Faculty Expectations for Expert vs. Upper-Level Undergraduate Academic Writing

Alisa Russell, Wake Forest University[1]

Abstract: This article explores the role of upper-level undergraduate student writing as a phase of enculturation into disciplinary ways of knowing and doing. Much of the writing assigned in upper-level major/minor courses are intended to act as transitional genres that both mimic and abstract academic genres of the discipline. Because faculty define this phase of enculturation based on what they assign and how they assess, this article draws on 47 faculty interviews across 19 departments to compare, in faculty's words, the characteristics of academic writing expected of experts vs. undergraduate students in upper-level major/minor courses. Overall, this article articulates faculty expectations for undergraduate student writing in upper-level major/minor courses; contributes to our collective understanding of how academic writing is socially recognized, including the consistencies and variations across disciplines; and validates undergraduate student writing as an essential phase toward disciplinary enculturation while offering WAC/WPA administrators ideas for faculty development in navigating this phase, especially around the themes of (a) motivation, (b) process, and (c) imitation.

Writing is the work of an academic discipline. The varied discourses across academic disciplines reflect and inscribe the values, processes, and epistemologies of each discipline (Bazerman, 1994; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Carter 1990; Gee, 1989; Graves, 2011; Hyland, 2004; Prior, 1999). At the graduate level, much attention has been paid to how one becomes enculturated into a disciplinary community with and through writing, especially since most graduate programs have the explicit goal of producing new scholars in a given field (e.g., Anderson & Romano, 2006; Belcher, 1994; Berkenkotter et al., 1988; Brooks-Gillies et al., 2020; Blakeslee, 1997; Paré et al., 2011; Prior 1999). This enculturation process is often described as gradual progressions of apprenticeship, trial-and-error, crossing thresholds, and troublesome identity clashes as expertise builds in a continual cycle of starts and stops (e.g., Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015).

My interest in this article is how faculty characterize the role of writing in upper-level undergraduate courses as part of an overall enculturation process into disciplinary ways of knowing and doing. Because undergraduate students are rarely poised to become full-fledged members of an academic discipline through further graduate study, many studies of undergraduate disciplinary writing focus on how the assigned writing in these courses might transfer (or not) to professional or personal contexts (e.g., Anson & Moore, 2017; Artemeva, 2009; Dias et al., 1999; Nowacek et al., 2024). However, large-scale studies of upper-level writing assignments by Melzer (2014a), Nesi and Gardner (2012), and Soliday (2011) confirm that most of these assignments are intended to develop disciplinary thinking. In other words, even the loose genre labels we've come to associate with

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classroom writing—research paper, comparative analysis, exam essay, lab report, etc.—are largely mirroring the academic discourses of the discipline to immerse students in those particular ways of thinking and doing: a phase towards enculturation.

In this article, I compare faculty expectations for expert academic writing vs. student academic writing to understand the role of upper-level major/minor writing assignments as a phase of disciplinary enculturation. While other studies have studied writing assignment prompts (e.g., Melzer, 2014a) or student writing (e.g., Aull, 2019), this study focuses on verbalized faculty perceptions since, as both assigners and assessors of undergraduate writing, faculty are in the unique position to define this stage. Thus, this article highlights 47 faculty voices across disciplines to uncover expectations that might be occluded by examining textual artifacts or student perspectives alone. I first explore how most undergraduate writing assignments function as transitional genres: they are not the exact genres of the discipline, especially since genres cannot be divorced from their situations, but transitional genres combine learn-to-write and write-to-learn approaches as scaffolding toward disciplinary genres. Then, I detail methods from a large-scale WAC study at an R2 institution, especially focusing on one-on-one interviews with faculty representing 19 departments. I consider frameworks for defining academic writing before presenting results that reflect the major characteristics of academic writing as described by faculty in this study. For each characteristic, I review what faculty expect of experts, what faculty expect of undergraduate students, and how faculty directly compare the two. In the end, I explore three themes that shape this phase of enculturation: (a) motivation, (b) process, and (c) imitation. To better support faculty in navigating these intricacies, I recommend WAC/WPA administrators' faculty development efforts highlight multifaceted motivations of writing; encourage an articulation between write-to-learn and learn-to-write goals, as well as repeated processes across a vertical curriculum; and tease out the potential benefits and strategies of generative imitation.

Overall, this article articulates faculty expectations for undergraduate student writing in upper-level major/minor courses; contributes to our collective understanding of how academic writing is socially recognized, including the consistencies and variations across disciplines; and validates undergraduate student writing as an essential phase toward disciplinary enculturation.

Upper-Level Undergraduate Writing Assignments as Transitional Genres

Like most any discourse community (Swales, 1990), members of an academic discipline enact their ways of knowing and doing with their written genres. As typified social actions (Miller, 1984), genres both respond to and construct rhetorical situations. While the genre labels of the academy (e.g., journal article, conference presentation, monograph, etc.) seem to echo across disciplines, the features of these genres vary significantly between disciplines in response to each discipline's recurring and evolving situations, exigencies, and values. For example, in his comparative analysis of articles in biology, sociology, and literary criticism, Bazerman (1981) concludes that "each text seems to be making a different kind of move in a different kind of game" (p. 46). Even stylistic moves like hedging and personal asides (i.e., metadiscourse) vary between disciplines based on members generally agreed upon epistemologies (Hyland, 2011). Of course, the generic divisions between disciplines, fields, subfields, and even particular journals are always in flux and subject to negotiation by members of these communities (Harris, 1989; Klein, 1993). But because genres operate at the nexus of individual actions and broader social contexts/cultures (Devitt, 2004), and because genres are "stable-for-now" (Schryer, 1993, p. 204), a discipline's genres are entry points into ways of knowing and doing in that discipline.

Thus, newcomers into a discipline are often initiated through troublesome engagement with that discipline's genres. Building genre knowledge toward expertise is a complex enterprise that has been described with various frameworks (Artemeva, 2009; Dias et al., 1999; Tardy, 2009). Of course, many have questioned whether genres can be taught or engaged in a classroom setting at all (e.g., Freedman, 1993; Russell, 1995) since they cannot be divorced from their exigencies, situations, motivations, and audiences. But even as Dias et al. (1999) famously describe the vast differences between university writing and workplace writing, many scholars have discovered a through-line between the genres of a classroom that at least set the grounds for more situated apprenticeship in subsequent spaces (e.g., Artemeva, 2009; Pessoa et al., 2020; Pigg & Berger, 2020). The disciplinary or professional genres students encounter in the classroom can contribute to their long-term, laminated (Roozen, 2020) enculturation process towards expertise. For this reason, Devitt (2007) argues that the goal of assigning disciplinary or professional genres in a classroom setting should not be to replicate the situation of a genre nor to master skills (both of which are impossible outside of authentic contexts), but instead to provide students with rich antecedents (Jamieson, 1975). Devitt (2007) explicitly argues that genre knowledge cannot automatically transfer from genre to genre, but antecedent genres "help writers move into a new genre; they help writers adjust their old situations to new locations" (p. 222). This view prioritizes genre awareness; metacognition (Tardy, 2020); and an emerging balance of general and local knowledge (Carter, 1990) as essential components for enculturating into disciplinary ways of knowing and doing through genres.

In other words, the genres assigned in a classroom setting may not be the literal genres of the discipline, but they can develop the kinds of thinking toward genres of a discipline. McLeod and Maimon (2000) might describe these writing tasks as existing at the intersection of write-to-learn (WTL) and learn-to-write (LTW) approaches: these writing assignments are not "an exercise in formalism and technical correctness," but an "exercise in epistemology" (p. 580). This phenomenon is perhaps taken for granted at the graduate level: seminar papers and dissertations are student-only genres that echo the disciplinary thinking required for the expert genres of journal articles and monographs, respectively, even as they are distinct genres that exist for the dual purpose of communicating as a member of the discipline (LTW) and practicing the ways of knowing and doing in a discipline (WTL). Prior (1999) calls these domesticated genres, as distinct from genres in the wild, but they still allow for the deep participation needed to enculturate into a disciplinary community (Soliday, 2011).

