Empowering International Graduate Students
through Writing

Empowering International Graduate Students through Writing

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Contents

About the Book

In the past four years, we have been Graduate Teaching Associates and doctoral students at the Ohio State University's Department of Teaching and Learning. This book is the product of our teaching experience and informed by the theories (e.g., Culturally Relevant Pedagogy) we have become familiar with in our doctoral studies, one of several publications we have co-authored on the subject. Our goal in writing this book is to **empower** our graduate-level ESL students to be confident and successful in their fields no matter whether they speak and write English "with an accent" or not.

We divided the book into five parts:

- Starting Out in an American Classroom
- Plagiarism at the ESL Composition Program
- Reading as an Active Process
- Writing at the Graduate Level
- Communication in American Classrooms

Each chapter focuses on different cultural, social, and linguistic concerns that graduate-level ESL students might struggle with.

Acknowledgements

About the Authors

Zhenjie Weng is an ESL instructor with more than five years of teaching experience in the U.S. She has taught ESL reading, writing, listening, and speaking as well as English literature across different contexts in the U.S. to both undergraduate and graduate level international students. As an advocate for racial justice and education equity, she is committed to international students' academic success and well-being. As an experienced L2 writing instructor at The Ohio State University (OSU), she won a racial justice grant to create two online discussion units for undergraduate level ESL composition classes and a high support grant to create a free textbook for graduate level ESL composition courses at OSU. Outside of classrooms, she serves as a peer advisor for international students and dedicates herself to university services (e.g., Critical Reading Workshops) for international students.

Mark A. McGuire is currently a Graduate Associate at the Ohio State University. He has been teaching university EFL and ESL courses for more than ten years, in China and in the United States. His interests include the identity and pragmatic development of English users, primarily, though not exclusively, from China and Hong Kong. His research is based on integrating mixed methodologies to better understand language according to Complex Dynamic Systems Theory and usage-based perspectives on language development. His goal as a researcher is to encourage the voices and dignity of language users, especially of adults and professionals as they negotiate their expertise.

STARTING OUT IN AN AMERICAN CLASSROOM

Introduction

Dear students: congratulations that after much preparation and travelling, you are now successfully studying in the U.S. and beginning a new chapter of your life at the university–you should feel proud of yourself!

In the first several weeks of the semester, you might feel both excited and nervous, particularly if you are studying abroad for the first time in your life, but these are common feelings for novice and experienced international students moving from one place to another, domestically or internationally. No matter where you are from or which language you speak, you will soon find that becoming multilingual and multicultural is both an asset and a challenge.
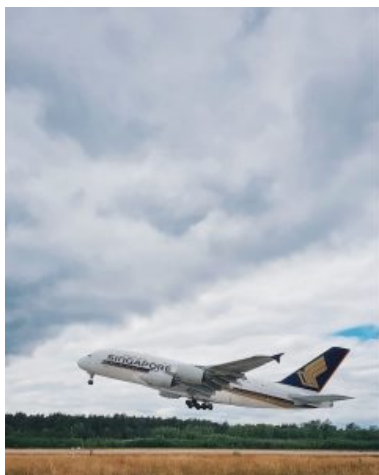
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In the U.S., English is not an official language of the country but is almost always positioned as the language of power and an indicator of socio-economic status (Weng, 2016). As you are becoming an expert in your own discipline, pursuing a degree in a second or foreign language, you are much more well-educated than almost 80% of Americans ("Number of People", 2019). However, as users of English as a second or foreign language, your English language skills may feel like an obstacle to getting opportunities in your program, writing a grant proposal, applying for a job in the U.S., etc., but the most important purpose of language is communication. With practice and adaptation, anyone can become more effective at

communicating. Whether you feel like you struggle to communicate or not, a writing course can help you become more conscious and shrewd about how you use language in writing–it may surprise you that most American students take similar courses at some point in their academic career. Rather than assuming that "ESL" means a person has "bad English", it is more accurate to say that their language needs to be better adapted to the needs of an American university life, something which virtually **every** student, **domestic or international**, must address at some point in some way. For you, to ease your transition to a new lifestyle with lots of unique communication challenges, we are addressing that now.

Many think learning English is just about mastering grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structures in a decontextualized way, that is, without thinking about the context or how the language is being used, such as in many textbooks. Yoon (2008) and Weng et al. (2020) remind us that English language learners have linguistic, social, and cultural needs which create a framework defining their actual needs. This means a few things:

- To be successful in another culture, you have to learn its language as well as social and cultural conventions across different academic spaces (e.g., in classrooms, individual meetings with professors, and conferences).
- Also, people around you may not simply see you as an international student. At the graduate level, you could simultaneously be a teacher, researcher, and organization leader. Navigating all these different roles entails professional communication skills, both written and spoken, with professors, colleagues, peers, and students. English, therefore, is no longer about whether you should use "is" or "was" in a given sentence, but rather about how to express your ideas accurately and concisely to the target audience.
- Finally, and perhaps most importantly, because the context of each student varies somewhat, the language needs of each student could be very different. A high school or

undergraduate language course may have modest goals, but a graduate language course is intended to equip you as a professional, and that requires specialized and invested effort from the instructor, but even more so from the student: in short, no one can teach you all the skills you need to know, but we can help **you** to learn them, and to be better prepared when you encounter new language needs in the future. You are the most important person in that process.

As mentioned, the purpose of this book is to **empower** you as a scholar in your field and as an English user by increasing your awareness of your past successful and non-successful professional experiences, promoting your agency in learning within and beyond your disciplines, and preparing you with social, cultural, and linguistic knowledge on how to read, write, and speak across academic spaces in the U.S.

Cultural Expectations on Teaching and Learning

Cultural differences can generate different expectations on teaching and learning. Watch the following video and answer the reflection questions:

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/
internationalgraduatestudentwriting5901/?p=32

Reflection Questions:

1. Summarize the content of the video
2. What's your opinion on the content of the video?
3. How have you prepared yourself to study in another culture?

4. What might be your concerns?
5. What do you think is the priority for learning in U.S. classrooms, that is, what goal are they trying to achieve by teaching in the way that they do?

Of course, cultural expectations on teaching and learning could also vary across disciplines. For example, students from Humanities and Social Science are usually required to write and speak more in class than those from STEM which often asks their students to solve particular problems. Thus, there are different disciplinary expectations on teaching and learning.

Do you know the cultural expectations on teaching and learning in your disciplines at different education levels (i.e., undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels) ? Please fill out Table 1 below with what you know. In the left box in the row for "Countries", please fill in a country you are familiar with to compare to the disciplinary expectations of the U.S.

Table 1: Disciplinary Expectations

Major						
Education Levels	Undergraduate		Master's		Doctoral	
Countries		U.S.		U.S.		U.S.
Expectations for Teaching						
Expectations for Learning						

Reflection Questions:

1. Is it easy or difficult to fill out the table? Which part is easiest and hardest to fill out? Why?
2. Where did you get the information? Are you familiar with the faculty and staff of your department?
3. Is there anything surprising to you?

Compare your table with someone from a different discipline and answer the following questions:

1. What is similar or different between the two disciplines?
2. What is surprising to you?

Teaching and learning at the tertiary level can take place in different styles across the same or different countries. You may come from an educational culture that values teacher-talk and students' engagement in rigorous note-taking rather than interaction in the classroom. Final exams may be

Photo by Mimi Thian on Unsplash.

the only evaluation of your academic performance of the semester. However, in most U.S. universities, a student-centered teaching style is more common, which means teachers usually take roles of a guide, bridge, or facilitator in class and students participate in individual or collaborative projects, active discussions, and presentations, in addition to more traditional assessment components, such as quizzes, mid-term and final exams. In this way, the need for a large assessment, such as a final exam, is less important, as the teacher is more able to assess students, particularly their language use and communicative ability, through their frequent classroom interaction–some instructors will grade for participation, so be sure to speak up!

At the graduate level, you will be given more opportunities in taking seminars in which you and your cohorts will discuss and share ideas with each other. Your professors may barely be involved in discussions. Many international students have felt frustrated because their discussions with classmates did not lead to solutions but probably more questions. In their understanding, the professors should provide the correct answer at the end of the class. This, however, is seen as detrimental to students' intellectual growth because knowledge at the graduate level is not a thing to be given by professors but discovered by graduate students through their

discussions and research, a process that can happen individually, or collaboratively with their cohorts and professors. [Bloom's taxonomy](#) can best demonstrate different levels of learning.

Like Bloom's Taxonomy shows, for graduate studies, one of the main purposes of learning is to create knowledge, which is at the top of the pyramid, meaning it is only done by few people and full of difficulty and challenge. However, you are selected and trusted by your program to embark on this strenuous task, a task which you will increasingly find is more and more your own journey as a developing expert rather than something simply taught to you by an instructor. In some sense, you must learn to teach yourself, but as a result, the value of any person's education at any level can be greatly improved by their own effort and engagement with the learning process.

Because much of graduate education is about developing the ability to participate in professional and scholarly negotiation and critique, this interaction between students may be both more common and more important than your previous studies. The qualification represented by graduating is something you will fight for and develop gradually each day of the next few years. Graduation is to acknowledge that you **have become** a scholar; it does **not** make you a scholar by itself. Right now, the idea of graduating may seem like a big deal, but perhaps by the time you get to that phase, it will feel more and more like a formality as the real work will have already taken place.

Classroom Expectations

This practical need for the learning process to be centered on the students rather than on the teachers at the graduate level is reflected in the classroom. Most ESL composition programs offer a variety of the second language (L2) composition courses for both undergraduate and graduate students. Graduate-level ESL composition courses are very challenging to teach because students are from different disciplines and have different needs, both in terms of their individual language skills and in terms of the different professional needs put on upon their language skills. Frodesen, an experienced L2 writing instructor, pointed out long before that graduate students in an L2 writing class should be positioned as participants in their larger academic community rather than as merely "ESL students", etc. (1995). Casanave, another well-known L2 writing expert, commented on the importance of linking the general L2 writing courses at the graduate level to students' work in their own discipline (2003). In other words, graduate students lose motivation in class if the course design only has tangential relation to their disciplinary practices. At the same time, L2 writing instructors are not all-knowing, meaning they have expertise in L2 writing but not in students' specific disciplines. What this book promotes, therefore, is *student agency* in learning, namely, your control and participation in learning the writing conventions of your disciplines. Student agency highlights students' self-initiation for learning. For example, you have to find out the specific formatting styles used for citations in your program and analyze their usage in your disciplinary writing. Your instructor is a facilitator who provides guidance and resources to expand your ability in learning.

