Chapter 3. Disciplinary Discourse: Examining How Disciplinary Knowledge is Represented

Chapter 2 described in greater detail how some of writing's threshold concepts can inform your approach to teaching writing. You also started to consider how writing works in your field. These ideas should provide greater insight into a central assertion of this book: "good writing" is shaped by contexts, the places where the writing is being done; the writer's purpose, which is informed by their identities; and audiences, the people for whom the writing is being created.

How people produce this writing is influenced by their prior experiences as writers and by how understandings of writing have been conveyeds. Sometimes, this has been in school, through different assignments to teaching and grading; often, it has been out of school. The threshold concepts identified in Chapters 1 and 2 provided activities for you to explore the assertion that "good writing" is shaped by contexts, audiences, and purposes, as well as activities for you to act on it: naming your disciplinary threshold concepts; considering the values, conventions, and goals of your disciplinary work; analyzing the nature of writing and how writing works in your field.

Where Chapter 2 focused on this idea from a 10,000-foot perspective, this chapter asks you to zoom in and spend some time closer to the ground. Here, you'll conduct an analysis of specific elements of writing in your field and explore: what kinds of questions do people in your field ask? What kind of evidence or data do they collect and expect? What methods do they use to interpret or analyze that evidence? How are the results of that work conveyed *in writing*? How are their citations field-specific? Considering these questions will help you teach writing because you'll start to pay close attention to these aspects of writing that most people take for granted, the ones that seem immutable and incontrovertible. As this book has already suggested, one field's idea of what can and must be done in writing can sometimes be in direct conflict with the imperatives of other fields, and what one faculty member considers the correct and only way to write, another would find absolutely incorrect.

Goals for this chapter include:

- helping you closely study elements of writing that you often take for granted or that seem "invisible";
- bringing your disciplinary conventions to conscious awareness;
- studying research writing and citational practice in your field;
- gaining some language for talking about linguistic conventions and rhetorical "moves"; and

- developing language to talk with students about elements of writing (especially research-based writing) that you and they might take for granted).

As you undertake the activities in this chapter, you will be asked to "translate" your analysis (Gonzales, 2018) into language you might use with students. That's because research shows that talking about how fields work (and, in this instance, how the genres of those fields work) may result in a number of important outcomes: mitigating stereotype threat, decreasing distance between student and instructor, and cluing students in to "how things work in this place" (Harrison et al., 2019; Seidel et al., 2015).

How Written Genres and Writers Reflect the Values of Fields

Chapter 2 introduced the idea that while the conventions of types of writing might seem obvious, rigid, and even like "common sense" to you, they are instead specific characteristics of *genres* of writing that circulate within communities of practice. In everyday practice, the term "genre" is often understood to mean "category." For instance, playlists are sorted into genres like R&B, country, rap, classic rock; literature is sorted by categories such as fiction, mystery, science fiction, romance, or nonfiction. But researchers who study written discourse have demonstrated that genres are more than simply categories. People produce genres in response to rhetorical situations that they encounter regularly, and they use genres to achieve their purposes. Chapters 1 and 2 also introduced the idea that these characteristics are produced within communities of practice, including academic disciplines. The threshold concepts in Chapters 1 and 2 also demonstrated how writing in disciplinary genres mediates activities. Writing does this mediational work through recognizable and recurring genres—and in academia, these are most often the genres of the fields (Bazerman, 2015; Hart-Davidson, 2015).

Within those communities of practice, ideas of what "good writing" looks like play important roles. As they are used by people in the communities, they become accepted as "correct" or even "the right way to write." Researchers studying communication thus say that genres *enact* values, conventions, priorities, beliefs, and even power structures of the communities where they are used.

In this context, *enact* means both "use" and "perpetuate," because each time the genres are used they recreate and reinforce beliefs and values about 'correctness' by their users. It is critical to understand not only what is defined as "correct" within genres, but also the values that these ideas of "rightness" reinforce in order to create *access* for disciplinary novices. Once people have learned textual conventions of disciplinary genres and use them regularly, the conventions seem obvious, perhaps even like "genres-in-general" (Wardle, 2009)—just "how things are." Thus, it may be difficult for experts to even name the conventions they use and expect their students to use. Experts may not see genres and genre conventions as something that needs to be named, they may not consciously see the conventions at all, or they may no longer have the language for talking about them. However, naming and providing ways for students to practice with the conventions of these genres—with the ideas (content) of writing *and* the way that those ideas are presented as an argument or thesis or main idea, supported with evidence from others, cited, and shaped in written form—is a critical part of providing disciplinary access. That's because written genres (both their content and their conventional forms) reflect the ways in which people join or belong to fields, and perpetuates the ideas circulating within those fields (Lerner, 2015).