At the undergraduate level, a negative outlook of these domesticated genres might be Wardle's (2009 mutt genres, which she defines as genres somewhat uselessly mimicking the genres of other activity systems but with different purposes, etc. However, scholars use a plethora of other terms that perhaps highlight the value of these undergraduate writing tasks: transitional genres (Linton et al., 1994); simulation genres (Freadman et al., 1994); intermediary genres (Smit, 2004); apprenticeship genres (Nesi & Gardner, 2012); and pedagogical genres (Pessoa et al., 2020). For example, transitional genres "share some features of disciplinary writing but are situated in classroom contexts" (Linton et al., 1994, p. 63). Essentially, transitional genres both mimic and abstract elements of disciplinary writing for students who are in earlier phases of enculturation. Anderson et al. (2016) might call these assignments meaning-making writing tasks, which charge students with abstracting moves of various academic disciplines as high-impact practice. Of course, studies of students moving between even the transitional genres of different disciplinary classrooms (e.g., Beaufort, 2007; Carroll, 2002; Fishman et al., 2005; McCarthy, 1987; Nowacek, 2011) confirm that these abstractions must still be situated within each discipline's ways of knowing and doing since they vary so widely.

Transitional genres, then, can provide manageable scaffolding toward the complexity of disciplinary genres: they are exercises in what Bartholomae (1986) would call "successive approximations" (p.

11), or what Vygotsky (1978) might describe as a zone of proximal development, or what Rogoff (1990) might term guided participation. As Paré, Starke-Meyerring, and McAlpine (2006) describe,

> undergraduates are eavesdroppers, listening in on the disciplinary conversation and reporting it back to the professor (an actual member); Master's students are ventriloquists, able to sound like participants, but really only channelling the voices of the true members; doctoral students—if they are fortunate—find themselves increasingly involved as participants in work that matters, in work that will be public and that might affect others. (p. 10)

With an instructor's guidance, transitional genres support undergraduate students in one step on their long road toward expertise by constructing a space to learn and communicate as fledgling members of the discipline. We especially see this progression in longitudinal studies of students gradually enculturating into disciplinary ways of knowing and doing as they move through upper-level writing courses in their majors (Carroll, 2002; Haas, 1994; Herrington & Curtis, 2000; Roozen, 2009, 2010, 2020; Sternglass, 1997; Walvoord & McCarthy, 1990).

What features, then, characterize these transitional disciplinary genres? Much of the prior research on upper-level undergraduate student writing cited in this article's literature review are ethnographic (especially from the student perspective), while other existing studies are largely discourse-based, such as those based on the Michigan Corpus of Upper-Level Student Papers (e.g., see Ädel & Römer, 2012; Aull, 2019; Hardy & Römer, 2013). In this article, I focus exclusively on faculty expectations, highlighting their own words and characterizations, since they are the ones assigning and assessing (and therefore defining) this writing as a phase of enculturation.

The next sections tease out the questions: what do faculty expect these transitional academic genres to look like at the undergraduate level, especially in upper-level major/minor courses? In what ways are these genres a "fainter, domesticated shadow" (Soliday, 2011, p. 13) of the genres faculty might engage as expert members of the discipline? On what do faculty members expect undergraduate students to "eavesdrop" (Paré & Le Maistre., 2006, p.10) concerning academic writing, and what do they not yet expect?

Methods

Findings in this article are derived from a larger mixed-methods WAC study at a midsized, R2, private, predominantly white institution in the American southeast. In Spring 2022, a call for faculty partners was distributed across departments to join a study, *Writing and the Teaching of Writing Across Disciplines*, that sought to uncover how writing was defined, described, and taught by faculty across disciplines as a foundation for WAC program-building. Faculty partners were offered $200 in gift cards as compensation, and 47 faculty partners across 19 departments joined the study. The larger study included surveys, course material collection, and interviews. Table 1 shows the number of faculty members and courses represented in this study from each department.

Table 1: Participants

Department	# of faculty members	# of courses
Humanities		

English	1	0
History	3	5
Art	3	7
East Asian Languages	1	2
Spanish	2	3
German	1	4
Philosophy	1	2
Total:	12	23
Social Sciences		
Communication	6	10
Politics & International Affairs	3	8
Education	5	8
Economics	2	5
Psychology	3	5
Anthropology	2	2
Counseling	2	2
Total:	23	40
STEM		
Chemistry	2	6
Biology	4	6
Physics	1	1

Mathematics	1	3
Statistics	1	1
Health & Exercise Science	3	3
Total:	12	20
Overall Total:	**47 faculty**	**83 courses**

All faculty interviews (Appendix A) lasted between 47 minutes and 95 minutes and were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed by Otter.AI. With a team of four researchers, an initial coding scheme was collaboratively developed with 10% of the data set. We inductively developed our initial codes with open, descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2009, p. 70) for the following questions:

1. What do faculty identify as the characteristics of "good" academic writing in their discipline at an expert level?
2. What do faculty identify as the characteristics of "good" academic writing in their discipline at an undergraduate student level?
3. What direct comparisons do faculty make about the characteristics of good academic writing in their discipline for expert versions vs. student versions?

We then individually coded 6% of the data set to establish interrater reliability. Our interrater reliability score for 425 lines of code was 96.8%. The remainder of the data set was divided evenly between the four researchers to code using MAXQDA. The team met once weekly during coding to discuss any edge cases, questions, clarifications, and/or new codes.

All coded data was then organized by department, which were further categorized into Humanities; Social Sciences; and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). These broad areas were primarily chosen because they map onto my institutional structure (for example, Table 1 is based on the institutional department names and divisions): while there are some clear distinctions between the three broad disciplinary areas, there are also plenty of variations within each. There are further variations for subfields within disciplines, or even from journal to journal within a subfield. By dividing the data by these three disciplinary areas, I am not attempting to prescribe any characteristics, but I am attempting to create a manageable framework for description. Even though I describe the data by those three disciplinary areas generally, I still aim to draw out complexities and contradictions between disciplines and fields.

The other slippery concept in this endeavor is academic writing. Academic writing is somehow predictable, complex, fluid, definable, and indefinable all at once. In their seminal study of faculty writing across disciplines, Thaiss and Zawacki (2006) identify three main characteristics of academic writing: (a) clear evidence, (b) reason over emotion, and (c) a rational, responsive imagined reader. Some scholars abstract academic writing by grouping the general action of various academic genres across disciplines, such as Nesi and Gardner's (2012) genre families or Carter's (2007) meta-genres. Others (Bartholomae, 1986; Elbow, 1991; Graff & Birkenstein, 2009; Harris, 2006; Swales, 1990) point out the major rhetorical moves that seem to exist in all academic writing, such as engaging with other literature in the field, declaring gaps in knowledge, and applying theory to create new knowledge. Still, in his review of 2,101 undergraduate writing assignments, Melzer (2014a) echoes

Thaiss and Zawacki's (2006) ultimate conclusion that writing varies too drastically between disciplines and even between courses for the concept of academic writing to hold much weight.

However, I would argue that academic writing does hold weight because it is socially recognized. Every faculty member in this study clearly and easily delineated between academic writing and other forms of writing in their profession (like client reports or grant applications)—a felt sense, (Perl, 1980) if you will. If we are trying to understand how writing assignments in undergraduate major/minor courses are expected to act as transitional genres, the specific genre labels are never going to match one-to-one. We need the broader conception of academic writing to uncover the ways of knowing and doing these assignments attempt to develop. And indeed, a recognizable collection of moves and characteristics emerged as faculty described academic writing in their varied disciplines, which I've used to organize the results in the next section.

Results

In this section, I present eight major characteristics of academic writing that faculty identified in their descriptions of both expert and student writing:

1. Questions
2. Situating
3. Argument
4. Engagement with Literature
5. Methods + Data
6. Analysis and Implications
7. Structure
8. Conventions and Style[2]

For each of these characteristics, I describe (a) how faculty describe their expectations for expert, published writing; (b) how faculty describe their expectations for undergraduate student writing in upper-level major/minor courses, and (c) how faculty directly compare expert versions vs. student versions of academic writing.