To give an example, a literature review is a typical final assignment for a graduate-level L2 writing class. Here, *literature* refers to the cumulative knowledge about a topic in your field, and the *literature review* is a sampling of that knowledge, sometimes

exhaustive, so that the rest of a written work is accurately presented with the larger context of the discipline. Although some amount of literature review is required for every student, what you want to focus on, the length of the review, as well as the choice of documentation style will be left to you to decide based on the needs of what you are writing. Throughout this text, you will be given a series of small assignments to help build up your knowledge about the literature in your own field so that you are more able to write a literature review. Notably, though your instructor may request to evaluate your work, none of the assignments are exclusively **for** this course, that is, all of the assignments are things almost every graduate student must learn to do at some point in their career anyway–a writing course should be simply a guided head-start to help maximize your potential. Additionally, they will never be "ESL assignments", but rather something more related to your discipline rather than a generic language exercise. Whether you are just starting graduate education or already have publications, these assignments can help focus your talent and overcome some of the obstacles you may have communicating through written language in a professional academic context. The goal is that you have assignments for your writing course, but that most of them are things which you already need to do as a graduate student, and that therefore this course is a genuine aid to your education rather than extra work.

Follow-Up Questions for Reflection or Discussion

After reading the chapter, please discuss the following questions:

1. How are teaching and learning assessed similarly or differently in your home country and in the U.S.?
2. Although all four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) are important, which language skill is more emphasized in your field?
3. What is your goal of taking a graduate-level ESL writing class? What is your expectation of a graduate-level ESL writing class?
4. After reading the course syllabus, how is it similar to or different from your expectations of the class?
5. How do you want the course instructor to help you with your writing or English language skills in general?

Assignment #1: The Ideas Journal

Start an ideas journal of some kind. This can be a physical paper or digital notepad for those of you who like sketches, a lined journal, a computer file, or whatever is convenient and comfortable for you when you are imagining new projects. The authors of this book have a folder on their computers with literally dozens of half-page ideas sloppily drafted up. 99% of them will never amount to anything, but the remainder may eventually evolve into the kind of highly organic and personally invested project that one can really get into, possibly go on to define one's career, and which one may even accidentally **enjoy writing about**–there is genuinely no better kind of idea for a project than these. Even if you do not literally pick up the same old note again when you start writing, merely having written it before will help you keep an idea in mind until it develops into something workable as a writing project. You may be surprised to know that echoes even of this textbook are found in that folder on the authors' computers, drafted in bits and fragments before there was ever even an idea that there should be a book for you now, or that those notes would influence it.

As you write your ideas, or as you reassess them later on when you are feeling more practical, ask yourself the following questions. Not all relevant questions are listed here, and not all questions listed here are relevant, but these questions can help guide how you prepare to turn those ideas, or similar ones, into successful future projects:

1. Is this the kind of project I can write by myself, or one that requires the support or involvement of others? (For example, this textbook is the work of two people and could conceivably have been the work of one if there was more time, but other

people had to support the effort at various points in its development in order for you to have it now as a student.)

2. Would this project require any special equipment or financial support, like a research grant or a laboratory? (For example, this textbook did not require any special equipment per se to write, but it did require access to a university library. To have it produced *en masse* as a textbook in this case required a grant and technical support.)

3. Would this project require permission from the university's research ethics Institutional Review Board (IRB) to involve human subjects for research, something which has to be granted **before** that research can begin? (For the example of this textbook, thankfully no.)

4. What is the best form for this project to ultimately take, e.g. a conference presentation, an article, a book chapter, a monograph, patent, etc.? (This question can be tricky, since the end of a project is not always visible from the beginning–for the example of this textbook, it definitely was not a textbook when it was first imagined, but now in retrospect, a textbook seems like the best way to share these ideas. When starting out, a conference presentation can be the best way to assess if a project is viable, since if your ideas can physically draw an interested crowd that is rather promising. Notice that "classroom assignment" is not on the list, because as a graduate student, **none** of your ideas should be conceived and planned to end up only as an assignment.)

5. Who is the target audience for this project? How can their needs and interests be better accommodated as it is presented? (For example, this textbook is clearly intended for students, specifically graduate students. Because of that, the authors chose to take a more personal tone, since the authors are professionals seeking to welcome more professionals to the field. Also, adult students perform better when they are told why a task is important, so explaining that is a part of this book. If it were written for teachers, the tone would be

different—if for novice teachers, there would still be a lot of explaining, but not for experienced teachers. For experienced teachers and scholars, this would need to have many more sources to justify exactly why this approach is better than the other approaches those experienced teachers or scholars may already be familiar with. It would also not be a textbook in that case, but probably an article or conference presentation of some kind. This may all seem like details in retrospect, but these were important strategic decisions made along the way as the project which is now this textbook developed.)

6. Most relevant to the upcoming assignments in this course, what kind of literature needs to be reviewed in order to support this project? Does it need to be an exhaustive review or a brief look? (This will vary greatly from one discipline to another: in some disciplines, "literature review" seldom means more than a paragraph while in others it can form most of the finished paper. It also varies from one project to another: if your project is controversial, you will likely either need compelling empirical evidence, substantial support from a more thorough review of the literature, or both—otherwise, current scholars may dismiss your work. For the example of this textbook, the authors are writing primarily for students who probably are not familiar with linguistics, education, or the debates surrounding them, and so a few references to an educational theory about classroom management and functional linguistics, as opposed to traditional Chomskian linguistics, are adequate. Examples of those used in this chapter appear in the references section below.)

Your instructor may want to see some of your ideas or the questions you answered about them, and may request a particular medium for submitting them—some of your ideas might be better than you think, and any feedback they give may surprise you.

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PLAGIARISM AT THE ESL COMPOSITION PROGRAM

Introduction

It is tempting to think, "Why should I reinvent the wheel?", that is, why should one write something new when someone else wrote something similar better? For university studies and research, there are two reasons. The first reason is that if every writer simply imitates other writers, little original work or fresh observations will be made–this was a common problem in ancient scholarship, such as earlier writers referring blindly to Plato or Confucius without making any empirical observations of their own. Re-examining problems is one of the ways that new solutions and understandings may be realized and articulated in written research. The second reason is educational: few questions at the college level have a neatly "correct" answer, and a written response allows students to explain how they understand the course material from their own perspective. This is especially important when describing a complex subject, such as a large social movement, as there are not only different possible correct answers to many questions, but different foci possible for each question. Thus, particularly as students, when asked to write about a subject, it is generally expected, at least in the U.S., that that will be original writing.

"NOS ESSE QUASI NANOS GIGANTIUM HUMERIS INSIDENTES," is a Latin proverb attributed to Bernard of Chartres (Salisbury, 1159/1991), translated by Isaac Newton in 1675 as "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants" (p. 1). What he was referring to by that metaphor is one of the most important principles of academic work: that scholars, researchers, and students benefit greatly from the brilliance of past authors, but also, as his example demonstrates, that those latter academics must give acknowledgement to those

This fifteenth-century illustration from southern Germany depicts the giant Orion carrying Cedalion (Rosenwald 4, Bl. 5r, ca. 1410). Note: PD-US-expired

previous authors in using their work. Academic work is primarily about ideas; the source of income, directly or indirectly via reputation, for researchers and writers is their ideas, usually manifest in some kind of writing. Therefore, to protect their studies, it is necessary to protect the profitable results of their studies. While there is an ongoing debate about how much people should pay to use or access the ideas of others, regardless, it is vital that people receive credit for their ideas, which in university and in this course is primarily about giving appropriate credit to the authors of other written works via citation.

How authors are given credit has varied throughout eras of the past and cultures around the world–sometimes, what seems to some people like an homage seems to other people like theft, and some of the laws surrounding things like "fair use" of others' work (called a *source*) may indeed be complicated and interpreted differently according to context. There are two key questions: (1)

can you use this source in your context? and (2) if so, what is the appropriate way to indicate the author of the source?

In universities across the United States, the term used to describe inappropriate use of sources is *plagiarism*, usually due to not mentioning the author of a source adequately. Fortunately, the university has a fairly defined (though imperfect) definition of what plagiarism is and is not, which is the subject of this chapter.

Defining Plagiarism

There are different approaches to defining what plagiarism is and is not. One text described plagiarism as "a deliberate activity–as the conscious copying from the work of others" (Feak & Swales, 2009, p. 79). Others clarify that when talking about plagiarism, the copying is specifically presenting someone else's work as your own, and likewise emphasized that there are cultural differences in what is perceived as plagiarism (Dollahite & Haun, 2012, p. 80). Macbeth and Chmarkh (2019) provide examples of ways to avoid plagiarism, and in turn examples of what would not be considered plagiarism (see discussion, pp. 54-55), emphasizing that "to avoid plagiarism, it is often necessary to use more than one technique [of paraphrasing] at the same time" (p. 54).

Reflection Questions:

1. Are you familiar with the term *plagiarism*? What is your understanding of plagiarism? How is your understanding similar to or different from the definition given in the chapter?
2. Is plagiarism an issue seriously discussed in classrooms in your home country? How does it affect your performance in class?
3. What is the consequence of plagiarism in your country?

In essence, what plagiarism is depends on how ideas and words are presented. In the previous paragraph, the three sentences talking about plagiarism are all referring to the words or ideas of others, but because they are **cited**, that is, explicitly labeled with the original authors and publication information, using them is not plagiarism. In other words, we have not presented them as though they were our own words or ideas but rather those of others.