Disciplinary Genres

When students are asked to write in new genres—or in known genres but in a new field or other context—they are being asked to enact a new set of values associated with the genre. To do this well, they benefit from looking at examples of what is expected and considering what is constant, what changes, and how writers use language to achieve the goals of the genre. The next two activities guide you through analysis of a genre in your field—first, a broad overview that you'll do with a partner (Activity 3.1), and then a close analysis (Activity 3.2) that you'll conduct on your own.

This activity of analyzing examples of one genre is a useful one to share with your students when you assign something that may be new to them. You can teach them to collect examples in order to look for patterns across them, but you must also serve as a sort of "insider informant" who helps them understand why the genre exists, who and what it does, and why.

While this sort of genre analysis is useful with any new genre students are asked to write, the rest of this chapter will explicitly focus on research genres as one "site" for thinking about how values, conventions, and goals of various fields are enacted in texts.

Activity 3.1: Trying to Understand an Unfamiliar Genre

For this activity, pick several examples of one genre that is fairly common in your field but that you think your partner may not be familiar with (for example, a musical score, an artist's statement, a poster presentation, notes on a piece of software code, etc.). Be sure to collect several examples of this one genre so that your partner can look across the examples in order to try to see patterns.

Trade examples with your partner but do not provide them with any contextual information. As you look at your examples of one genre that your partner brought, try to determine the answers to these questions (modified from Sonja Foss' (1989) excellent text *Rhetorical Criticism):*

1. What is the genre? Can you name it?
2. When and why do you think people compose this genre?

3. As you look across the examples of the genre, what content does it typically contain? What contents seem optional or variable?
4. What is the genre intended to do? What activity is it mediating? How can you tell?
5. How is the genre typically organized? What comes first, next, after that? Does the organization vary across the examples of the genre?
6. What seems to make this genre what it is? (What elements must be there for it to be what it is)?

After individually examining the examples of the genres you each brought, trade responses. How well have you figured out the genre your partner brought, and vice versa? What were you able to figure out from asking these questions, and what weren't you able to figure out?

Finally, share with your partner what you might need from them if you were a student being asked to write this genre for the first time. What seems hardest for you? What might you need the most help with? What seems particularly strange to you?

Activity 3.2: Rhetorical Scan of Research Writing from Outside Your Field

Trade research articles with your partner. Initially, do not share any context or information. Instead, do a quick rhetorical scan. As you do the following things, take notes that you can then share with your partner.

1. Skim the article from the other field from beginning to end, focusing on the pages, layout, sections, citations, visuals, footnotes, etc.—not the content. You don't want to read it closely now.
2. What seems familiar to you?
3. What seems strange or unfamiliar or unexpected? (Be sure to consider things like citation style, use of headings or footnotes, visuals, length, number of citations, length of paragraphs, etc.).

Share your reflections with your partner. Where are you seeing similarities and differences across your text and theirs?

The Elements of Effective Research Genres Within and Across Fields

The purpose of many academic genres is to share research findings and engage in the scholarly conversations of the field through inquiry. All of this work is mediated by the social institutions in which it occurs (universities, labs, and so on) and the disciplinary communities of practice that determine what "counts" and what doesn't. Research writing in the academy happens within and for different academic contexts and thus differs in many ways across fields. However, instructors often imagine and talk about academic writing as monolithic, telling their students to produce "good academic writing." While it is certainly possible to identify some conventions of writing that span across fields, as noted in the previous chapter, students tend not to see these similarities (McCarthy, 1987). In fact, in many cases, the differences are quite complicated in both obvious ways (some fields embrace first person and others never allow it; some use APA and others use MLA for citation) and quite subtle ways (different appeals to background knowledge, different means of establishing "truth"). Experts may use disciplinary citational forms as a shorthand to summarize all of the conventions they want students to use: "Write an APA paper," or "Write an MLA paper." However, these shorthands gloss over multiple conventions that novices have not yet learned. Experts immersed in disciplinary ways of thinking and practicing are often unable to recognize what they do as specialized and particular, and instead mistake their rhetorical moves for what David Russell (1995) calls universal educated discourse.