Questions

Expectations for Experts. For faculty, academic writing begins with a motivating question or hypothesis. Questions in the humanities are often occasioned by cultural or political movements in the world around them. As one philosophy professor reflected, "Why do I feel like this is problematic?" Faculty in the social sciences can develop hypotheses to be tested with the scientific method, or those hypotheses can be prompted from theory to further test and discuss. Many applied branches of the social sciences, like counseling, psychology, and economics, are often exploring answers to problems observed in the profession. Meanwhile, faculty in STEM develop a hypothesis that forms the central, sustaining idea for a project. Across disciplines, faculty describe their motivating questions as driven by problems they observe in existing scholarship or in practice, explaining "what's happening with this" (counseling), or exploring interests that sometimes preempt a data set and sometimes arise out of data sets.

Expectations for Undergraduates. In describing what they expect of undergraduate student writing, this category of questions had the least representation: for example, a response pertaining to questions was represented by 1/7 of Humanities disciplines; 5/7 of Social Science disciplines; and

2/6 of STEM disciplines. For those who did describe the questions they expect of students, they hoped students would find "something exciting that leads to the question" (history) or "clearly [lay] out what they're interested in exploring" (biology). However, the motivating question was also described in terms of reading the assignment prompt carefully and following instructions. As one anthropology professor described, "The best student writers are the ones who are able to write with the most clarity of purpose, and I guess that means they're usually the ones who read the assignment prompt the most." Or as an economics professor succinctly puts it, students need "to find a thesis." A few answers also point to faculty expecting more passion and agency around student questions once they are writing an undergraduate thesis or honors project.

Direct Comparison. In directly comparing expert and student questioning, faculty agree that students must ask questions, and that questions should be focused and clear. Faculty may even encourage students to make the expert move of grounding their question in the literature:

> I have my students start in the literature, kind of get familiar with it, and start searching for those gaps or so-and-so suggests additional research is needed in this area. And so that would be a good start to a gap. And then they start formulating their research question. (Education)

One of the main differences faculty identify, though, is that students are usually formulating questions from a much more limited scope of literature, so there's rarely a true originality to the identified gap. Meanwhile, a chemistry professor recognizes that students often struggle to keep their data motivated by their driving question because they want to prove to their professor how much they know and how much they've done: "[They've] got really good facts in there, but none of them are actually pertinent to the question that was asked, but they want to show [me]." In this case, the professor-as-evaluator in the classroom setting can preclude undergraduate students from allowing a question to provide focus and shape to the final product.

As a phase of enculturation, then, questioning at the upper-level undergraduate level is largely constructed for students by function of the prompt and classroom setting: Students are exposed to the kinds of questions they might be able to ask and answer that relate to their interests in the field, even if these are not necessarily questions that need to be asked.

Situate

Expectations for Experts. Faculty across disciplines describe the need to situate their project's relationship to other projects and perspectives in the field, contextualize their project against what's known, and explicitly name a gap their project addresses. In the humanities and some social sciences, situating a project often means developing theoretical or conceptual grounding to "frame your research questions" since "reviewers come back and say, 'Oh this should have more theory'" (psychology). As one politics professor describes, they must know the landscape of the field before even conducting research: "The background information on [this project] are the different categories that academics talk about when we talk about why people join political parties. [Without the background research,] I can't ask the right questions that will fit into pre-existing categories." In disciplines like history, art history, and archaeology, situating a project doesn't only include contextualizing other scholarship, but also contextualizing the time and setting of the data at hand. Meanwhile, in STEM, the existing literature allows researchers to create "packages of research" in their ongoing laboratory projects: "sort of nuggets that fit communication in that style of an article" (chemistry). In these cases, identifying a gap allows STEM researchers to shape their ultimate goal. Across every discipline, faculty emphasize the importance of rationalizing and justifying their project:

> I want to know, in the first paragraph, is this worth my time to read? (history)
>
> It's trying to make an argument of why we're doing this and why this is important. (counseling)
>
> Can you justify why you did this? (physics)

Expectations for Undergraduates. Faculty expect undergraduate students to situate their projects, as well. As a psychology professor succinctly puts it, undergraduate students should make similar moves to experts: "This is the problem. This is what's been done. This is my approach, and this is why it's important." Likewise, faculty expect students to understand and "have self-awareness" (chemistry) that their research questions and findings can only exist in conversation with others. As a health & exercise science professor explains, students should be able to say, "See, here's what we want to do. And the reason we want to do this is based on what other people have done, and we speculate that this would happen," even if students are not expected to "[put] in" as many as "thirty articles" like experts might. The limited scope of the conversation is echoed by a philosophy professor, who expects a student to "locat[e] [them]self," but mostly within the conversations had within the class instead of the field at large. Several faculty do note that students seem to struggle with the application of theory, especially since students try to apply theory retroactively instead of pre-data collection (anthropology), and many faculty do not expect or require students to meaningfully engage with theory in most classes.

Direct Comparison. The direct comparisons between expert and undergraduate students in this category mostly focus on issues of scope and background knowledge. Faculty do expect students to "include a set for contexts that sort of set the stage for that analysis" (East Asian languages), as well as to articulate "why the study is important" (psychology). However, faculty note that students simply do not have the depth and scope of background knowledge to fully situate their projects: Students often end up including more basic information that most experts would take as a given, or they cannot go as far back for their "historical basis" (communication), or they simply do not understand the implied knowledge, which one biology professor says leads to students misusing "culturally-loaded" words. To that point, one history professor recalls a journal editor at a conference begging colleagues not to submit undergraduate honor theses to the journal because "they will never be good enough" and "they cannot be good enough." Even if undergraduate students "asked a cool question," the professor relayed, "they do not have the scholarly apparatus to make it happen." In addition to lacking the necessary scholarly apparatus, faculty across disciplines expected student writing to be "less engaging" or less clear in their intentions (anthropology).

Situating at the undergraduate level, then, is primarily geared toward developing an awareness of the conversational nature of scholarship, as well as the need to contextualize and rationalize projects, even as those moves are based on a limited amount of classroom discussion and literature.

Argument

Expectations for Experts. Across disciplines, faculty emphasize argumentation as a defining feature of academic writing. They especially emphasize that the argument needs to be an original contribution to the field: words like "unique," "novel," "exciting," "new," "compelling," "meaningful," "innovative," and "intervening" abound in this realm. Carving out the novelty of an argument necessitates putting it into conversation with existing scholarship and explicitly delineating the novelty. To advance the field, these original contributions must have the appropriate argumentative support—whether theoretical, empirical, and/or analytical—to convince an audience. For example,

in the humanities, a history professor insists that scholarship must be "an argument about the past rather than a description of the past":

> If it doesn't have some sort of engagement with prior historians' takes on whatever you're doing, and then putting forth your own original argument based in sources, then it's just a narrative [...] without any causality, or a particular argument about why or about how to see things differently. So I think that it all boils down to argument.

A physics professor echoes this sentiment of drawing out meaning beyond description alone: "You could just go through and say 'we did this, we did this, we did this.' But what are the meaning of things? What are the conclusions? And not just saying they did stuff, right?" In STEM and some social sciences, argument is usually described in terms of finding and telling a story: "So a story is basically information that advances knowledge in a way that is compelling to the people reading it" (biology). Or as a mathematics professor puts it,

> Because a math paper is really a story. You build on how this is the context, and then you develop the story. And eventually, this is true. So it's a story of reaching conclusions from many, many things. Reaching a really concrete story.

Most researchers find the story after analyzing their data and comparing it with the existing literature. These stories—or original contributions—can advance ongoing debates (politics, biology), propose practical interventions (education, health & exercise science), contend with existing assumptions (Art History, Philosophy), and/or generalize findings (chemistry, psychology).