The value of using other sources is that they can make a claim more justified by using the evidence or testimony of other trusted authors, for example, our claim about the meaning of a complex idea like "plagiarism". Additionally, citing them in the above paragraph

does not decrease the value of the original source, but instead arguably shows that those three sources are also important and draws more readers, such as yourselves, to those sources as well. This is particularly the case in the third citation, of Macbeth and Chmarkh (2019), in which readers are specifically encouraged to see their list of suggestions for how to avoid plagiarism when using sources. This is all a part of what is considered fair use in academic writing, a term that will be important later in this chapter.

Using sources well is not merely a matter of following rules, but also of your judgment as an author. As Feak and Swales (2009) and Dollahite and Haun (2012) mentioned, what is and is not plagiarism is related to how the ideas of others are **deliberately presented**–thus, in a sense, one cannot accidentally plagiarize if they simply do not know how to cite another source accurately, though this may be controversial. Regardless, in the U.S., it is assumed that all university students, if not high school students as well, have already been taught how to cite another source correctly. As a result, what looks like deliberately presenting someone else's words or ideas as one's own, that is, plagiarism, will be treated as plagiarism in the United States, whether or not it is intentional. The severe consequences of plagiarism are discussed in another section.

Another example of what is not technically plagiarism having severe consequences is when too much of your paper is quotations from other people. Even if those quotations are correctly cited, your instructor will likely say that you did not write too much of your paper. Paraphrasing is acceptable as your own writing, though not your own ideas, and so quotations should be avoided as much as possible in favor of paraphrasing. It is vitally important to cite both of them correctly.

Two Ways to Use Others' Ideas and Avoid Plagiarism

Having discussed the perceived value of citation, it is important to understand the process of citation. Generally, there are two ways to use the ideas of others: *quoting* and *paraphrasing*. You have likely heard the word "quote" before, but in academic writing it has a very specific and literal meaning: to quote someone is to use their exact words, and when cited includes quotation marks, " " , around the words taken from the other source. *Block quotations* refer to when several lines of text are quoted–these do not have quotation marks around the entire quotation, but are set apart from the rest of the text, such as here when reviewing the first paragraph of the last section:

> There are different approaches to defining what plagiarism is and is not. One text described plagiarism as "a deliberate activity–as the conscious copying from the work of others" (Feak & Swales, 2009 p. 79). Others clarify that when talking about plagiarism, the copying is specifically presenting someone else's work as your own, and likewise emphasized that there are cultural differences in what is perceived as plagiarism (Dollahite & Haun, 2012, p. 80). Macbeth and Chmarkh (2019) provide examples of ways to avoid plagiarism, and in turn examples of what would not be considered plagiarism (see discussion, pp. 54-55), emphasizing that "to avoid plagiarism, it is often necessary to use more than one technique [of paraphrasing] at the same time" (p. 54).

The first sentence, citing Feak and Swales (2009), is a quotation. Note that the quotation marks only go around the words from the other source, and not the names of the authors, or even necessarily the punctuation at the end of the sentence, such as if the citation is after the quotation marks. Note that when quoting, it is essential to exactly copy each word from the original source for accuracy, although you may alter a quotation using brackets, [ ] , to indicate that you changed some of the original language to make it easier for the current readers to understand. This is especially common when the original source uses a pronoun without a clear referent among the words quoted. It is better to alter the quotation with brackets than to quote more words when possible, because quoting should be done as little as possible in academic writing, mostly only if the exact words of another author are important to your claim and cannot be rephrased. Quoting, therefore, is using both the ideas and the exact words of another source.

Paraphrasing, meanwhile, refers to using the ideas of another source but with your own words, such as by using different words, reordering the words, etc., so that the sentence says a similar thing without any of the original language. The chief advantage of paraphrasing is that it allows you as a writer to summarize the important parts of a relevant source while still keeping your own writing focused and concise. The second citation in this section, of Dollahite and Haun (2012), is a paraphrase.

Looking at the third citation in this section, of Macbeth and Chmarkh (2019), you can see that there are different ways to cite sources, and that you can quote and paraphrase a source at the same time. Usually, if the names of the authors are part of the sentence, not simply a *parenthetical citation* (a citation in parentheses), it is to emphasize the names of the authors because it is assumed that the readers may or should know the authors of that source. In this case, Macbeth and Chmarkh (2019) is a publication from ESL instructors at OSU, and so OSU students may find it to be an especially valuable resource in their context. There are more examples of paraphrasing in Chapter 4.

Other Issues Regarding Plagiarism

While it might seem that being prepared to quote and paraphrase correctly is enough to avoid plagiarism, to consistently understand how to avoid plagiarism in different situations may require a more nuanced perspective.

"Common Knowledge"

The need for citing something as a quotation is usually obvious: are the words the same as those of another source, or are they not? The need to cite something as paraphrasing is not always so obvious. Everyone has ideas all the time, and certainly there is much overlap between the ideas of one person and the ideas of another. It is not impossible for two people to have the same idea, especially when there is a new technology or event which may trigger it, such as the conflicts over who exactly invented what could today be considered a modern light bulb, telephone, airplane, cars, or the Internet. This is more likely to occur in the case of a theory or invention which later proves important or popular. Ideas are not objects though, and do not go through the same kind of patenting process as an invention, and so, while defined theories and research with specific theorists and researchers exist, many times it is not clear who exactly thought of an idea or theory, or who made an important discovery, first. It can be more difficult to decide for how long they deserve credit for an idea, e.g. considering how many things and ideas which are now referred to as "Marxist" only came into existence long after Karl Marx's death. Fortunately, in academic writing, it is considered not only honorable but also useful context to cite the works of those who have or may have inspired the ideas in your writing, and so liberally paraphrasing many sources is often something encouraged rather than not. Even when a writer does not seek to add new ideas to a long description of cited literature, it

can still be considered original and useful work to have assembled them together for comparison and a better understanding of how that literature developed.

Still, this does not actually answer the question of "when should I cite an idea in my writing as one which I paraphrased?" The phrase usually used to describe when an idea does **not** need to be paraphrased is "*common knowledge*". You may notice that phrase is in quotation marks, and that is because while people may refer to this knowledge as "common", not only is it distinctly varied from one culture to another, but indeed people from the same culture may not actually consider the same knowledge "common". For example, students from China have previously complained that knowledge familiar to them and arguably "common" was not considered "common" by their American instructors. Sometimes, the problem is that the ideas appear stolen, as they closely resemble ideas that are associated with existing authors. Other times, the students in question are not considered reliable sources of information on their own. For example, when writing about the details of how language is used differently in rural and urban China, what might seem like an obvious conclusion to a Chinese writer might seem like it needs more evidence to a non-Chinese reader (or vice-versa). Conceivably, this evidence could come from some kind of mutually accepted expert about the subject, such as a respected book which is available internationally. In these situations, as is always the case, **effective academic writing is writing which the readers find compelling**, and so it is best for the writers to anticipate and prepare for the opinions of the readers since writers are not usually writing to persuade themselves.

There are some general guidelines that can help you to better understand "common knowledge". Names and dates, for example, at least for contexts for which reliable records exist, e.g. most non-ancient history, are generally considered common knowledge. When writing in any field, the most reliable measure is to follow the example of the sources you are reading. If two sources both have the same ideas, and neither cite each other, nor another, third source,

then what they are writing is likely considered common knowledge in that field. In reality, most of what is written has been written before in some way, and only some of anything written is cited, so arguably most of what you read about in a field is in some way common knowledge. However, if an idea seems unique, or you are not sure if what you are reading is "common" enough to just write it in your own words, there is no harm in paraphrasing and citing that source, and it is considered honorable to give credit to the scholars who came before you.

Plagiarism versus Copyright

One of the most confusing things about plagiarism is the difference between plagiarism and *copyright infringement*. Both are violations of the university's policies about academic integrity, but both, especially copyright infringement, are also **illegal**. Copyright infringement refers to using work without the permission of an author when the author legally reserves the right to copy their work only for themselves and those whom they have given permission to copy it, i.e. a *copyrighted work* (a trademark is similar, but different, and not as relevant to academic writing). This can be music, videos, any form of visual art, words, charts, graphs, etc. Generally, permission to copy a copyrighted work is granted when the copyright owner is paid for that permission. If a work is copied without permission, a lawsuit may force the copier to pay a penalty or even be sent to prison. Copyright laws can be confusing as there are differences from one country's laws to those of another, and a copyright may not be recognized equally in every country. It should also be noted that a copyright can be bought, sold, or inherited, and so even though the creator of a work may have died, the copyright may still be effective. Sometimes the copyrights on a work expire, as is the case in many countries when a book has already been published for more than a century. Other times, even an old copyright can be renewed. When a work is not copyrighted, it is considered in the *public domain*. A copyrighted book will generally have the copyright together with the publication information near

the title page. If you are not sure if a work is copyrighted, it is better to assume that it is, since most recent works are.

"Fair Use"

Fair use refers to using a copyrighted work in a way that is considered minor enough to be legally acceptable. Examples include short quotations from other sources in a book, or when one work is a parody or critique of another and uses *some* elements from the work being parodied or critiqued. How much is too much is usually decided in court, but, as was mentioned before, this is not so important to academic writing, because you should not have long quotations in your writing anyway simply because quotations are not considered your own writing, and even if cited correctly and not plagiarism, will usually be considered excessive when readers are expecting to read your work. That said, to give some examples of how plagiarism and copyright infringement sometimes overlap, consider the following:

- If I were to scan a copyrighted book into a computer for my own use, that **may** be neither copyright infringement nor plagiarism, since it is for my own use and I am not suggesting it is my own writing.
- If I were to scan and distribute a copyrighted book to others, either digitally or on printed pages, especially for money, that is copyright infringement, since I had only paid for it for my own use but then distributed it, but it would not be plagiarism, since I did not claim it as my own writing.
- Fair use is typically calculated according to what portion of a work has been copied by someone else, but for example, if I were to copy and distribute a page from a copyrighted book, that may or may not be considered copyright infringement, but it would not be considered plagiarism unless I also claimed to have written that page myself. Educational contexts sometimes allow freer sharing of a copyrighted work. However, even if it is fair use, copyrighted sources must still be cited.
- If I copy a paragraph from a copyrighted book into an essay

and did not cite it as another source, it is both copyright infringement and plagiarism, since using a copyrighted source still requires a citation, and I would have also claimed someone else's writing as my own writing.

