp. 302-319). New York: Parlor Press.

In-text citation

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Chicago Citation Examples

Bibliography

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20.

ANTHONY T. ATKINS'S "COLLABORATING ONLINE: DIGITAL STRATEGIES FOR GROUP WORK"

Writing Spaces Volume 1

Read the chapter "Collaborating Online: Digital Strategies for Group Work"

Group work is something students will encounter in the classroom and in their different professional spaces. Often a dreaded task, group work requires team members to work together to accomplish a set of tasks and to work collaboratively towards an end goal, which typically takes the form of a presentation. Atkins' chapter aims to breakdown group work into steps in order to help students get started and get organized. Atkins also provides a number of online and computer-based resources students can utilize in order to deviate from the usual dynamic of group work and instead provide new ways of thinking and approaching group work. According to Atkins, these tools can "increase participation in your group by changing attitudes about group work" and "also alleviate the problems associated with face-to-face discussion-based meetings and facilitate participation by all group members." Atkins also explores a step-by-step approach on how groups can take their work and determine the kind of presentation appropriate for their project. This chapter aims to digitize the group work dynamic in hopes of refreshing and recharging group members' enthusiasm about their projects.

"Group members should decide on an exciting way to conduct and complete group work. Using a technology like a wiki, Google Docs, or a blog (or even a social networking site), can do more than excite group members about the project; it can also alleviate the problems associated with face-to-face discussion-based meetings and facilitate participation by all group members."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Atkins, Anthony A. "Collaborating Online: Digital Strategies for Group Work." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 1*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky, Parlor Press, 2010, pp. 235-248

In-text citation

"Group members should decide on an exciting way to conduct and complete group work. Using a technology like a wiki, Google Docs, or a blog (or even a social networking site), can do more than excite group members about the project; it can also alleviate the problems associated with face-to-face discussion-based meetings and facilitate participation by all group members" (243).

References

Atkins, A.A. (2010). Collaborating Online: Digital Strategies for Group Work." In Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.), *Writing spaces: readings on writing*, vol. 1 (pp. 235-248). New York: Parlor Press.

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About the author

Writing Spaces Volume 1

PARLOR PRESS AND WAC CLEARINGHOUSE

<https://writingspaces.org/writing-spaces-volume-1/>

https://twitter.com/writing_spaces



edited by charles lowe and pavel zemliansky

Released in 2010, the first issue of Writing Spaces was edited by Drs. Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky. In addition to the Writing Spaces Website, volume 1 can be accessed through WAC Clearinghouse, as well as Parlor Press.

From Parlor Press

Topics in Volume 1 of the series include academic writing, how to interpret writing assignments, motives for writing, rhetorical analysis, revision, invention, writing centers, argumentation, narrative, reflective writing, Wikipedia, patchwriting, collaboration, and genres.

From WAC Clearinghouse

Charles Lowe is Assistant Professor of Writing at Grand Valley State University where he teaches composition, professional writing, and Web design. Pavel Zemliansky is Associate Professor in the School of Writing, Rhetoric, and Technical Communication at James Madison University.

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21.

CHRISTOPHER LEARY'S "COMPOSING THE ANTHOLOGY: AN EXERCISE IN PATCHWRITING"

Writing Spaces Volume 1

Read the chapter "Composing the Anthology: An Exercise in Patchwriting"

Patchwriting, or the practice of taking words and sentences from the writings of different authors and combining them together to create something new, is often associated with plagiarism and cheating. Christopher Leary, however, outlines their experimentation with patchwriting and "found poetry" to find ways to refresh and reflect upon writing. Leary argues that "One of the things you come to realize as a patchwriter is that the shifting boundaries between writing, editing, and cheating are not problems you need to resolve, but rather opportunities you can exploit." These sentiments extend to having students create anthologies of different writers in their writing class. While the students are not actually doing the writing themselves, Leary suggests that this exercise provides students with opportunities to engage with texts in unusual and new ways, reading each carefully and meticulously curating their anthology based on how the different writings fit with one another. This chapter provides composition students with a new way of thinking about how they engage with the different texts they encounter in the classroom, as well as to rethink how those texts fit in with their own goals as writers.

"Patchwriting was a mode I gravitated toward while studying for a degree in English at Long Island University in Brooklyn. Underemployed, single, without the kind of budget that would allow me to really partake in New York's 'nightlife,' without any cable TV or Internet access, I had, during much of this time, nothing to entertain myself in my bare apartment except for a bookshelf full of books."

MLA Citation Examples

Works Cited

Leary, Christopher. "Composing the Anthology: An Exercise in Patchwriting." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing Volume 1*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky, Parlor Press, 2010, pp. 225-234.

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References

Leary, C. (2010). Composing the anthology: An exercise in patchwriting." In Charles Lowe and

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This is where you can add appendices or other back matter.