Expectations for Undergraduates. The resounding concurrence is that faculty expect there should be a clearly defined and locatable argument in student writing. In fact, argumentation had the most consistent response across faculty expectations for undergraduate students in every discipline. As an art history professor succinctly says, "It's all about being able to make an argument...and being able to trace that argument in a way that is clear." The sentiment is echoed in economics: "The better writers can link together all the parts to tell a story. Thinking through, not just interpreting the numbers, but telling what it means." Many faculty members describe academic writing as a place for undergraduate students to critically think, analyze, and organize their thoughts through a logical approach that aligns with the discipline; they expect a coherent through-line from start to finish. But most faculty also recognize that it's a challenge for students to move from description to argumentation, as well as to follow through on that argument fully to conclusions. As a chemistry professor describes,

> This is not your lab notebook. We're not telling the story in the chronological order. You were collecting all the facts. You have, you know, you have all your data. You said on a table all your data. And now, you can reword that story. So you can tell a very coherent story. So I think students, more so in the undergraduate level but even at the graduate level, they have a really hard time... It's like still facts. I mean, you're still presenting your data, but sometimes reporting the facts makes a bad story.

Additionally, faculty still expect students to draw out the novelty of their argument, but in the context of the class discussions or materials instead of the field at large. Across disciplines, faculty hope students will connect ideas or push a conversation forward in ways not yet explored in class, but do not expect students to put forward a totally new or compelling idea compared to experts.

Direct Comparison. When faculty directly compare their argumentation expectations for experts vs. undergraduate students, the similarity includes the core idea of supporting one's view with evidence:

> There's always an emphasis on reasons, like supporting your view. Why should anyone buy what you're selling? So all that's the same. (Philosophy)
>
> What is a research question, and what is an argument? What is an analytical claim? (Politics)
>
> Every essay no matter what the discipline has an analytical claim of some kind, right? Otherwise, what's the point? You're not just a book report. (Counseling)
>
> At minimum, they're setting the groundwork for original work. (Physics)

The differences that faculty identify, though, revolve around consistency, nuance, and originality of the argumentation. For example, faculty across disciplines note that students often overstate the originality of their argument because they do not know what counts as original in the field. As an anthropology professor wryly puts it, "Calm down, Indiana Jones, we all get it. It wasn't a breathtaking discovery." Students can also be prone to making "absolute statements" without evidence (anthropology) or make leaps in logic or ideas whose connections are not appropriately explored (health & exercise sciences). One history professor attributes many of these argumentative disconnects to students' research processes:

> And so what upper-level students will do wrong is they will start with the argument they want to make, and they will go looking and trolling for evidence that will suit that argument. And they miss stuff. And they misinterpret stuff. They do violence to the evidence. And so they have a wonderfully organized paper and a clear argument that's wrong. Brilliantly precise and clear explanations that are wrong.

Interestingly, a chemistry professor notes that students' shaky arguments are rooted in them not "feel[ing] like they themselves are entitled to assert those right as 'I'm just a student.'" Meanwhile, an economics professor reflects that "because they don't have any idea about [their argument] from a philosophical sense, they can't make the leap to create the story that's based upon findings that they are able to create from the data." Thus, illogical, incorrect, or shallow arguments by undergraduate students are expected by faculty for a variety of reasons that mostly boil down to inexperience in the field.

Yet, even if undergraduate student arguments are not necessarily inventive or correct, argumentation is one of the major enculturation leaps faculty expect students to make: students should assert a claim and develop that claim through to its conclusions.

Engagement with Literature

Expectations for Experts. Engagement with literature has been lurking through the characteristics of academic writing identified so far, but I'm committing a section to this feature because of its prominence in all faculty's responses and the range of ways literature is engaged in academic writing across disciplines. Many faculty describe existing scholarship as a way to frame their own project or question, "to either say, no one's asked this question before, or, when they answered it, they answered it wrong" (art history). While engaging existing literature is how gaps are identified and defined, they also work to justify projects: "So how does your work build upon someone else's, right?" (education). There's usually a balance that faculty are trying to achieve between "reviewing what's already been done, and in doing so, also kind of revealing gaps and what still needs to be done" (psychology). Moreover, engagement with literature helps faculty in the humanities and social sciences, especially, build their theoretical or conceptual frameworks that will be used later in

analysis. While faculty in the humanities may use existing scholarship as a "foil" or "dialogue" (philosophy), faculty in STEM are often using literature to "try and confirm what I found is not isolated. I'm trying to show that this is something that was previously seen" (health & exercise science). Yet, when there are contradictions with new findings, one chemistry professor cites the "self-correcting nature" of science: "It feels a little less personal and more part of the process to overturn someone else's results." Across disciplines, faculty confirm that engaging with literature is a way to locate their own argument among the "big picture" (biology) of the field.

I do want to draw attention to one aspect of engagement with literature that doesn't come up as much with other characteristics of academic writing: Many faculty describe engagement with literature as a way to show reviewers they've "done [their] homework" (communication). More than any other characteristic, faculty tend to mention how engagement with literature is often necessary to appease reviewers. For example, a Spanish professor notes that reviewers "want to see you've done the work" and that "you know what the experts say about your field, about your area, and you acknowledge those contributions, and they're in your paper." Similarly, a German studies professor told me her footnotes are mostly to "show that I know where all this is coming from, basically." Or as one politics professor reflects,

> When I get rejections from journals, often it's that they want to see me insert myself more concretely into what they see as the relevant debates within the field. It's less of a, "Tell us about your thing you have found that people are talking about" and more of a, "Make sure you are speaking to the people who have already thought about this." It's challenging as a junior scholar, and someone who maybe doesn't know the field as well, just trying to kind of find their way in it.

The hoop-jumping aspect of engagement with literature even led one communication professor to sigh heavily: "Sometimes I get tired of, like, citing people. Like, I get tired of that in academic writing."

Expectations for Undergraduates. When faculty speak about their expectations for undergraduate students' engagement with literature, the conversation is much less about framing their projects, locating themselves in ongoing debates, or even proving they know the scope of the field/subfield, but faculty expectations revolve more around students knowing how to delineate their voice from scholars' voices. Faculty are especially wary of the summary trap students tend to fall into instead of using existing scholarship to shape their own arguments. Many faculty do expect students in their upper-level major/minor courses to critically read literature, synthesize literature, and even write literature reviews, but faculty often provide literature to students or have them work mostly with or off readings from class since they are not expected to know how to locate the full scope of relevant literature and often struggle to realize what literature is relevant for their questions. For students, faculty are especially focused on the logistics of engaging with literature, like avoiding summary, following templates to integrate others' ideas stylistically, distinguishing one's own voice, and having accurate citations. Engagement with literature feels slightly like an afterthought in how many faculty talk about their expectations for students as opposed to an integral part of the research and writing process:

> They usually start without sources, and my comments lead them to sources, which they then work to integrate, or oppose, somewhere. (English)

> Where are these agreements happening? Ideally, you can bring in some evidence, maybe direct quotes, maybe paraphrasing, from the pieces that you're engaging with. (politics)

Direct Comparison. When asked to directly compare engagement with literature at the expert level vs. the undergraduate student level, faculty agreed that students should engage literature "in some way, shape, or form" (philosophy). An anthropology professor puts it in terms of preparation for future endeavors: "If you're going to conduct research, if you're writing a grant, if you're going to graduate school, if you're writing a thesis, you're going to have to do a review of the literature." But faculty acknowledge that students are always going to engage with less literature than an expert, and they cannot be "fully critical without really understanding the whole field and the discourse" (art history). Students often make claims without needed sources behind them (health & exercise science), or they do not engage with literature as a dialogue. In providing the bounds of literature with which to engage, one history professor says he is "cutting their meat for them." Even with less literature, students tend to struggle to synthesize the way "expert writers in the discipline are able to synthesize in a few sentences what might be the approach of hundreds of books and articles" (history). Given the junior faculty in politics has the same struggle in her own publications, it's no wonder engagement with literature might be a rather steep path toward enculturation for undergraduate students.

On the whole, engagement with literature seems to come secondary to argumentation: faculty are mostly concerned with students developing their own arguments and voices instead of merely summarizing existing literature or letting that literature speak for them; thus, students are expected to focus more on the logistics of integrating a limited selection of outside literature in a gesture toward a dialogue.