- If I copy a paragraph from a copyrighted book into an essay and cite it as another source, that is not copyright infringement, nor plagiarism, as it is limited enough copying to be fair use, and I did not claim it to be my own writing. However, it may still not be appropriate, since only rarely is a whole paragraph from another source necessary to quote in an academic paper. There are some academic fields in which this is more common, such as history or textual analysis, but in most it is frowned upon.

Perhaps the most dangerous and common error students make confusing plagiarism and copyright infringement is not when they are guilty of copyright infringement, but rather when they are not guilty of copyright infringement. In this era of mass distribution of media, text, and information via the Internet, it is increasingly popular for creators to label their work "copyright free", meaning that the creators do not require credit for their work in the form of a copyright, and you can access, copy, and alter it freely. Sometimes, there are still restrictions, such as not allowing copiers to sell and make money off of the copyright-free work of a creator, or not allowing it to be altered. Copyright law is not the focus of this paper, however. The important thing is that some students think that because a book is in the public domain, that is, without a copyright, that they can therefore copy it into their papers without citing it as an outside source. **This would be considered plagiarism.** A common example is using information from open-source reference websites like Wikipedia–it is public domain, but that only means that anyone can read, copy or alter the information on the website. It does **not** mean that students can copy and paste information from Wikipedia without citing it. Quotations from Wikipedia and other websites are still quotations, and must still be

placed in quotation marks and cited as such. If one is paraphrasing common knowledge from a website like Wikipedia, no citation is necessary, but only if it is common knowledge written in your own words, i.e. paraphrased. If you were quoting Wikipedia, your instructor would probably wonder why, as Wikipedia is not a reliable source and is mostly common knowledge besides. But this is not to say that Wikipedia and other websites have no academic value. Some websites with protected domains, such as .edu or .gov, offer generally reliable information which could be used in an academic paper. Even with ones which are not protected domains, and therefore could be bought and written by anyone, websites such as Wikipedia can provide useful clues about what is considered "common knowledge", provide examples of specialized language used to describe technical information in English, or provide examples of more reliable sources via their citations. Few sources of information are truly useless, but **none** of them can simply be copied and pasted into an academic paper without marking them as a quotation and providing a citation.

Plagiarism and Plagiarism-Adjacent

With all this, it might seem that what is and is not plagiarism is clear enough to be assessed, but nothing has been said about the mechanical differences between plagiarism and non-plagiarism, and what will be referred to in this chapter as "plagiarism-adjacent". That is, what could be interpreted as plagiarism in some reckoning. Assuming that a source is cited correctly, and quotations are required to be the same wording as the original source, essentially the question is, "How different does paraphrasing need to be from the original wording in order to not be copying?"

There is not an easy answer to this question. Generally, if you want to keep a unique phrase or term, especially if you want to include the term and the definition, it may be better to use a quotation. Some guides have set out a certain number of words one is allowed to have similar to the original source, usually between five and ten, but this too is not very meaningful, as even two or three of the exact same words in the exact same order can seem like copying

the wording, whereas other times, even longer phrases can seem like they are not copying. Consider the following example:

Ludwig van Beethoven was baptized in 1770 in Bonn, Germany.

This sentence is ten words long, and generously exceeds any conceivable general rule for the maximum number of words before a paraphrase could be considered copying and therefore plagiarism. However, three of those words are a name, and phrases like "was baptized", "in 1770", and "in Bonn, Germany" (an ancient and prominent city in western Germany) are all extremely common in English. In particular, when describing an event, it is not usual to provide the city and year in which it occurred, and in Beethoven's time, baptismal records were sometimes more reliable than birth records–in short, this sentence could easily be written by two unrelated authors purely by coincidence simply because of common language and conventional phrasing. It could perhaps be called plagiarism-adjacent, but not many instructors are likely to call it plagiarism. This is an extreme example, but the point is that there cannot be a simple rule to decide what absolutely is and is not plagiarism. Part of it is whether or not the author likely intended to copy a sentence, that is, is the potential plagiarism deliberate? Part of it is what kind of phrase is potentially plagiarized, that is, are they long, common phrases with names of several words or are conspicuously unique phrases using specialized language? Of course, it is better to avoid this plagiarism-adjacent zone, but it would be difficult to avoid altogether, and so it is important to know that it exists.

Self-Plagiarism in the Classroom and in Publications

Sometimes students assume that because they wrote a paper that they can do whatever they want with the paper, and to some extent that is true. Generally the author of a work is automatically the copyright holder, for example. However, if that writing is being submitted for any purpose to a university, publisher, etc., there may be expectations about what the writing can and cannot be that authors must follow.

Of special importance is that the policy of most universities is

that students **cannot** resubmit the same paper for multiple classes. Sometimes, especially if a student is writing a paper that exceeds the expectations of two different classes, special permission can be granted by the instructor of **both** classes to submit the same paper to both, but that permission is not generally granted, as the expectation is that each class represents a certain amount of work for the students. Likewise, publishers generally do not want to publish something which has already been published elsewhere, although, since submitting a paper for class is not actually a form of publication, it is not unusual for students to submit a paper they wrote for a class to a publisher. It should be noted that because a class requires a student to submit new and original work students cannot submit any previous publications for a class.

Closing Advice on How to Not Plagiarize

There are two things that can be strongly recommended as general practices to avoid plagiarism, in the experience of the authors as writers:

- Keep a list of notes and quotations that you like as you read different sources for your research. This will serve as a reference later as you go back to read your notes while you are writing so that you do not need to re-read sources while writing. Importantly, include all necessary information for a citation in your notes, so that you do not lose the ability to create accurate citations. Also importantly, be sure to indicate quotation marks with the quotations in your notes so that you do not accidentally paste a quotation from a source into your paper thinking that it is a paraphrase from your own notes. Your paraphrasing from your notes can be used as paraphrasing for your papers, so extensive notes can be useful.
- It can seem frustrating to have to paraphrase extensive amounts of text. However, your purpose as a writer will not be the same as the purpose of any other writer. Rather than thinking of paraphrasing as unnecessary alterations, think of how your purpose is unique, and how the text can be

shortened and rephrased to something which is compelling and concise for your purpose more than for theirs.

Detecting Plagiarism

Plagiarism is in some ways easier than ever, but many of the same tools people use to plagiarize, e.g. the Internet, can be used just as effectively to detect plagiarism, and while it is unlikely that every student who plagiarizes will be caught, there are usually a surprising number of students who do indeed get caught plagiarizing in greater or lesser ways. The authors of this book, as instructors, have caught more than a hundred plagiarizing students and, every now and again, a few more are caught who for one reason or another thought it was a good idea to try to cheat.

To use a metaphor, plagiarism being detected and prosecuted is handled similarly to the enforcement of the speed limit on roadways: not everyone who breaks the rules will be caught, but enough are to make it unwise to risk the penalties. Likewise, the penalties are harsh enough that even getting caught one time is significant, as described in the following section. If a student makes a habit of cheating, sooner or later one of two things is likely to happen: (1) they are caught, and potentially expelled, ending their career at the university, (2) their ability to write papers decreases while the expectations for their writing increases, leading to a situation where they are no longer able to write their own papers, or even perhaps to do their jobs after graduation (depending on how much writing they are required to do professionally). Both may happen. In either case, students who are paying large sums of money to learn a difficult professional skill like writing are not learning, and so it is the responsibility of students and teachers alike to encourage learning and prevent plagiarism and the need for it. Each student has considerable resources in the form of their classmates, instructor, and course materials, and so in many cases it is actually more difficult to plagiarize than it is to just do assignments besides.

Similarity versus Plagiarism

One of the most popular mechanisms for detecting plagiarism, especially for misused quotations, are programs that check for the similarity between a submitted paper and a large pool of other papers. Many universities have these available and many classes even require all major papers to be submitted through a similarity checking program of some kind.

It is important for students to understand what these tools can show, and what they cannot show, as many students think that similarity and plagiarism are the same things, and while they sometimes are, they often are not. For example, all citations of a single source in every paper that cites that source written in the same *format* (MLA, APA, etc.) should be identical, and would therefore be 100% similar on a similarity checking program. Likewise, certain phrases, like the plagiarism-adjacent example above, will simply be similar to other phrases by coincidence due to patterns in the way English is commonly spoken or written, and that similarity will boost the overall percentage of similarity. Occasionally students have common names which are categorized as similar to another paper. None of these are examples of plagiarism. When grading a paper, an instructor will examine whatever the similarity-checking program highlighted as "similar" and then decide if it is plagiarism. This is usually the first step in determining if a paper has been plagiarized, but again the important thing is that the program measures similarity, which is not the same as plagiarism.

Consequences of Plagiarism

As mentioned previously, the consequences of plagiarism are quite severe. To put it briefly, the minimum penalty for a student found guilty of plagiarism is that they do not pass the assignment they plagiarized. The maximum penalty would likely be expulsion from the university, which may have consequences for enrollment at other universities in the future. While the instructor may be asked to make a statement, the actual decision about whether or not a student is found guilty of plagiarism and the penalty is made by a separate committee of university officials.

There are a few other things to note about this process. In particular, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the committee generally assumes that students have been trained in how to avoid plagiarism, and therefore that any plagiarism that occurs is deliberate cheating by the student, and therefore is punished more severely. The penalty is also more severe for graduate students than for undergraduate students, and for larger papers rather than smaller ones. Students have lost years of academic progress because they were caught plagiarizing papers and then expelled.

Follow-Up Questions for Reflection or Discussion

After reading the chapter, please discuss the following questions:

1. How does cultural difference affect the understanding of common knowledge and fair use?
2. After reading the chapter, do you feel prepared to write professionally in a U.S. university and be a multilingual and multicultural scholar?
3. What is your takeaway from this chapter?