Helping students learn to write in your field first requires you to recognize that what you recognize as "good" academic writing is often unique to your own field (and maybe adjacent ones); once you recognize what is unique about how *you* write, you can, in turn, help students understand and practice with the conventions of that writing. Activities 3.2 through 3.5 ask you to look at a research article from outside your own field and examine elements that might be strange to you. Doing this reflective comparison should help you be better able to see and name the elements of writing in your field that may previously have been invisible to you.

For these activities you will again want to try to work with a partner, preferably one from a field as different from yours as possible. Each of you should select a research article/paper that you feel reflects the expectations for conveying knowledge (however you define that) in your field. Be sure to choose a *research article* for this activity, rather than another scholarly genre such as a book review.

There are specific ways that academic research genres can vary—multiple places where differences can be readily analyzed, including introductions to research-based writing, and the ways that authors work to make these texts convincing to readers. You will consider these next.

Research Introductions

The first place where research articles can vary is in their introductions. While all introductions share some common elements, or what linguist John Swales (1990) calls rhetorical "moves," the ways the moves are enacted differ quite a bit from one field to the next. Understanding and naming what these "moves" are and how they vary can be quite helpful for students because it helps them see how there are common features of "academic writing," but different fields enact those features in different ways that embody the values and goals of their work.

Rhetorical Move 1: Establish a territory.

"Establishing a territory" refers to the ways that writers situate their research within the field and acknowledge their awareness of related work. Writers can establish a territory by:

- claiming centrality ("recently there has been a spate of interest in . . ." or "knowledge about Y is important for . . .") and/or
- making topic generalizations ("the properties of X are not well understood . . ." or "X is a common finding in patients with . . .") and/or
- reviewing previous research.

Rhetorical Move 2: Establish a niche.

"Establishing a niche" refers to the ways writers demonstrate a need for their own contributions as they're related to the field and the territory they've established. Writers establish a niche by:

- counter-claiming ("Jones and Riley believe X, but . . .");
- indicating a gap ("While existing studies do Y, they have not . . .");
- question-raising ("While Jones and Riley have established X, a number of questions remain . . ."); and/or
- continuing a tradition ("Earlier studies suggest . . . and more work is needed").

Rhetorical Move 3: Occupy the niche.

"Occupying the niche" refers to the ways that writers assert how their research contributes to existing knowledge and how they will go about demonstrating their claims. Writers occupy the niche they have established by:

- outlining purposes,
- announcing present research,
- announcing principle findings, and
- indicating the structure of the research article.

Recognizing how researchers in your field establish the territory, identify the niche, and then occupy that niche can help you identify how these common moves look in *your field.*

As you consider the similarities and differences in how the articles from your two fields work to set up and establish a space for research, consider the challenges for students in producing "research papers" as they write across their general education, elective, and majors courses. Without examples and directions, it may be difficult for them to know what is expected, even in what may feel like the simplest elements of introducing and framing their ideas.

Activity 3.3: The Moves of a Research Introduction

Look again at the research article that your partner has shared with you. Try to identify the introduction and beginning of the article (up to the point where the methods or analysis or beginning of the writer's own research begins). Note that in some fields this is clearly marked, while in others, it is not.

1. Identify where and how each of the three moves are made:
   a. establishing a territory,
   b. establishing a niche, and
   c. occupying the niche.

   Be sure to highlight words or phrases that cue you that the writer is making these moves (see the examples above).

   You may not be able to identify these "moves" without the help of your partner. If you struggle to find these moves and the piece has an abstract, you may find them there as well. Note that the moves might occur several times and they may not occur in this order.
2. Do they make them in order? Are they short or long? Are they repeated? How much citation is included in establishing the territory?
3. Talk with your partner about what you found. Do they agree with your analysis of where the moves are made? Compare how each of your articles makes these moves and where. What do these choices tell you about the values and priorities of each of your fields?