Methods + Data

Expectations for Experts. Faculty identified a plethora of methodological approaches and ensuing data sets across their disciplinary spheres, and all agreed that methods and data must be presented in particular ways in their academic writing. In the humanities, methods can range from the qualitative, like archives or case studies (history, German studies), to the quantitative, like coded linguistic transcripts (Spanish). For disciplines like art history, history, and English, the data is their object of analysis, which must be described and contextualized; the method is often a form of close reading that applies contextual or theoretical frameworks to that object. As one history professor explained, "My evidence tends to be, 'So this guy said this to somebody else.' Or, 'This person did this thing in this way, and other people reacted to it.' I don't have spreadsheets... I don't have p-values, right?" On the STEM side, though, reproducibility is paramount. Data may include code, lab experiments, simulations, and/or proofs, but STEM faculty emphasized the need to provide very detailed and precise methods in their academic articles, as well as the rationale for that method and any analytical approaches / techniques, so others might replicate their methods and compare results, which may be "a tedious process, but we have to do the work" (mathematics). Every STEM professor likewise impressed the importance of communicating large amounts of data in a small amount of space with tables and/or graphs: "The bulk of the paper's really in the figures" (biology). In fact, many STEM faculty told me they create the data figures first and then build the "story" of their paper around them. These figures and any description of data is written in a relatively short Results section that "has to be objective. This is not your opinion. This is the facts. This is what you found" (health & exercise science).

Meanwhile, disciplines across the social sciences run the continuum between the humanities and STEM in their methods and data. In my interviews alone, methods in the social sciences span fieldwork, rhetorical analysis/criticism, theory-building, ethnography, historiography, narrative criticism, statistical analysis, case studies, field experiments, and model-building. Some disciplines like economics and psychology mirror STEM in detailing methods towards reproducibility, generating data figures, and separating data from any interpretation of that data. For qualitative

methods, data often includes rich quotations from participants (counseling), site descriptions and histories (anthropology), photos from fieldwork (politics, anthropology), and descriptions of objects of analysis (communication). Interestingly, many journals in the social sciences "mimic experimental designs from the hard sciences" (politics), which by default demands a detailed methods section, a data-without-interpretation Results section, and following interpretation in a Discussion and/or Conclusion section. This structure aligns more with some methodological approaches than others: even within politics, one professor told me she loved that structure to organize her research, and another professor told me he hates it because it tends to delegitimize his qualitative work. The baggy range of what counts as credible methods and data even within one discipline can mean scholars need to further rationalize their methods, or at least be discerning about the journals in which they attempt to publish. One professor in communication even noted that he can struggle to help students in his classes who are doing quantitative work in his field because he's on the qualitative side of his field.

Expectations for Undergraduates. When it comes to faculty expectations for undergraduate students concerning methods + data, I do want to note that this category was less represented than the others, similar to the questioning category: For example, a response pertaining to methods and data was represented by 3/7 of Humanities disciplines; 3/7 of Social Science disciplines; and 4/6 of STEM disciplines. Those who did mention methods and data in the humanities expected students to be able to conduct primary source analysis (history); case study examples (East Asian languages), and a critical reading of a text (English). In the social sciences, the three disciplines that discussed student expectations for methods + data are those that most closely mirror STEM and want students to "go through this whole process and class of designing studies, getting the data, and analyzing the data" (psychology); "understand the conceptual framework of what's being taught and...communicate that mathematically and spatially with graphs" (economics); and "be able to go out and collect data and to be able to support that data...or answer their research question through the things that they've collected" (anthropology). In STEM, faculty expect students to be able to write-up their methods accurately and clearly (chemistry, mathematics) and to avoid "data dumps" (biology) by representing data with figures (statistical sciences, chemistry).

Direct Comparison. In directly comparing methods + data expectations for experts vs. undergraduate students, faculty do expect students to engage with the methods of their discipline, whether that's working with primary source materials (art history), developing empirical cases (politics), or running an experiment (biology). A psychology professor notes that "the methods should be pretty similar in that it's descriptive enough...to provide enough detail so that if someone read this, they will be able to replicate your study." Meanwhile, a chemistry professor also stresses presenting data in figures: "I try to emphasize to students and to myself, even though it feels like I'm not writing anything, [the creation of tables and figures is] part of your writing process. It's not that you're not writing; you just happen to be doing it in a tabular or graphical form." The differences in methods + data, though, primarily come down to scope, complexity, access, and time. In the humanities, faculty agree that "the quantity and quality" (history) of the data will be lesser in undergraduate writing because they do not have the time or experience required to select and fully engage with their body of primary sources. In the social sciences, a politics professor notes students simply do not have access to the same statistical databases as experts, and even if they did, they do not have the time to run multiple analyses (economics) or interview a critical amount and diversity of participants (psychology, education). They can also struggle to "make the leaps to the weaknesses of the methods that they're using" (economics) and even align "their intentions and the results of their research" (anthropology). Thus, faculty agree that their expectations for student methods and data are much simpler; as a statistical science professor notes, "If they're just calculating means, that's okay." Obviously, most lab experiments require months or years to run, and students are usually

working within the confines of a single semester. This biology professor perhaps describes the differences between expert and student engagement with methods + data best by emphasizing process over product:

> And so there's a lower bar in terms of the significance of the findings, or, you know, the amount of data they have. And this is something in the microbiology lab that I really stress that it's about the process, it's not about how much data they get at the end. It's about accurately explaining what they did, how they got the data they got, and what they think that data means, and then a lot more focus on what can be done in the future.

For many undergraduate students, upper-level major courses mark a major jump in enculturation since it is most likely their first exposure to the methodological approaches and data sets of the discipline: the entire endeavor may be on a smaller, less robust scale, but students are picking up and turning over the tools and building blocks that create knowledge in each discipline.

Analysis & Implications

Expectations for Experts. For faculty across disciplines, their arguments only come full circle when the evidence from their methods + data is analyzed for how it answers their questions or hypotheses. Analysis across disciplines is characterized as an act of interpretation (or "re-interpretation," in a mathematics professor's estimation) that often leads to implications. Words like "original" and "deep" and "nuanced" are often paired with analysis; a German studies professor even calls it "evaluation of the data." In the humanities (Spanish, English) and some social sciences (communication, education, politics, counseling, anthropology), analysis often involves interpreting evidence through the lens of a theoretical framework, both to understand how the evidence advances an argument and to refine the theory. In some social sciences (economics, psychology) and STEM, analysis goes "beyond" (biology) the data figures alone; as a physics professor describes, "The actual simulations probably take only like a month. But then analyzing simulations—trying to figure out what they mean—can take several months." Across disciplines, analysis usually involves making connections between data points, considering data against other literature, and establishing major findings: "What are the stories, and what themes emerge in the stories? How are those important for what we're trying to argue?" (communication). Many faculty note that analysis necessarily involves exploring alternatives, such as comparing findings to other contexts (art history, history); engaging in a hypothetical dialectic (philosophy); running robustness checks or alternative statistical analyses (psychology, economics, biology); and considering alternative interpretations (biology, physics). All of this analysis ultimately ends in broader implications, which emphasize one's conclusions, draws out the benefits of that conclusion, proposes practical applications or considerations, and explores limitations and future research directions. Many applied disciplines, such as counseling, education, politics, and health & exercise science, especially emphasize practical applications or recommendations based on their conclusions. But perhaps a German studies professor sums it up best: "Here's my conclusion. Here's what I can do with it."

Expectations for Undergraduates. For undergraduate students, faculty are similarly looking for exploration and connections beyond the evidence alone. One politics professor describes it in terms of "unpacking:" "[Effective student writers] do a good job of making it very clear what the connections they saw across readings were and how they apply to theory. And not just that they saw a connection, but what was the connection? What was the evidence of the connection?" The word "creativity" is interestingly used by multiple faculty members when describing student analysis, as evidenced by this communication professor's response:

> Can they show creativity in their thought? Walk me through their thought process in ways that I can actually understand what led them to think those things? Provide evidence and background for their thinking? Show not only a clarity and organization of thought at the micro-level (so for each individual argument), but for the structure as a whole?