Assignment #2: Identifying and Using an Appropriate Format

One of the challenges of avoiding plagiarism is that "correct" citations require a rather exact knowledge of whatever academic format you are using. APA and MLA are common formats, but the way they do citations and what information is included in a citation differs. These are only two formats: there are many. The format you need to learn and use in this course is whatever format is used in your field. It takes time to remember what is normal for a format, and so it is better to focus on one you need rather than trying to learn them all. By itself, a format has no value, but it is necessary to know well the one you are asked to use for your classes or publications. Sometimes, an instructor or editor may be lax regarding things like page layout, but the correctness of how a citation is laid out is important. Consider the following example, in APA format, taken from the list of references for this chapter. Note that this is how it appears in the references list at the end of a work, not an in-text citation within a work.

Dollahite, N. B. & Huan, J. (2012). *Sourcework: Academic Writing from Sources.* (2nd edition). Heinle.

Notice that the information is not labelled. Instead, it works because of rules about how citations are ordered. This is categorized as a "book" with "two authors" in the APA Guide on Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL), and so first are the authors' names, then the publication year, then the book name, then the edition number, and then the publisher. Without those rules, a reader might not know that the publisher is Heinle, or that the first author's last name is Dollahite, since the last name goes first in APA. Also note that periods, commas, colons, and other punctuation are

required to follow strict rules to help distinguish this information. This is a fairly simple source, but if it were a citation for an author quoted in a chapter by multiple authors in volume with multiple editors, the citation could be quite complicated. (In APA, an in-text citation should include the date of publication, but since no date is available, I should simply mention the author, who is this case is a corporate author rather than a person, i.e. Purdue University, and since I already mentioned the name in the sentence and this is not from a source with page numbers, I do not need to add anything else in parentheses–there are indeed many rules.)

Note that online guides like the OWL are not authoritative, but convenient, and it is important to find a reliable one, such as one produced by a university. Be cautioned that many citation-generating programs, such as the ones incorporated into Microsoft Word or available with apps or websites, are not necessarily updated or detailed enough to be reliable. For a popular format like APA or MLA, thick, new, authoritative printed guides are released every few years–this is especially important for updates to how electronic sources are listed, and for example, the authors were surprised that they recently no longer require a publisher's city to be mentioned, so things do change. Publishers and some university departments sometimes have their formatting guides. You will be responsible for the quality and accuracy of your citations regardless of the guide you use.

For this assignment, there are three parts:

1. Consult your department or an instructor for a course in your discipline about what format is common in that discipline, and where students can find guidance about using it (the OWL is very convenient, but only covers a few formatting styles). When you have found a guide of some kind, choose five different kinds of sources. It doesn't really matter what they are: the point is simply so that you can have practice composing citations, and so they do not need to be related to your discipline. Your instructor may provide sources for you.

However, they should be **different kinds**, e.g. a book with a single author, a journal article, a documentary, a poem from a website, etc.

2. Write a nonsense paragraph that has in-text citations for each of those five sources. "Nonsense paragraph" here can be anything, and does not really need to come from the source–this is only to show that you can structure an in-text citation correctly. It does not need to use a real paragraph structure either; it is simply that you would have to work much harder to intelligently use five different kinds of sources related to your field in an authentic paragraph for your papers, so this is something easier made an exception to this book's rule of not giving you more work unrelated to your existing writing projects.

3. Compose a list of references like the one for this chapter below featuring your five sources. If your citation is correct, your instructor should be able to identify and perhaps locate the source without any difficulty–that is the point of citations.

In Part I, it was stated that a goal of this course is not to give you additional work beyond what you are already doing, but practicing writing citations is an important skill that more easily transfers to your papers than other skills–if you already have sources in mind for your papers, you may include those as some or all of your five required for this assignment, thus saving you more trouble. Submit this either as a printed or electronic document file according to the preferences of your instructor.

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READING AS AN ACTIVE PROCESS

Introduction

When people talk about graduate school, it is not unusual for them to focus on the challenges of the extensive amount of writing involved in graduate research, and the transition from writing to satisfy finite class requirements to writing for infinite professional requirements. To write in this way is a learned skill, not something bound to being a "native speaker", and takes years to refine as a skill, and can be refined as a skill, no matter what language background a writer has. Becoming a skilled writer requires becoming more active and conscious of the writing process, identifying **why** you structured your paper one way and not another, **why** one word is ideal compared to another, etc. As you become more cognizant of your own choices as a writer, the best way to understand English-language conventions and find inspiration for your own writing is to observe the choices of other writers.

This is critical reading, perhaps in its most simple sense reading deliberately, with the understanding that the author of a text writes by making strategic decisions one line at a time. For example, in reading this chapter, why is the first paragraph the way that it is, to start a chapter about reading with a discussion of writing instead? Writing is not a topic of general interest, but the audience for this chapter is presumably bound to read and learn about writing–an audience which may do so much reading that they take reading for granted, and may not pay attention to a chapter about something "easy", "passive", or "automatic", as reading as often characterized as being. Therefore, the most important thing to persuade an audience concerned with writing that they should read a chapter about reading is to highlight advanced reading as a vital and parallel process to the development of advanced writing skills. This is not coincidence or stream of thought: it is strategic, and for you as a reader, the most important question is "why did the author write in this way?"

There are two critical principles manifest in a well-written text:

1. As an author, do not tell the readers what you think, but instead, **show** it. That is, present the evidence so that the intended conclusion is implied rather than simply stated. For example, in this chapter, the first two paragraphs could have been replaced simply with "effective writing depends on effective reading", but in that case, the text would lazily depend on the readers merely to trust that sentence, without any evidence, example, or exact understanding. Thus, when reading, a critical reader may ask,

   - "What is the author trying to show in this section?"
   - "How could it have been written differently, or better?"
   - "Why did the author choose to write in this way?"
   - "How would I have written it differently?

   Becoming aware of the author as a strategic agent is like becoming aware that the pieces on a chessboard are moving not randomly or aesthetically but rather toward a specific objective. Aware readers can sense this, and learn from it.

2. The second principle is that the form of writing determines the meaning of writing. This is similar to the first principle, in that writers are deliberate in how they form and arrange a text, but when reading that is applied to how a text is interpreted rather than to how it is composed. That is, when writing, an author should expect that readers will perceive the text not from the

author's perspective, but rather from their own perspective as readers, and readers should expect a skilled author to write in a form that brings about the intended meaning for readers. This does not lead to as many questions as the previous principle, but instead only one important question: "What does the form of the text show about the meaning?" What kind of publication a text appears in, how it is arranged on the page, the sections, whether it is a list or a paragraph, etc., all affect how a text is perceived by readers.

There are two other important principles worth mentioning in this discussion of critical reading.

Reading Purposefully

This is perhaps the single most important thing for a graduate student when it comes to reading. Too often, one is tempted to simply pick up a book and start at the beginning and read to the end, but this is seldom wise unless you want a comprehensive knowledge of a topic, and even then one should instead consider consulting multiple sources by multiple authors rather than relying heavily on a single author to elaborate on a concept important to an entire field. Incidentally, this is the chief problem with using a textbook as a source when writing, since a textbook is in many cases an author writing beyond their immediate expertise to explain the field to a novice–it is not as reliable as a description of an important concept by an author who is well-published for writing about that concept in the larger and very competitive world of research. For example, if an historian who specializes in studying ancient pottery fragments writes a textbook about the history of an ancient world, unless that book is exclusively focused on pottery, the book is at least somewhat outside of their speciality, and so a more focused publication is usually better.

Ensure Access to the Material You Seek

In this era, not only do students have the luxuries of traditional library catalogs and book indices, but they enjoy the vast improvements of online databases, text-searchable electronic documents, etc. Though the body of literature on virtually any given subject is larger than any one person can read anymore, most any student has powerful tools available to them to locate the texts which may be truly valuable to them. There is virtually no reason not to invest considerable time into ensuring that you have the most relevant sources **before** you even start taking notes–sometimes this process can be as long as the reading process itself, but it can greatly improve the quality of the results if you take the time to search carefully before reading. In that sense, the reading process

begins much before one actually begins reading, at which point a student should already be forming focused questions.

Reflection Questions:

1. What search engines do you use to find sources?
2. Have you ever reached out to a librarian to find sources? Was it helpful?
3. How do you usually screen and evaluate the articles you have found?
4. Would you have any specific advice about finding and evaluating new sources for someone else in your field?

There are myriad resources available in virtually any university library. It is strongly encouraged that you take some time to ask the librarians and consult the library website for advice about how to make the best use of their system. Remember, their full job is helping students like you have access to the resources you need, and they generally welcome as many questions as they are able to answer.

Continue to Focus Your Reading with Questions

Merely because you already have a stack of resources, physical or digital, does not mean you should no longer maintain a sharp focus on the relevance of what you are reading through. For some students, only about half of the resources they locate prove to be relevant enough to cite in a paper, and so continue to scrutinize intensely. Much like if you were to interview a notable person or meet with a professor or your advisor, have a list of questions **written and in front of you** to focus your reading at all times, and one you can add to as you learn more about the topic you are researching. Again, do not start at the beginning, but rather choose at least a chapter or section most likely to answer your questions–if you find that section refers to another section, consider reading that other section too; if you find nothing, discard the source and move on. You honor the authors with a citation when they are relevant to you, and so you do not necessarily need to feel like you

have to read any of their writing in entirety. It is rare for a student to be able to accurately anticipate exactly which sources will prove the most valuable, so have an open mind about your sources and how you might use them.

It is important as well to read reflectively, that is, consider how what you have read changes your perception of the topic. Perhaps you will develop new questions as you go, and as you realize the fuller context of a field. For example, consider **when** each of your sources was written, and by **whom**. Are there larger disagreements in the field between groups of scholars? Was there a change in the way the research was done, often called a *turn*? In language teaching, for example, there was recently what is referred to as the "sociocultural turn", in which language courses became less about making students memorize grammar books and more about being sensitive to their uniquely developed language and unique language needs as a result of their context. Reading articles from before the 1990s will likely not reflect that turn, but afterward, many authors began to refer to the same ideas–if you only read one article from afterward, you might think that one author was especially insightful rather than there being a larger movement in the scholarship. Naturally, you would then have to consider, "Has a larger turn in the research occurred, or is this a unique position of this author?" and read more.