Making and Supporting Persuasive Arguments

Most disciplinary genres are intended to argue or persuade—to convince a funding agency, to assert and illustrate a new analysis, to show how something that the writer has done or learned contributes to knowledge-making in the field. Writers must accomplish a number of things if their disciplinary texts are to be persuasive. For example, readers must be persuaded that an observation is a worthwhile contribution. To make such worthwhile observations, writers must know what issues are seen as relevant within fields and how to address them (what topics or problems are seen as current and relevant and which are not, for instance); how to contextualize results (what sources need to frame the ideas being discussed); what people in their community see as a convincing or "logical" argument, what theories or conceptual frameworks are currently accepted and how explicitly those frameworks must be described; what methodologies are considered sound; and what will be recognized as compelling evidence. All of these are quite field-specific and sometimes even sub-field-specific (Hyland, 2013).

Activity 3.4: Arguments and Evidence

Read your partner's article a bit more closely and ask:

1. What argument is the writer making? Where do they make it, and how explicit is it?
2. What evidence is used to support the argument? Is the course of the evidence textual? Observation? Personal? Qualitative? Quantitative? Several of these things? All of them?
3. Can you identify what kinds of theories and methodologies are employed? How explicitly are they described?

You may need some help from your partner to identify these elements.

After you each have some notes, compare your findings. How do arguments, evidence, theories, and methodologies work in similar or different ways across your two articles (and fields)?

This is a good time to reflect on the instructions you give your students when assigning them to write about research. Do you ask them to "back up claims with evidence," for example? If so, consider: how do you define what counts as evidence in your course? How is your view of evidence different from the way your partner defines what counts? You might realize that more refined definitions of evidence will be helpful for students in both courses. In addition to including what is perceived as relevant content, academic writers who want to be persuasive in communities of practice must also use social and linguistic conventions that others in their communities of practice find convincing. These include terms and phrasing that others in their community use, as well as the appropriate tone or register (a word linguists use to refer to the choice of written language that is used to communicate in a particular context) (Berkenkotter et al., 1988). Writers must also figure out how or if to represent themselves and their readers in the text. For example, do authors refer to themselves directly, not at all, or in third person? Are readers treated as present or ignored? Are they imagined as friendly or hostile? Disciplinary communities of practice vary greatly in this regard, and even different journals or book series within one field might vary. These rhetorical choices are all part of the way a writer demonstrates their credibility and persona (or ethos), what is seen as the appropriate balance of confidence and deference given their positionality, the level of claim they are making, and their evidence.

Once again, you might pause to reflect here on the implications for your students of what you are discovering. Are you expecting them to use phrases and terms or grammatical constructions (like passive voice) that may not only be unfamiliar to them but which they may be told not to use in some of their other courses? Do they need help navigating how to refer to themselves and to readers? If you say "cite other scholarship," do you need to help them understand how much is enough and how much is too much? Again, these expectations can differ quite a lot across fields.

Activity 3.5: Familiar and Unfamiliar Language

Return to the article your partner brought.

1. Circle examples of terms and phrases that you would not typically see in articles in your own field.
2. Focus on the article's author or authors. Are there one or many? How do the authors refer to or represent themselves—directly, indirectly, not at all? For example, does the author use "I," "we," "they," or use the passive voice to avoid naming a person as the agent of the work being discussed? Does the author discuss their positionality?
3. How does the author refer to or seem to imagine the readers? Are they addressed at all ("you" or "readers" or "other researchers")? If so, where and how? Does the writer seem to anticipate the readers will be charitable or hostile? How do you know? (For example, do they directly name possible counterarguments and try to refute them?)
4. Are there any clues as to how the author treats other scholars in relation to their own work? Is there an attitude of deference? Is there an effort to cite a great deal of other scholarship or very little? Are other scholars treated combatively? Are other scholars ignored altogether in favor of just discussing "facts"?

Take notes and then discuss what you found with your partner. This is a good time to ask your partner to serve as an "insider informant," perhaps explaining whether what you highlighted is typical for the field, for one journal in the field, or maybe just for this writer. Your partner might also explain why certain conventions are used (for example, the passive voice or not naming other scholars in the text itself).

Source Use and Citations

Instructors are often concerned that student writers don't know how to incorporate and cite sources. This concern feels commonsensical, reflecting the belief that it should be fairly straightforward to cite any sources students use beyond "common knowledge" within their papers, and then create a reference list at the end.