In STEM, faculty expect students to "go beyond just restating what the figures show me or writing what the table shows me" (chemistry). Faculty expect students to find relationships between data points and "describe those relationships in a clear and compelling way, just like a storyteller" (statistical sciences). In terms of how this analysis leads to implications, faculty responses were scarce, with answers in 1/7 of humanities disciplines; 3/7 of social science disciplines; and 1/7 of STEM disciplines. Those who did mention implications expect students to restate their conclusions (communication), tell why that conclusion is important (history, politics), and even think creatively in applying their analysis (counseling, health & exercise science).

Direct Comparison. When faculty directly compare their analysis expectations between experts and undergraduate students, faculty confirm that they expect undergraduate students to interpret findings and establish a main take-away. As a communication professor puts it, "I'm always trying to make sure that students are able to be strong critics, and so writing is, of course, important to that. [It's] inherently analytical and critical, in attempts to be scholarly." These "attempts to be scholarly" are perhaps evidenced by the differing expectations for experts and students: across disciplines, faculty note that they expect student analysis to be less nuanced, less lengthy, less developed, and less complex than an expert's analysis. Application of theory is especially highlighted as a challenge for students (East Asian languages, communication, anthropology). Time in the field is identified as the main reason student analysis tends to be simpler, though a chemistry professor notes the deeper analysis isn't necessarily the goal with student writing: "If you think through a problem long enough, your level of understanding and critical thinking is gonna be much higher. But I think what we're trying to achieve is not a higher level of understanding, but a notion of the process." Some faculty note that even when they try to mentor undergraduate students toward more complex or developed analysis, students can struggle to make those connections: a communication professor describes learning long ago that simply writing comments for "more depth" led students to ask "What do you mean?": students often ended up adding "more summary or whatever they were doing" instead of deeper analysis. Likewise, a physics professor notes that analysis can be lacking because students "spent a fair amount of time just learning how to do things," like running labs or simulations. In terms of implications, perhaps this history professor says it best when she relays: "[Students] are not able somehow to take it to the next level of analysis to pull it together and show why this is so important and what impact it has had on society. I think that differentiates between [experts and students]."

In terms of enculturation, analysis is a characteristic that undergraduate students seem to skate the surface of; with arguments and data in place, analysis that fully explores and connects how that evidence proves the claim is an uncomfortable move that takes creativity and even a push from faculty. Perhaps this less developed analysis—along with the prompt-motivated question—also leads to a lack of implications.

Structure

Expectations for Experts. Faculty across disciplines identified the structure of their final written products as an essential component for what makes good academic writing. While some faculty noted that structures differ between genres (e.g., a book chapter vs. a conference talk vs. a journal article), and even from journal to journal, they all described the structural considerations for a typical journal article in their field to me. In the humanities and some social sciences, the overall structure of journal

articles can vary based on the argument; they often do not have headings that divide sections, but certain beats still generally come in a particular order. For example, all humanities faculty described the need for an introduction that says what they're arguing and what they'll be doing, methods or a description of their object of analysis, historiographies or theoretical framing, a logical progression through their arguments, and a conclusion. In most social sciences and STEM, journal articles follow an Introduction-Methods-Results-Discussion (IMRD) format, named by many as APA formatting, or what a psychology professor called a "structured structure." However, faculty still pointed to multiple considerations within this structure. For example, one economics professor describes the Methods and Results sections as "more formulaic" and thus easier to write; a chemistry professor echoes that by saying she'll often let students write those parts of her articles toward publication. Yet, journal editors are described as "fussy" (chemistry) when it comes to the Results section; there can't be too many figures, but not too little, either. Several faculty note that the Discussion should mirror the Introduction to put your findings in conversation with what's known, and all confirm that the Introduction is usually the toughest to write and oftentimes written last. Faculty who write in IMRD particularly note that the structure means readers can jump around and read in whatever order they wish; faculty who do not write in IMRD emphasize clear transitions and signposting to help guide their reader through. Across disciplines, the need for a very clearly-stated and obvious argument, "where you don't have to guess what the finding is" (physics), near the front of the article is paramount: the argument is usually iterated in an abstract and the introduction, and even in the title of many STEM pieces. How long each section of an article is depends entirely on how many paragraphs are needed to build the argument.

Expectations for Undergraduates. When describing structural expectations for students, the words "organized" and "clear" and "basic" proliferate faculty responses. Almost all faculty mention that they expect an introduction and a conclusion, and they hope students understand what each of those entail, such as clearly saying what the paper is about in the introduction. Most faculty expect students to be familiar with either an argumentative structure (based in the 5-paragraph essay) or APA structure by the time they reach upper-level courses in the major/minor. Faculty also especially note the need for transitions between paragraphs, moving through paragraphs logically, and signposting—or, what one Education professor calls "idiot-proofing": "First I'm going to tell you what I'm going to tell you. Second, here's what I'm going to tell you. Finally, here's what I already told you."

Direct Comparison. When directly comparing expert vs. student expectations, structure is the singular outlier because it's the only characteristic in which faculty across every discipline described more similarities than differences between expert and student versions. Faculty expect students to have the same sections that "roughly" (psychology) accomplish the same goals as expert versions. One East Asian languages professor has students identify and then mimic "key sentences or key transitions" from expert articles, while an economics professor describes the structure as "very, very recipe-oriented" so students can follow it. The "bare-bone infrastructure" (health & exercise science) of most journal articles means faculty expect students to make the same moves in the same order as expert versions, even if those moves are overall less sophisticated. This is why one psychology professor calls student papers a "mini version" of a research paper in their field.

In this phase of enculturation, then, undergraduate students are meant to secure the structures of academic writing at macro- and micro-levels to ensure they are covering all of the required components—and the relationship between those components—that are expected to create knowledge in their discipline.

Conventions & Style

Expectations for Experts. Faculty views on the conventions and stylistic markers of good academic writing abound, with some clear patterns and some obvious contradictions. Across disciplines, faculty connect conventions and style back to their disciplinary goals and values. These quotations from various disciplines highlight the relationship between conventions and purpose:

> The degree that your argument depends on drawing connections, that's going to be reflected in the grammar (philosophy)

> [It's about] leveraging the language of the discipline for succinctness (economics)

> Empirically, we don't want the writing to get in the way of the work that's been done when we're trying to explain something. And if we make the writing too creative, in a sense, that can really start to distract from getting the essence of: here's what we did, here's what we found, here's what it means (psychology)

> A lot of authors at least try to scrub out that kind of more poetic license for the sake of interobserver clarity (anthropology)

> [It's] concise, symbolic language. A lot of time in Mathematics, if you choose to express something in just ordinary words, it's going to be very complex, very involved. If you design this expression of symbols, then we can understand that (mathematics)

The word "clarity" or "clear" shows up in nearly every disciplinary faculty's answer to describe good academic writing. But of course, what clarity means varies. For many disciplines, clarity means concision, precision, lacking in tangents, and shorter rather than longer (Spanish, psychology, chemistry, biology, psychology); still, an economics professor emphasizes concision but also repetitiveness. Some disciplines describe their writing as technical (education, biology); others emphasize accuracy and honesty, especially in how data is represented and interpreted (psychology, biology). On the flip side, a communication professor draws out the tensions inherent in this idea of clarity:

> You know, I said that it's clarity. But there needs to be an elegance to it. As much as you're striving for clarity, there's a lot of sort of complex arguments in social sciences. You also don't want to bore your reader to tears. So there's also sort of getting a nice rhythm to it.

Or as a German studies professor puts it, "In order to be taken seriously in the Humanities, you need to be as factual and as concise as the sciences. But I believe that you can be exact and concise and still have nice prose."