Reflective reading and asking questions not just about comprehension but about how a text relates to you or to other texts is generally valuable, however, and you will notice that throughout this book there are liberally scattered questions for reflection, some with group discussion in mind, and others just for you as you read. Take a moment to reflect on these–no author can tell you how exactly their work relates to you or other texts you have read, and so that task is yours alone.

In this, and in all things for graduate-level research, the maxim "work smarter, not harder", will surely serve you well.

The Importance of Genre for Reading

A *genre* refers to a kind of writing, and in academic writing usually refers to the arrangement of a text to accomplish the goals of that text, e.g. how a cooking manual is arranged in steps rather than in paragraphs. Despite the way many writing courses are taught, almost no texts conform to a single genre or the expectations of any one genre. That said, genres can serve as a useful model for how different texts are organized, and like any model, it is not universally or equally applicable to all situations, but it helps readers using the model to better interpret the situation they find themselves in.

The Impact of Genre on the Structure of Text

It is not necessary to define what all genres of text could be–these genres are rarely strictly followed anyway. The important thing is that if one is reading an argument, description of a process, etc., there is likely to be a statement near the beginning which summarizes the authors' main point, that is, the thesis being argued, the process being explained, etc. If it is an argument, then it is likely that each paragraph or section will relate to a premise for that argument. If it is a process being described, then each paragraph or section will likely relate to some phase of that process. If a comparison is being made, it is possible that each paragraph or section may be describing one or the other thing being compared in alternation. Whatever the case, a critical reader should anticipate the structure of the text accordingly, and you should be observant in order to understand how texts are commonly structured in your field.

For modern texts, Shore (2016) advocated a bold strategy of starting with the conclusion, locating the thesis, then using the foreshadowing of points in the introduction and the table of contents or section headers to locate important sections, and finally

simply reading the important sections (pp. 8-39). That is an example of an aggressive strategy for understanding a text, and Shore (2016) focused especially on reading books rather than short articles, but it is a powerful example of how starting at the beginning and reading to the end is certainly not the only way and usually not the best way to read an academic text.

Narratives may be unique, in that they are structured chronologically rather than according to the author's point. As a result, they may be the most difficult to locate relevant information within, as the location of that information may be unpredictable. Caution must be applied. Narratives may be less common in an academic setting than non-narratives; this is not because narratives are categorically not useful, and they do appear in academic settings when they are useful. If they are uncommon, it may be because they have a greater potential for diverse interpretations than some non-narratives, and so may seem less suited to a clarity-oriented academic setting. When using narratives in academic settings, an author should be careful to explain why the narrative is relevant and make clear any distinctive interpretations of its meaning.

Interpreting Difficult Sentences

With so many different kinds of writing, often in long, difficult sentences with unfamiliar words, many academic texts can be daunting for any reader, no matter how familiar English is to them. In reading critically for academic purposes, the key is to be able to interpret what an author is arguing about one idea in relation to others, e.g. are they supporting or rejecting the claims of other authors?, etc. Especially in some fields, the sentences used can become quite long, with many clauses, and it can be difficult to parse what meaning is intended in the sentence as a whole. When struggling, the following tips may help:

1. *Where and what is the verb*? English grammar is looser than that of other languages, but the most effective word in a sentence is almost always the verb, and usually there are not more than a few verbs in a sentence–there can be more, but in most academic writing, this is frowned upon. Note this too as an author: try to make your sentences clear and straightforward, rather than unnecessarily long and complex, as it will make them more readable.
2. *Use those verbs as anchors to understand the logic of a sentence* by determining what the verbs relate to each other. For example, X *is* Y, X *is not* Y, X *confirms* Y, etc., where having determined the verb, you then try to determine what X and Y might refer to for the sentence in question.
3. *Use the other sentences before and after, as well as the section, specialized vocabulary, etc., to try to interpret any additional meaning the text may have.* This is something that you will be more able to do as your knowledge of your field increases.

If a complex sentence seems important, Shore (2016) advocated

rephrasing it, either in pieces manageable for you and your goals as a writer, or simply writing the bit which is important to you in your notes. This is a form of paraphrasing, and an example of an excellent time to paraphrase a complex but important idea for your own writing.

Follow-Up Questions for Reflection or Discussion

After reading the chapter, please discuss the following questions:

1. The word "critical" is used in many ways in academic contexts. What is your understanding of reading critically? How is it similar to or different from the definitions given in this text?
2. What strategies have you developed regarding reading across different genres?
3. What do you find to be the most challenging part of the relationship between reading and writing?

Assignment #3: Finding and Taking Notes on Sources

For this assignment, there are three important steps. By the time you are done, you will have found sources and taken notes to prepare you for the drafting process.

Step 1: Choose a Topic

By now, you have a number of ideas, and perhaps a few valuable sources you were using to practice citations. While it may seem like choosing a topic for your paper is something that happens as you write, usually a paper at the graduate level requires enough sources and interaction with the existing literature that while ideas are important, you likely need to think about what literature is relevant and how you will use it before you begin.

Ambitious projects are wonderful. That said, there is a time and a place for more or less ambition. For many courses or exams, the intention is to establish that you have knowledge of a topic, and while you could write a clever critique of an existing author which demonstrates that you have that knowledge, that would be more than is required and should only be attempted if you are certain you can do it well, demonstrating that you have that knowledge in the process. A project building off of the work of favorite researchers, agreeing with them, is perhaps less complex, but still requires you to demonstrate knowledge. Whether the paper is for this kind of situation or not, consider carefully whether your idea can fulfill the needs of the audience. In publications, for example, it is tempting to just write about your interpretations of the field or your ideas, but in many fields this will seldom be well-received by publishers unless you have some kind of data or analysis to support your claims–for you, the paper may feel like it is primarily about your claims, but for them it may feel like it is primarily about your data, and should be

written as such, as readers are always the ones who determine if a paper will ultimately be read.

Finally, do not choose a topic that is too small or too large either for your sources or for your finished project. If your goal as a graduate student was to write about racial injustice in the state of Ohio, that would be a very long project, perhaps even a book, and one with many, many potential sources you would have to wade through. If your goal as a graduate student was to write about racial injustice at the Ohio State University, that might be a suitable topic for a typical article or paper, and would have a manageable number of sources to examine without having too many. If your goal was to look at racial injustice in a particular department at the Ohio State University, it may be difficult to write a full paper or article and difficult to find many sources.

These are only examples, and there can be exceptions; the point is that you should be strategic about what you want to write about before you start trying to find all the sources about a topic, since in many cases you will need a thorough if not exhaustive knowledge of the literature to write about a topic in an informed way. Your plan for your paper may evolve as you read the literature on the topic, and this is good, but radical changes may prove a setback to your work. Remember the maxim: "work smarter, not harder" or graduate school may quickly overwhelm you!

A *topic* is a general area, usually expressed by a term or phrase, such as "marine wildlife". A *thesis* is a specific idea, something which a person can agree or disagree with, usually expressed in a sentence, such as "marine wildlife are especially susceptible to pollution and climate change"–a person could agree or disagree with that idea, but they cannot agree or disagree with just "marine wildlife". Write a topic, or better still when you are able, a thesis which you think is practical for this paper, and have that in front of you at all times when working on the paper from this point on–it can be adjusted, but the paper must remain focused on that thesis. Your instructor may have additional guidelines about the length, total number of cited sources, etc.

Step 2: Choose Sources

After you have a plan, the next step is actually locating sources. You have a vast array of tools and choices for how you go about this, and some of them are not very reliable. On the unreliable side of possible sources are the vast majority of websites: books and journals and even magazines require some kind of editorial approval, but many websites are created by the author themselves and have no expectations about the reliability of the information they include. It is no coincidence that this era of misinformation and disinformation corresponds to the surging popularity of Internet use. This is not to say that the Internet is bad, should be censored, or even that it is useless, but simply to say that one needs to apply caution before getting invested in using a website as a source.

There are three prominent examples of useful things on websites:

1. Access to existing, reliable, published documents. More and more books, articles, etc., are accessible easily or even primarily through the Internet. Some search engines, such as Google Scholar, specialize in locating these; however, **remember that you are responsible for what kind of sources appear in your paper**, and do not assume that everything on Google Scholar is necessarily reliable. Review and consider first.

2. Information from websites with protected domains. Some kinds of websites, such as .edu or .gov, require credentials to own or operate a website under that domain, and as a result are more reliable than websites that anyone can purchase and write what they will, e.g. .com, .org, etc. Universities and governments naturally do not allow just anyone to post on their websites, and so these may be a reliable source. One practical example is the CIA World Factbook, at www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/, which has a vast collection of statistics and demographic information for nearly every part of the world, and can be a useful source if you need to know an estimated population, etc. for a paper.

3. Finally, websites may guide you to reliable sources. Wikipedia, for example, notorious in academic circles as an open-source reference guide, may only really be suitable for casual use, but it can be useful for learning the language and important names or publications in a field. For example, if one were trying to find the technical term for "someone who speaks two languages", typing that into Wikipedia would likely take you to a page about "bilingualism", and then you would know the term, and from the page there other words which might be useful. You could also consult the reliable publications mentioned in the article or in the citations for the Wikipedia page. In this way, while it is not a good source, Wikipedia can still be on the path to a good source.

The most reliable sources are typically academic journals and scholarly books in which different authors contribute chapters to an edited volume. This is not merely arbitrary reputation: they are more reliable because unlike other books which are reviewed only by an editor, these academic texts are *peer reviewed*, meaning that each submission (that is, the article or chapter) is sent to another expert in the field, usually anonymously for fairness, and then critiqued by that expert, and by a few others. The critiques then go back to the editor, who is typically themselves an expert in the field, who decides if a submission can be published in the academic source as it was initially submitted (this is rare), cannot be published (this is uncommon, simply because most people who submit papers usually know what is expected of them), or, most commonly, that it can be published, but only after some major or minor revisions are made. After the author makes those revisions, the submission goes back to the editor again, who may send it back to other experts, or make a decision then about whether it is adequately revised to be published. **Even in this phase, a submission can be rejected, representing that the standards are high** for peer-reviewed academic publications. Be cautious still, as not all academic publications are peer-reviewed, but any publisher which uses a peer

review system will likely declare it proudly on their website. This concept of peer review is one that will be revisited in Chapter 5.