But as you may have already seen by looking at your partner's research article, using sources and citing them is far more complicated. Understanding why brings together several of the threshold concepts you have explored thus far in this book.

- First, writing is a social activity whose value is determined and reinforced by audiences, in this case audiences within your field (Roozen, 2015c).
- Second, writing mediates activities through recognizable and recurring forms—such as ways of incorporating and citing sources (Russell, 2015).

- Third, writing is a means of learning and creating new knowledge—but in this case, that knowledge must be carefully chosen and intentionally used (Estrem, 2015).
- Fourth, writing is informed by prior experiences. By the time college students reach your course, they have likely had a number of lessons (potentially contradictory ones) about sources and citations (Lunsford, 2015b ; Roozen, 2015c; Yancey, 2015).

The accumulated lessons of these threshold concepts, along with the idea that "source use and citations are aligned with disciplinary values," lead to important questions you should consider when asking students to write about research and/or simply write with sources. First among them: what sources are acceptable? For instance: is personal experience considered a source? Ethnographic data? Novels? Numbers? Is it acceptable to cite scholars from other fields or not?

Then there is the question of what counts as "common knowledge," since "common knowledge" is often identified as something that doesn't require citation (in some fields). But what is common to a long-time member of a particular research community is decidedly not common to an 18-year-old in an introductory course (Shi, 2011). Textbooks in such introductory classes tend to summarize ideas without citing their sources. Can students do the same? Are they expected to cite the textbook? Find the original sources? Or assume these ideas are simply "common knowledge"? "Citing sources" is a shorthand for an extensive practice associated with knowledge building within fields. The texts we create and the ones we ask students to produce are expected to build on or otherwise be connected to other texts—to have a meaning that is relative to those other texts, too (a practice that writing scholars call intertextuality [Dryer, 2015; Porter, 1986; Roozen, 2015a]).

Then there is the thorny problem of citation itself. In high school English classes, where students do a good bit of their writing, they typically learn Modern Language Association (MLA) citation format: author is named in the body of the writing (e.g., Jane Austin described longing….") , year is less important and often not important at all. Quotations are extended, often 1-2 paragraphs. References at the end of the paper are listed in alphabetical order, with the publication year at the end of the citation. But these rules (or conventions) reflect the beliefs and values of the people who create, use, and maintain the system: in this case, the Modern Language Association, the disciplinary association of literature and languages. These include the belief that literary works that are "timeless," that the author of the work is the most important feature; that it's necessary to include fairly extensive source material from a text to support interpretation of its meaning. These conventions are quite different from citation conventions in fields like history or biology, where timeliness is extremely important, or engineering, where ideas and findings are often more important than either date or scholar (D'Angelo et al., 2016; Karatsolis, 2016).

All of this use and citation of sources takes place within varied genres. Students need to know what and whom to read and cite (and how to cite), but also how to do this within the genres that mediate disciplinary or professional activity. Lab reports, field notes, literature reviews, book reviews, essays—each requires the writer to draw on sources differently as they enact the conventions of the genre and the field where it is mediating activity—and this gets even more complicated when we consider how citation works in formal texts outside the academy (Anson & Neely, 2010; Bazerman, 1987; Buranen & Stephenson, 2009; Connors, 1999; Hyland, 1999; Lerner, 2015).

To help students learn how to use and cite sources in the ways you expect, it's critical to untangle the complexities of attribution and recognize how closely related these practices are to the values of the field using them, as well as to understand disciplinary perspectives on those values. Disciplinary perspective is especially important to remember when you see unintentional violations of expectations of source use and citations. It is easy to view such violations as the student having betrayed ideas about intellectual property ("taking someone's ideas as their own") or disciplinary focus ("using sources that aren't right"). Many times, the perceived violations by students are more complex than simply a choice to cheat or plagiarize.

Activity 3.6: Knowing Who, What, and When to Cite

You'll complete this activity on your own, but share the results with your partner. Focusing on two courses you teach—one introductory and one advanced—reflect in writing on these questions about the courses:

1. What people or ideas are routinely cited in the disciplines or fields these courses relate to? Do students come into the courses already knowing about these people or ideas? How can you be sure?
2. What particular previous studies or texts do students in these courses need to be familiar with? How do they gain this familiarity? In other words, what do you think they should already understand as "common knowledge"?
3. How do students know what/who it is essential for them to cite when they write for these courses?
4. How do they know what ideas/sources/people are central to a particular conversation? That is, who must be cited, who shouldn't be cited?