Beyond these characterizations of clarity, two other stylistic issues surfaced explicitly across faculty responses: agentive pronouns and jargon. Even in the humanities, faculty identified three different approaches to agentive pronouns: first person (art history), second person (philosophy), and no personal pronouns (history). In another example of the social sciences attempting to mirror conventions of STEM, one politics professor reflects, "The political sciences desire to pass itself off as a pure science with objective and neutral language like 'the data were collected,'" while a biology professor notes that their use of active vs. passive voice usually depends on the journal. Beyond agentive pronouns, one of the most contradictory responses across disciplinary faculty focused on the use of jargon in academic writing: on the pro-jargon side, jargon is described as an expectation in prestigious journals (art history); a way to conserve words (economics); and a form of reader-hook

through trendy buzzwords (education). On the anti-jargon side, jargon is described as a "disease [...] a study in reputation and vocabulary as opposed to clarity" (communication) or as inappropriate since so many subfields exist (history). And then there are those in the middle, who are fine with jargon as long as it is defined or explained (German studies, psychology). Or as a communication professor says, "If you need a big word to be more clear, then by all means use the big word. But if there is a smaller word that means the exact same thing, use the smaller word."

Expectations for Undergraduates. In terms of conventions and style, faculty expectations for undergraduate student writing can perhaps be summed up by quality over quantity. The words "clarity" and "clear" come up just as much in describing expectations for students, but the word "coherent" often gets piggy-backed here: the main expectation is "short, sweet, and understandable" prose (health & exercise science). For example, many faculty say students can end up writing long, convoluted sentences that obfuscate meaning: "Can we just do subject-verb-object for just a little bit?" (politics). Many faculty also lament that, in an attempt to sound sophisticated, students can inject too much jargon and complex language, which an art history professor describes as "hiding behind these big words." In STEM, faculty especially note that "the more the merrier" in terms of big words and long sentences interferes with precision (chemistry), and less words requires more creativity and reveals more understanding:

> And so concise writing, I've found is easier for me to grade. But it's actually more effort for students, and it tells me more about what they can do. I have tried to embrace brevity as a way of getting to a deeper understanding of what my students can and can't do. (biology)

However, two major tensions seem to exist in faculty expectations for students' stylistic choices: Several faculty note that students should develop their own voice, "not stock phrases and conventions" (anthropology), but this must be balanced with expectations of clarity. Likewise, many faculty also expect students to follow grammar rules and for their writing to be typo- and error-free; but other faculty mention that they explicitly do not get hung up on or "picky about" (counseling) grammar or typos. Perhaps this economics professor expresses the tension in grammar expectations best when he says, "I'm more looking at content, less about grammar and flow. Those who have that grammar and flow tend to get better grades, but mostly I work on substance."

Direct Comparison. The direct comparison between faculty expectations for expert writing vs. student writing concerning conventions and style likewise centers on clarity. Faculty expect "an equal level of clarity" (communication) from their students as they would experts. However, the main explicit difference that faculty identify is how to appropriately balance voice. As an anthropology professor puts it, student prose is "either too dry and clinical, or it'll be too swashbuckling." In English, the balance of voice is a matter of maturity: "Even though I keep telling them to make it aesthetically pleasing—'use your voice'—I don't expect them to have that kind of mature voice, or that mastery of it." Perhaps my favorite story of conventions and style came from a psychology professor whose student had the sentence, "This area of research is in its larval stage," in their introduction of their thesis. On every draft, he wrote a question mark or pointed out how awkward it was as a metaphor in the piece, but the student liked it and kept it. At the thesis defense, one of the very first questions was "What's up with the 'larval stage?'" This professor went on to say that, while the metaphor was an "unnecessary use of language," it was "not the worst thing in the world." And yet "every reader tripped on it," which was ultimately the issue.

Given that even faculty have a range of expectations—or rather, preferences—for expert academic writing, it follows that students might struggle to enculturate into the conventions and stylistic

markers in their discipline. In many students' attempt to sound sophisticated, they can undercut clarity, so this phase sees students wrestling to find balance.

Discussion

Based on faculty expectations for undergraduate student writing, I believe Paré and Le Maistre's (2006) estimation that undergraduate students are "eavesdroppers, listening in on the disciplinary conversation and reporting it back to the professor (an actual member)" (p. 10) does not quite align with faculty expectations for the role of writing assignments in their upper-level major/minor courses. Undergraduate students are not expected to report back, but they are expected to engage with and develop ways of knowing and doing in the discipline, primarily through practicing the major moves of academic writing for each discipline. Based on the above results, I want to highlight three themes that shape faculty expectations for undergraduate student writing, explain its role as a phase of enculturation, and point to WAC/WPA administrator considerations for faculty development: (a) motivation, (b) process, and (c) imitation.

Motivation

Perhaps the most obvious driving factor that differentiates expert vs. undergraduate student academic writing expectations is motivation, both for the reader (teacher) and writer (student). For faculty, most academic writing projects are occasioned by questions or hypotheses that emerge from their experiences in the world, what they read, or a definable phase of lab research. For students, projects are occasioned by crafted prompts that can define, limit, or propose the motivating question, leading students to "find a thesis" (economics). Hilger et al. (1999) call this a content-driven problem, where students struggle to locate and decide what counts as appropriate content for a paper in the discipline. While many faculty attempt to still allow students the experience of asking questions they care about or deriving a question from existing scholarship, there will always be a motivational tension between asking a question out of curiosity and asking a question because one must for an assignment. This reality also means the implications of students' projects are usually less emphasized: without a question grounded in a problem, observation, or driving question, students often do not consider the larger societal implications, interventions, or applications of their findings. Likewise, because students want their teachers, as evaluators, to recognize and validate all the work they've done, students can include too much data or report various facts that are not necessarily relevant to their argument.

However, Russell (2001) reflects that grades, while no doubt the initial motivating factor for students, do not necessarily disallow for the development of disciplinary motivations, especially if faculty make explicit moves to clarify the relationship between class assignments and disciplinary objectives/motives. WAC/WPA admins might emphasize, for example, that even faculty wrestle with issues of motivation similarly to students: more than one faculty member reminded me that they must publish for promotion, and they are often writing with peer reviewers in mind—especially in how they justify their project, engage with literature, and anticipate counterarguments—the same way students are writing with the teacher in mind. But just because faculty are writing for an evaluative audience with pressures far greater than a single grade (i.e., tenure) does not mean they are not immersed in disciplinary motives, too: motivations can be multi-faceted. Of course, developing a clearer alignment between learning outcomes and grading schemes is one of the major ways WAC/WPA admins can support faculty toward encouraging student motivations beyond the grade; Melzer (2014a) found that a misalignment between learning outcomes and grading schemes still abounds in writing assignments, which can cause a grade to preclude the disciplinary ways of knowing and doing the assignment attempts to develop. Perhaps Thaiss and Zawacki's (2006) finding

that "passion through reason and reason through passion" (p. 114) can be one of the greatest ways to diversify student motivation so their academic writing puts them more strongly on a path toward enculturation: students who are invited to infuse their interests and passions into their writing assignments, as highlighted by Eodice, Geller, and Lerner (2016), may more meaningfully align their questions, argument, data, and implications.

Process

Another major theme that differentiates faculty expectations for expert academic writing vs. student academic writing is process. Students have not yet developed the research and writing processes that are responsible for many of a final written product's characteristics. For example, some of their processes are out-of-order, like when they attempt to apply theory to their data only retroactively, or when they attempt to find evidence to support an argument they've already settled on instead of letting the argument emerge from the evidence. Similarly, students' engagement with literature often gets isolated to one stage of their drafting process instead of integrated throughout. Many faculty recognize that these issues of process are because students are still—and should be—on the write-to-learn side of WTL-LTW sliding scale. For example, because students are learning the literal tools of running experiments in the lab for the first time, a chemistry professor knows students cannot spend as much time on the analysis portion of their write-ups. The emphasis on WTL is also illuminated by the "creativity" that many professors hope to see in clear, argumentative through-lines in students' papers, even if the arguments are not necessarily original or situated in the full scope (or implied knowledge of) the field's literature and theories. Likewise, faculty's general "quality over quantity" expectation for students' conventions/style is tied to the fact that faculty will be assessing learning and thus need evidence of that learning to be clear and obvious.