On a somewhat related note, for your own publications, be warned that there are predatory publishers, usually ones who solicit you for submissions rather than you making a submission first, who use your publications to sell low-reliability journals without adequate peer review. They will essentially publish anything, and will take advantage of a good researcher's work rather than giving it the respect of a proper review and critique–that researcher would then essentially be ignored by respected academia. Some are so brazen that they will request money from the researchers to publish their article or chapter, which is truly a sign that they are suspect since their income should come from satisfied readers rather than desperate writers. In any case, have no association with these journals or publishers, either as sources for your writing or as eventual destinations for your hard work. There are many lists online of predatory journals, which unfortunately are non-exhaustive and need to be constantly updated–be sure to consult one if you are suspicious about a publisher's or journal's practices. [Here is one example of such a list.](#)

Find 5-10 reliable academic sources related to your topic. In some fields, that is more likely to be books, and in other fields, that is more likely to be articles. **Consult the campus libraries and librarians for guidance, as they are there to help.**

Step 3: Take Notes on the Source

After you have a stack of interesting sources, begin to take notes about them. Naturally, there are different ways to go about that, but in the authors' experience, tables such as Tables 2 and 3 below work best.

For Table 2, note the name or authors of the source, usually with the year of publication, and then write the thesis in the next, wider column. This will allow a very general comparison of your sources, although it can be difficult to make specific comparisons from this unless the theses are closely related. These can be quotations from the text, or in your own words, but be sure to put quotations taken

from the original source in quotation marks so that it is clear to you that they are quotations when you later go to write based on these notes. Most formats require quotations to include page numbers, so note the page number as well.

Table 2: Comparing Sources by Thesis

Source	Thesis

Table 3, below, allows for a more focused comparison of your sources. Make note of three (or more) issues related to your research that the articles address. You might want to choose ones commonly addressed in the articles you found, or ones central to your own research (in the latter case, you may end up needing more sources). Then, fill in the name or authors of the source, usually with the year of publication in the left column, and any notable theories and methods in the next two columns. In the third column and onward, make a note about how the article addressed each of your chosen issues. Not all sources are likely to address the issues you are writing about, and so you can simply write "N/A" for "not applicable" in that case. When there is a pattern in the answers you have for some or several of the issues you chose, it is probably a good topic for further research. The methods or theories used may be a factor in how these issues are considered, and so are included in the table. You may add to the table any other factors you think may be important.

Table 3: Comparing Sources by Theories, Methods, and Issues

Source	Theory or Theories	Method	Issue #1	Issue #2	Issue #3

Notice that with the table, all of the information is arranged in a way that allows for easy comparison. Is one author more common than the others? Are there clear trends in the conclusions about the topic? Are there prominent outliers or exceptions? When you are writing about the literature, you will have to make statements like, "most authors agree with X, but a few think Y", which will require you to have been able to make these kinds of comparisons. A neat table will help with that. Also, as mentioned in Chapter 2, it is a good idea to copy down any especially good quotations for possible use or paraphrasing, or to paraphrase a valuable piece of information; however, be sure to use quotation marks around the parts you quoted rather than your paraphrasing in your notes so that you do not accidentally plagiarize. Again, most formats require page numbers when creating a citation for a quotation, so be sure to include page numbers from the original source for the notes you take. These page numbers also allow you to go back and re-read a section if new questions come up about a particular note during the writing process.

Collectively, these notes and tables form your *annotated bibliography* on this subject. The authors have annotated bibliographies on various topics they write about, going back over years of their research, and which they add to over time, forming a very substantial body of notes and citable literature for current and future projects. For some of you, this may be a valuable example to follow.

Your instructor will give instructions about how to submit the tables you created, as well as possibly your notes.

References

Shore, Z. (2016). *Grad school essentials: A crash course in scholarly skills.* University of California Press.

WRITING AT THE GRADUATE LEVEL

Introduction

You will soon find or have already found that the requirements and purposes of writing at the graduate level will depend on your discipline. For example, a literature review serves different purposes across majors (e.g., economics, psychology, mathematics, engineering, and education). It can be a short description, providing background information to the topics in question. A literature review could also be a rigorous analysis and synthesis on a certain concept discussed in previous literature. Or, it could be a concise overview of existing studies and a place to show the research niche and the importance of the research. Due to different writing conventions, citation, and reference practices, an essential part of writing practice at the graduate level, vary across disciplines as well (Pecorari, 2006; Samraj, 2004). "Five-paragraph essays", familiar to many of you, no longer exist.

ESL composition teachers, having a background in English composition, applied linguistics, and language education, cannot require you to write a literature review without first telling you what a literature review is in the class and whether you can adapt the literature review to the specific

Photo by Glenn Carstens-Peters on Unsplash.

requirements of your disciplines or not. Clear definitions and explanations are always important. If the information is missing, you are entitled to request it. However, it poses a challenge to instructors to determine what they should teach and require of graduate students with different fields of study. Which genre should the teachers teach so that you feel the content is still relevant to your study and maintain motivation throughout the semester? If an

instructor just asks you to write a literature review on a general topic, such as "Should animals be used in labs?", not related to your field, you are likely to feel this class is not helpful to your career or even a waste of your time. Many students in the past mentioned teachers should focus more on grammar in general, often a perennial request from students. While grammar exercises may seem familiar or easily able to demonstrate some kind of progress with, not only is basic grammar something that you have likely already mastered, but more subtle uses of grammar are also often discipline-specific. A common grammatical practice, particularly related to tone, positioning, word choice, audience, etc., in humanities and social science might be frowned upon by scholars from other fields, and vice-versa.

In this case, teaching and learning a decontextualized grammar and writing genre will not be helpful to you to be successful in your discipline. Instead, teaching and learning how to analyze essential components and functions of writing in a specific context and reflect upon the involved writing process will benefit you in the long term. That is, learning how to write at the graduate level in ESL class should not be about mastering a certain written genre, but to develop your skills that can be transferred when writing contexts change. Transfer means using "prior knowledge in new ways and in new situations" (Wardle, 2007, p. 68). Thus, this chapter is dedicated to train you on transfer skills that you can internalize and apply to your future writing practice in your disciplines.

To make skill transfer happen across disciplines, it is important to balance the local and general knowledge being taught and learnt in class. Larsen-Freeman (2013) points out that "if knowledge is too tightly bound to the context in which it was learned, transfer to superficially different contexts will be reduced significantly... general knowledge that works together with local knowledge is important for transfer" (p. 115), which is supported by Green (2015) who claims that transfer failure occurs when "learning in formal education contexts is often highly localized (or 'domain specific') and, hence, does not lend itself to transfer to other contexts" (p.

3). With this being said, although writing across different curricula requires various foundations of local knowledge as each subject in each major is unique, this chapter particularly pays attention to your analyzing and reflecting skills, rather than your knowledge on a specific writing genre (e.g., literature review). More specifically, this chapter focuses on analyses of writing conventions in different disciplines, understanding metacognitive languages, and the internalization of the writing process.

Building Transfer Skills through Metacognitive Analysis

Developing transfer skills for writing across disciplines involves metacognitive analysis, meaning intentional and explicit analysis and reflection. This analysis includes several steps as stated below:

Collect Model Texts

First of all, make sure of the type of writing you need to do for a class, conference, grant, etc. For example, it could be a conference proposal or grant proposal. The model texts can be published research articles from academic journals or from course work (e.g., reading materials, sample writings provided by professors).

Skim the Model Texts and Locate Major Components

After collecting the model texts, you skim the texts and find out all the major components of the model texts. The major components can be signified by subheadings. For example, if it is a research article, typical writing components include *an introduction*, *research questions*, *literature review*, *methodology*, *findings/results*, *discussion*, and *conclusion and implications*.

Analyze each Component

After identifying each component, you should read each component closely for multiple times and analyze the *function(s)* of each component as well as the organizational *structure* within each component.

Examine Rhetorical Elements

After the functional and structural analysis of each component, you should turn to the language use in each component. For example, what are the characteristics of the tone, tense, and word choice in a literature review of a research article from your field? What are those different from other parts of the research article? Is

"I" or "we" used in each component? What is the tense used in each part?

Explore the Use of Citation and Reference

Citation and reference use are essential in writing for graduate students. As mentioned in Chapter 2, there are many different citation and reference rules across disciplines and also vary based upon specific documentation styles. You need to pay attention to how sources are cited and incorporated into the text and why the sources are included. Remember that citation use is also a political act. You are more likely to cite the scholars whom you are familiar with and whose works are in line with yours. You may want to ask yourself: are the sources used appropriately to align with your own argument?

Scholarly Implications of In-text Citations

Before moving on, it is good to take a moment to review, in context, what paraphrasing and quoting mean **in context**–when it was discussed in Chapter 2, that was mostly about the legal implications and mechanical process. Now, it is time to examine the scholarly implications of citing the work of another author by paraphrasing as opposed to quoting, etc.

Several excerpts, using APA, from the article "Sociocultural Theory in the L2 Classroom" by Neomy Storch (2017) are underlined to show how in-text citations can be used for different purposes:

Example 1:

"Initially SCT [socio-cultural theory] was met with vigorous resistance from established researchers in the field of SLA (e.g., Gregg, 1993; Long, 1990)" (Storch, 2017, p. 69).

Purpose: In-text citation at the end of a sentence (author's last name and year of publication with

parentheses). It is used to back up the author's argument by giving examples of the "established researchers". As you can tell here, the cited sources are all from the 1990s. **Why did the author cite old sources, not more recent ones?**

Example 2:

"Poehner (2008), for example, writing about the reciprocity of the learner in the ZPD [Zone of Proximal Development], notes that we should view the learner as agentive rather than as a passive recipient of assistance" (Storch, 2017, p. 71).

Purpose: In-text citation within a sentence with *summarizing* and *paraphrasing*. It is used to give an example to support the author's own argument. Compared to just mentioning a study like in Example 1 as background information and evidence, the specific point from Poehner (2008) has the significance to be emphasized in the text to further support the author's argument.