After reflecting on these questions, talk with your partner. What are you recognizing about students' prior knowledge about important texts, ideas, and people? What are one or two supports you might build into your courses to help students gain the awareness they need?

Identifying expectations of what is typically cited (important people/ideas, previous studies/texts) and *how* those things are cited (how sources are incorporated, connections to meaning-making, how to indicate sources) are important steps in delineating practices associated with source use. These expectations and practices are often largely unfamiliar to undergraduates and beginning graduate students, who know less about values that orient and sometimes form the boundaries of disciplinary worlds.

In Activity 3.7, you will be asked to identify some of your assumptions about what gets cited and how. Not only do instructors have expectations about what is common knowledge and who should be cited, they also have expectations for what the attribution should look like in the text itself. For example, are other scholars named directly within texts, named only parenthetically, or not named at all? These practices are called "integral" and "non-integral" citation, with integral citations clearly naming authors within the sentence ("John Jones argues…") while non-integral citation either includes the name in parenthesis, footnote, or even only with a number that corresponds to a references list. While texts often use a combination of both, some fields adhere to one or the other more rigidly. Integral citations tend to be used in fields that value the contributions of individual thinkers; their names are mentioned in citations (so they are "integral" to the writing) and often include extended excerpts from texts. One study found that philosophy, for example, uses integral citation 64% of the time to accomplish its work, which "typically consists of long narratives and engages the arguments of other writers" (Hyland, 2004, p. 25). Non-integral citations are those that point to previous scholarship in a parenthetical or as part of a list of citations. Non-integral citations are often used in fields where accepted ideas or findings take more precedence, such as biology or engineering. Fields that primarily use non-integral citation may use a number system (referring readers to a list of citations in numerical order) at the end of the publication and rarely (if ever) include extended quotation from the source texts (Hyland, 1999, 2000, 2002; Maroko, 2013).

Fields also differ in how much of another text can be quoted directly (if at all) and how. Some fields (such as applied linguistics or sociology) allow for more extended direct quotations of other texts, while in other fields (like physics or engineering) writers rarely, if ever, do this (Hyland, 2004).

As you are likely discovering, directions such as "cite your sources" and "don't cite what is common knowledge" are often not specific enough for most students, especially in general education courses and courses taken early in a major. These sorts of expectations, while well-meaning, gloss the complexity of citation practices and their variations across fields. Until students learn what counts as common knowledge for your courses, which ideas you and your colleagues assume to be understood and which need to be attributed to specific people, and whether their written arguments in your class should focus on a person, an idea, or something else, they are likely to struggle.

Activity 3.7: Examining Citation Conventions

Return to the article your partner brought:

1. Mark instances of integral and non-integral citation.
2. Indicate which are used predominantly. Explain why.
3. Explain how work is usually cited—block quote, direct quote, summary, generalization?

Compare with your partner and discuss practices that most surprised you. Ask your partner to explain why these practices are used in their field

Activity 3.8: Making Expectations Explicit for Students

You've just spent time studying research writing in your field (and your partner's), as well as thinking about how you talk with students about elements of research based-writing. Now, draw on what you have learned to start writing some explicit expectations and directions for your students.

1. Make a list of one-sentence findings from each of the reflective activities in this chapter (3.1–3.7).
2. Make notes to yourself about what you want to tell students (potentially at varying levels—new undergraduate, new graduate, advanced graduate) about research-based writing and citation based on what you've learned. You'll read more about talking with students later in this chapter, as well.

Stating Your Field's Writing Expectations for Students

In Chapter 2, you thought a good deal about some threshold concepts of writing and how they can help you start to study writing in your life and, especially, your disciplinary life. In this chapter, you looked especially closely at conventions of research-based writing, thinking about how conventions and genres for writing (particularly research writing) differ across academic fields. Now it's time to step back and think about the big picture. What is "writing" in your field? And what is "good writing"? And how can you talk about this with your students? Chapter 1 described the ways in which writing can serve as a gateway to disciplinary practice; it also emphasized the importance of providing *access* by making practices associated with disciplinarity (and writing) explicit and transparent. Stating your field's (or sub-field's) expectations is the starting point for providing this disciplinary access. That's because, as Chapter 1 noted, writing is never "just writing"—it's a representation of the values and ideologies that are important to you and to others with whom you feel yourself to be aligned (Lerner, 2015; Scott, 2015; Villanueva, 2015).