These issues of process are why the similar structure between expert and undergraduate student writing is so crucial. It is easy to assume that faculty expecting the structure between expert and student academic writing to be nearly identical is a superficial feature, but I would argue that following an expert structure builds scaffolding for students to learn research processes of a discipline. Hilger (1999) found that upper-level undergraduate writing, even in transitional genres, provided students a "window into the discipline's methodology" (p. 327): faculty in my study likewise saw the structures of their academic writing as a way for students to organize their argument, methods, data, and analysis in ways appropriate for the discipline—and thus think about their argument, methods, data, and analysis in ways appropriate for the discipline. While students may not be able to collect as much data for as long as experts, or analyze that data as thoroughly, they are still gaining exposure to the relationship between methods and arguments. Leaning on an expert structure—with plenty of genre awareness—could be one way WAC/WPA admins support faculty in addressing students' common misconceptions about research as mere library research that then gets written into an "all about" (Bean, 2011, p. 226); indeed, all faculty in this study expected students to engage with the primary methods of their discipline in upper-level major writing assignments.

The challenge as WAC/WPA admins, then, is helping faculty find a balance between the "repeated practice" that is essential for enculturation (Tardy, 2004, p. 261) and the "coherence-with-diversity" approach that Thaiss and Zawacki (2006) would hope all students eventually reach (p. 139). For example, Thaiss and Zawacki describe stages of student development through their undergraduate years as firstly mapping a general picture of "what all teachers expect" in college-level writing; secondly, interpreting the vast differences between faculty expectations as "idiosyncratic" rather than disciplinary; and thirdly, understanding the variety of "methods, materials, approaches, interests, vocabularies, etc." as the building blocks of various disciplines. Reaching that third stage requires students to see themselves as having a place in the discipline, which Tardy (2004) confirms usually happens through repetition of the research and writing process over time. Thus, faculty may

need WAC/WPA admin support toward explicitly showing how the writing in any one class within a department is coherent with and/or diverse from writing in other classes in the department (and even adjacent departments) so students are aware of their repetitions and what disciplinary conventions hold across subfields, topics, etc. WAC/WPA admins might also guide faculty within a department to pay special attention to their vertical curriculum (Melzer, 2014b) to build both repetitive processes and variety in writing assignments as students move through major/minor courses.

Imitation

Finally, I would like to speak to undergraduate student writing as an imitation of expert writing. Bawarshi (2008) argues that all student writing is a complex negotiation of imitation and invention since students are following the guidelines of a prompt but also expected to critically think and present their own arguments. In this study, faculty very much expect students to imitate the moves of the discipline, but they also recognize that most discrepancies in that imitation are matters of time and scope. Students are drafting papers within one semester (maybe two if they are writing an undergraduate thesis), and their overall exposure to the discipline is most likely no more than a few years. Thus, students are imitating the moves of experts at much smaller (and less complex) scales: they are expected to situate their arguments, but only within the course readings and discussions; they are expected to have a unique argument, but not necessarily unique outside of the class; they are expected to engage with literature, but with a limited selection and more as a gesture to delineate their own voice; they are expected to conduct primary research, but with smaller data sets; they are expected to analyze data, but not as thoroughly or as complexly. Understanding undergraduate student writing as mini-imitations of expert writing does not invalidate or decontextualize this writing; I would argue this stage is necessary in an overall progression toward enculturation.

For example, Gardner and Nesi (2012) call this phenomenon a developmental trajectory across genre continuums, which "can create assessment pathways for [...] students, using less complex genres as a gateway to the more elaborate genres in which they may be embedded" (p. 47). Of course, Devitt (2007) and Tardy et al. (2020) reminds us that these less complex antecedents are more easily built upon in the future when faculty explicitly encourage genre awareness. Thaiss and Zawacki (2006) provide WAC/WPA admins with questions that faculty and students might explore together, such as: "What do these assignments in major courses have in common? What principles lie at the heart of my major? How can I find a place for my goals in that structure? What other modes of inquiry attract me, and can I borrow from different fields to achieve my goals?" (p. 140). Imitation may be a form of dress-up or play as an expert, but in my estimation, it's a generative form of play! To that point, I'll echo Soliday's (2011) sentiment, who is echoing Herrington (1992): "It is easier to 'compose oneself in a discipline' when one is asked to behave like an expert from the beginning, doing the things that experts habitually do and trying on their wilder roles" (p. 69). Expecting students to imitate expert moves in their academic writing, even in a "mini form" (psychology), is how they begin constructing disciplinary ways of knowing and doing toward their own ends.

Conclusion

Writing assignments in their upper-level major/minor courses are an essential phase toward enculturation into disciplinary ways of knowing and doing. This article has articulated, in faculty's words, how this writing is expected to be similar to and different from expert academic writing to describe the goals of this phase and to suggest how faculty might best meet those goals. Importantly, just because the genres assigned in coursework are not the exact genres of the disciplines does not mean they are not important rungs for scaffolding: These writing assignments serve as transitional

genres for students to combine WTL and LTW approaches and to develop rich antecedents for the future. WAC/WPA admins might use the findings and themes in this article to develop strategies for faculty development.

Future research might investigate how the expectations that faculty articulate in these interview responses are communicated to students, as well as how much they align (or do not align) with writing assignment prompts, assessment measures, and other pedagogical materials. This article also raises fruitful avenues to further explore "coherence-with-diversity" (Thaiss & Zawacki, 2006, p. 139) concerning academic writing as a socially recognized concept with identifiable characteristics that get taken up differently across disciplines.

Appendix: Faculty Interview Script

Thank you for meeting with me today. This shouldn't take more than 90 minutes. Consent for this interview was covered by your original consent form that you signed in at the start of the semester, which we can show you again if you would like. Are you comfortable with me recording?

Could you start with your name and department/program for our records?

Faculty Writing

1. Do you identify as a member of a particular discipline or field? If so, how would you describe it?
    a. Would others in your department or program identify as a member of that discipline, or are their various subfields / areas of interest?
2. [If submitted a writing sample written by interviewee] How did this project begin?
    a. [If did not submit a writing sample written by an interviewee] Can you describe a recent writing project you've engaged? How did that project begin?
    b. Follow-ups: What was the actual drafting like? What decisions do you make while drafting? When/where did you go for feedback?
    c. Is this a usual writing process for you?
3. Is there any other kind of writing that you regularly do? Does it relate to the writing you do in your field or is it different?
    a. How is your writing process similar or different for this writing from the project you just described?
4. What would you say are the characteristics of good writing in your discipline? What do editors of journals and book series expect?
    a. Why are those considered "good" characteristics?
    b. [If submitted a writing sample written by interviewee] Could you point to some of those characteristics in the piece of your writing you provided to us? [Where did you do ___?]
5. You indicated in the survey that writing is [level of importance]; why?

Teaching Writing

6. Why do you assign writing in the upper-level major or minor courses that you teach?

7. What are your best student writers able to do with their writing?
8. What do you expect students to have learned about writing before they enter your upper-level course in the major or minor?
    a. Where or when do you believe students learned (or should have learned) [answer from previous question]?
9. You marked several strategies you use to teach writing in our survey. What would you say are your go-to strategies, activities, or approaches for teaching writing or supporting students with their writing in your course?
10. Can you tell us about a time you tried to teach writing in one of your courses and it didn't go as planned?
    a. What did (or might) you try differently to address what happened?
11. Broadly speaking, what are the obstacles or challenges to teaching writing in your courses?
12. What would you identify as similarities between your own sample [or the expert sample] and the version you ask students to write?
    a. What would you identify as differences between your own sample and the version you ask students to write?
    b. What is the reasoning behind these similarities and differences?

Any last comments about writing in your discipline, teaching writing, etc.?

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Notes

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[2] These characteristics echo dozens of studies that break down academic writing, either through linguistic analysis (e.g., Hyland, 2011); discourse-based analysis (e.g., Swales, 1990); or discourse-based interviews (e.g., Harwood, 2009). For these results, I maintain focus on how faculty in my study described characteristics of academic writing as a point of comparison between expert and undergraduate student writing (as opposed to solidifying the exact moves of academic writing in relationship to previous literature on the topic.)

Contact Information

Alisa Russell
Assistant Professor
English Department
Wake Forest University
Email: russela@wfu.edu

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