Once you've done this deep dive, it will be important to take a step back and put your reflections into practice, communicating with students about both *what* these practices are and *why* they are significant—maybe even *how* they have come to be, over time, and what they represent. This kind of explanation is referred to by some researchers as "pedagogical content talk" (Harrison et al., 2019; Seidel et al., 2015). This is classroom language you use to explain *what* the expectations are in clear and transparent terms, and also *how* expectations have come to be. It is even possible to explore whose voices have been more and less powerful in the process of creating these forms and conventions. Such awareness is important if you want to provide students access to your field because it shows them that conventions and expectations don't come from nowhere, but were created by particular people with particular identities, goals, and values.

As difficult as it is for instructors to navigate the rocky terrain of disciplinary persuasion, it is infinitely more difficult for our students at every level. Among other things, students need to:

- sort through, understand, and appropriately use specialized vocabulary,
- recognize and use specialized forms of argument,
- understand how people here establish credibility,
- know what prior work (who and what) to cite,
- know how to cite it appropriately,
- take the right stance as a writer, and
- address readers in appropriate ways.

Activity 3.9: Pedagogical Instructor Talk: Expectations for Writing in Your Field

Review what you wrote in the reflective activities for Chapters 2 and 3. Consider the conversations you had with your partner from a different field about similar and different expectations for writing in your two fields.

Drawing on these, write a short statement to your students (choose either undergraduate or graduate) that explains

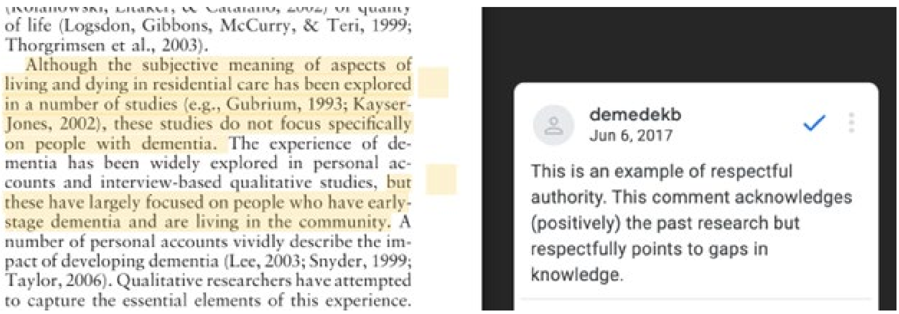
1. what "writing" is in your field/profession/field;
2. what activities writing is mediating/facilitating there;
3. what people in that field view as the characteristics of "good" or "effective" writing and under what circumstances and why, and
4. what elements of writing in your field might surprise students who are new to it.

Be as specific as you can, and if the characteristics of good writing differ from one genre to another, explain that to be the case.

One way to show—and not just tell—students about the conventions of writing in your field is to provide them with some overviews of the expected conventions, accompanied by annotated examples of both student and professional papers. For example, Suzanne Kunkel, Kate de Medeiros, and Jennifer Kinney, gerontology faculty at Miami University, have developed the following explanation of what they expect from student writing:

> **What does Gerontology value in writing?**
>
> Being a gerontologist means more than just studying later life and applying methods to solve problems. It means having a "gerontological voice." That is, the field of social gerontology values applying knowledge and building theory using a social science lens.
>
> - Writers are seen as credible when they present a conceptual context that draws from multiple disciplinary areas and demonstrate methodological sophistication and rigor. Papers should represent a "dialogue." The field's citations practices embody these values, and you can see that in the breadth of sources used, with specific citations from gerontology sources. Citations should be purposeful, strategic, and support the writer's argument/claim and avoid overgeneralizations, oversimplifications, and unfounded opinions.
>
> Effective writing in social gerontology does the following:
>
> - presents logical, parsimonious argument with neutral language
> - uses standard signposts and structure
> - avoids absolutes
> - demonstrates respectful authority
>
> Gerontology majors should expect to do the following:
>
> - read thoroughly and critically
> - finish synthesizing their reading before claiming their research space
> - seek feedback appropriately
> - be prepared to change their stance based on the feedback they receive
> - participate in authorship discussions to understand the work of conceptualization, coherence, and contextualization as well as methods and results
> - practice, practice, practice (improve, integrate, evolve)

They also then annotated an article from their field to show students what these "moves" look like in practice (see https://tinyurl.com/bdevyryv):


of life (Logsdon, Gibbons, McCurry, & Teri, 1999; Thorgrimsen et al., 2003).

Although the subjective meaning of aspects of living and dying in residential care has been explored in a number of studies (e.g., Gubrium, 1993; Kayser-Jones, 2002), these studies do not focus specifically on people with dementia. The experience of dementia has been widely explored in personal accounts and interview-based qualitative studies, but these have largely focused on people who have early-stage dementia and are living in the community. A number of personal accounts vividly describe the impact of developing dementia (Lee, 2003; Snyder, 1999; Taylor, 2006). Qualitative researchers have attempted to capture the essential elements of this experience.

Figure 3.1. Effective writing in social gerontology.

You can view their guide on the Miami University website at https://tinyurl.com/bdevyryv.

This chapter has primarily focused on surfacing and naming your field's values, conventions, and practices around writing so that you can name them for students and invite them into your work. This is a necessary part of *inclusive* teaching. Sometimes inviting students to engage in the already-existing practices is not enough, however. If the conventions of a field exclude some ways of making and representing knowledge that would enrich and expand the field and its members, then instructors may want to consider how to also create *opportunities* for students to challenge and change some practices that either no longer serve or may not leave room for them to enter the field.

Conclusion

Most instructors have learned to embody their field's expectations in writing over quite extended periods of time and through a great deal of trial and error, receiving feedback from reviewers and advisors telling them they have left out important bodies of scholarship, used theories that are discredited, failed to employ a methodology correctly, or were too combative (or, conversely, not assertive enough). By the time instructors are able to successfully enact all of these textual moves in their own academic writing, those moves most likely feel like "common sense." One of the challenges for good teachers is to bring the conventions of writing in your field back from the realm of common sense and recognize how difficult and idiosyncratic those conventions can be for newcomers. The activities you engaged in across this chapter were intended to help you do this.

One caveat is in order here, however: you should not necessarily ask all of your students to write in the ways that people in your field write. In fact, there are classes where such expectations might be deeply inappropriate—for example in general education courses enrolling students who will never take another class in your field. Instructors sometimes expect all of their students to produce what they see as "good writing" (which is actually field-specific writing) because they mistake it for "academic writing in general"—and they may do this whether those students are intending to join their fields or not. If you can identify and name the features of texts that are specific to your field, you can also ask yourself whether some, all, or none of these conventions and rhetorical moves need to be made by which of your students—and in which courses—and for what reasons.

After completing these activities, you might identify some courses where you might want to adjust your expectations, focusing more on higher-level ways of thinking and practicing that might be useful to students across all fields and more popular genres, and focusing less on citation, format, and evidence that are specific to their own fields, which these students will never enter.

Naming what you already do does not mean you need to keep doing it, ask all of your students to do it, or embrace it without question. Instead, such naming helps you recognize what has previously been invisible to you, bring it to conscious awareness, contemplate it, and decide what you want to keep doing, do differently, or change altogether. Naming what you and your colleagues do through writing helps you gain the language for talking about what you see in student writing. This ability to name what you know and do is one step on the road to offering students *access*. As you name your field's written practices, you may also recognize features of writing—and thus, values, conventions, and power structures—that you dislike, find outdated or restrictive, or believe to be exclusionary. You might then have conversations with students about what the writing in your field values and prioritizes; who it invites in and who it excludes; and how they might work to change conventions that no longer serve. This facilitates *opportunity*, finding ways for students to bring their identities and commitments to ways of writing (and thinking) in your field. Chapter 4 focuses on how to learn more about your students and those ways of thinking, briefly shifting your field to *teaching writers.*

Preparing for Chapter 4

The next chapter will shift from a focus on *teaching with writing* to *teaching writers*. Take a minute before you dive in to record (in writing) what you are noticing and/or thinking thus far. You may want to refer back to these notes as you read and complete activities in the next chapter.