Example 3:

"Swain (2006) proposed the term 'languaging' to

describe how language mediates the thinking process. She defined languaging as a 'process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language" (2006, p. 98)' (Storch, 2017, p. 71).

Purpose: In-text citation within a sentence with short *quotes*. It is used to draw upon an important study and scholar to give a definition to an essential term. Instead of paraphrasing, quotes are used to more directly state an idea using the author's original words, offering a particularly clear explanation of a concept or offering a unique insight.

Example 4:

"A study by Guk and Kellog (2007), which compared teacher-fronted activities and group work in an EFL primary class in Korea, found more evidence of scaffolding in the group interactions than in whole-class teacher–student interactions" (Storch, 2017, p. 74).

Purpose: In-text citation within a sentence with *summarizing* and *paraphrasing*. It is used to highlight findings of the cited study, which has an essential value for Storch (2017). Also, by starting with "A study" rather than the authors (see Example 2), the finding of the study is more emphasized than the authors.

Apart from giving credits to the original authors (as illustrated in Chapter 2), In-text citations have been used in diverse ways to

indicate the value of the cited sources. Therefore, it is important to know why a particular study is included and how it is incorporated in the text, and what purposes it serves.

Reflection Questions:

1. How are the sources incorporated in the model text? (e.g., What are the introductory phrases used? What verbs are used?) How similar or different is the usage from the one practiced in your field?
2. What are the strategies used in the in-text citation practices?
3. Do you know the differences among summaries, paraphrases, and quotations? How are summaries, paraphrases, and quotations used for different purposes?

References

The practice of references varies across disciplines. Below are some examples from the same article "Sociocultural Theory in the L2 Classroom" by Neomy Storch (2017). The author used APA (American Psychological Association) style.

Example 1: Journal Article

Aljaafreh, A., & Lantolf, J. P. (1994). Negative feedback as regulation and second language learning in the zone of proximal development. *Modern Language Journal*, 78, 465–483.https://doi.org/10.2307/328585

Example 2: Book Chapter

Brooks, L., & Swain, M. (2009). Languaging in collaborative writing: Creation and response to expertise. In A. Mackey & C. Polio (Eds.), *Multiple perspectives on interaction: Second language research in honor of Susan M. Gass* (pp. 58–89). Routledge.

Example 3: Book

Bitchener, J., & Storch, N. (2016). *Written CF for L2 development*. Multilingual Matters.

Example 4: Dissertation

Watanabe, Y. (2014). *Collaborative and independent writing: Japanese university English learners' processes, texts and opinions* (Unpublished PhD thesis). Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, University of Toronto.

Reflection Questions:

1. What is italicized in the references?
2. What do you notice about the names of the authors?
3. What are the rules similar or different across different types of publications (e.g., books, book chapters, journal articles, and dissertation)?

4. Are those rules applicable to the type of documentation style commonly practiced in your field? Please give examples.

Report the Analyses

After you are done with all the steps (from Step 1 to Step 5), you are ready to write a report on your analyses. The analysis paper does not have a certain format. The essence is to show your analyses clearly and support your analyses with evidence from the model text you select. Remember the goal of this analysis is to help you understand how a certain type of writing is constructed, its rules, and how effectively you can write one for the target audience.

Reflect upon the Analysis Process

After you are done with the analysis report, your reflection upon the analysis process will be beneficial to internalize the process. You will reflect upon how you analyze the model text, how easy or difficult the analysis is, whom you ask for help, what skills you have acquired, how you might apply those skills in analyzing new writing texts, what you learn from this analysis process, etc.

An Example of Following a Model

Here is a scenario, demonstrating how one might use a model text to inform their own writing. Obviously, you do not have to do this exactly, but it might give you ideas for how you can learn to write by following the example of other writings. Sometimes, since your advisor may not be very involved with all of your projects, such a pattern of observation, imitation, and adaptation is the best way to learn how to write a specific kind of text.

A doctoral student, Huiyuan Wang, from Language Education is preparing a literature review for her research. As this is not a course assignment, she has no model texts from her professor. She decided to find a model text online.

Collect Model Texts

She searched on Google Scholar and the university's online library catalog. She found a model text which was written by a well-known scholar from her field. The main reason she chose this model text is that the literature review in the text has a similar purpose for the literature review in her text and has a form that is familiar and comfortable for her. The model text is "Becoming a Writing Teacher: Using 'identity' as an Analytic Lens to Understand EFL Writing Teachers' Development" by Icy Lee, published in 2013.

Skim the Model Texts and Locate Major Components

As she wanted to know how to write the literature review section, she skimmed the model text and looked for the relevant components of the text. She found the section called "Conceptual Framework", relevant to what she was looking for. According to Rudestam and Newton (2015), a *conceptual framework*, also known as a *theoretical framework*, is "a less-developed form of a theory, [consisting] of statements that link abstract concepts (e.g., motivation, role) to empirical data" (p. 6). Furthermore, they make

the notable observation that "if not placed within such a context [of a theoretical framework], the proposed study [and empirical data, etc.] has a 'So what?' quality" (p. 6). Finding a study with a similar conceptual framework can be a valuable model for your own writing, as the way that framework is introduced and used throughout the text represents what readers familiar with that framework expect. Without a model, it can be difficult to know how to use a conceptual framework, because it is an abstraction.

Analyze each Component

Below is what Huiyuang Wang analyzed regarding the "Conceptual Framework" section:

In the "Conceptual Framework" section, the first part is about "identity", which is the main concept that needs to be defined and operationalized in the study. First, Icy Lee analyzed the general characteristics of identity, followed by a specific theorization of identity, namely **identity as discourse, practice, and activity**, in which the author drew upon different scholars to explain what it means by saying identity as discourse, practice, and activity. So far the author has not conceptualized the concept in the field of second language writing where the author is from. This is followed by the next section where Lee (2013) states that

- "identity" in the study is defined in terms of the ways in which teachers use language to talk about themselves, their roles, and their practices as teachers of writing (i.e., identity in discourse and narrated identity in practice), as well as how they position themselves within the social, political,

and historical contexts of their work (i.e., identity in activity). (p. 332)

This is a nice transition from a broad overview and conceptualization of identity to the conceptualization of the concept in the L2 writing field where the author wanted to situate her study. The next section is about research on identity in the field of second language writing to explore what has been studied and what is wanting:

- In L2 writing, research that specifically addresses the identity formation of writing teachers is scarce, though some previous work has been carried out to investigate teachers' conceptualizations of writing and what the teaching/ learning of writing entails. (Lee, 2013, p. 332)

Lee (2013) further points out that despite the increased research in the ESL context, there is a lack of research in the EFL (English as a foreign language) context to demonstrate the need for the research in this context. Generally speaking, in the conceptual framework section, Icy Lee defined significant terms, overviewed the research in L2 writing related to teacher education as well as the lack of study on L2 writing teacher identity, which is a broad to specific writing process.

Reflection Questions:

1. How do you feel about the analysis by the student? Is the

analysis clear and detailed?

2. What other information can you include in the analysis?
3. What conceptual frameworks, also known as theoretical frameworks, have you encountered in your reading? Were there any which stood out to you as valuable for your own analyses?
4. How does this analysis inspire you on your analysis of a model text from your field?

This is just a brief analysis to show how you can analyze the functions and structures of a component in a model text. Your analysis can be much more detailed to include information, such as the specific logic of writing in each paragraph, the relationship between each paragraph, as well as the function of each paragraph.

Examine Rhetorical Elements

Here is a brief analysis from Huiyuan Wang:

The tone of the part is academic and formal. Teachers, research, studies, and writing are the main *participants* mentioned in this section. Active voice is dominantly used. Verbs, such as investigate, define, demonstrate, focus, attempt, and pose, are widely used. The tense most frequently used is *present tense*. The first person point of view is rarely used, except for once Lee used in the sentence "we have little knowledge about how average EFL teachers working in the school context view writing" (2013, p. 333).

Reflection Questions:

1. *Participants* means the subjects or nouns involved in a text. What are the participants commonly shown in a model text in your field? You can also find a model text and look for the participants specifically in that model text.
2. What are the verbs commonly used in your field in a model text in your field? Which is more commonly used- active or passive voice- in your field?
3. Is "I" or "we" commonly used in your field?

Explore the use of citation and reference

Huiyuan Wang has difficulty analyzing the intext citations in the model text. Could you help her? Below are several examples of how in-text citation is used:

Example 1:

"therefore, provides a frame or a lens through which we can examine how teachers act, how they understand their work, and how identity is negotiated and shaped through experience (Clarke, 2008; Sachs, 2005) and influenced by contextual factors (Miller, 2009)" (Lee, 2013, p. 332).

Example 2:

"In Cumming's (2003) more recent interview study, he investigates how highly experienced ESL/EFL writing instructors [...]" (Lee, 2013, p. 333).

> *Example 3:*
>
> "Recent studies by Casanave (2009) and Lee (2010) have attempted to address such a gap, suggesting that EFL writing teacher development is affected by the ecology of teaching" (Lee, 2013, p. 333).

Reflection Questions:

1. Do you know which documentation style is used? How could you tell?
2. What is the purpose of each type of in-text citation?
3. What other purposes could you find from the model text?
4. How different or similar is it with the citation practice in your field?

Reflect upon the Analysis Process
    Writing prompts for the reflection are given:

1. What is the author of the model text in writing this literature review?
2. What is your purpose for writing your literature review?
3. How many sections are included in the model text?
4. How many sections will you have for your literature review? Why? Which part might be the most difficult part to write? Why is it the most difficult part? How are you going to prepare to write this section?

Here is Huiyuan Wang's reflection:

I think Icy Lee wrote the literature review section because it was a required section by the journal where she published the paper. The literature review section is also a ubiquitous section required by most journals in the field. Also, the literature review section is important because it provides the theoretical, methodological, and research background to readers. The importance is also the reason why I want to know how to write a review for my own research. In Icy Lee's paper, the literature review has four sections, following a general to a specific logic. I will apply this strategy to my own writing of the review. I think for now what is most challenging for me is to read a lot of relevant articles for the review. I need to start reading as soon as possible and possibly have a plan on how many texts I should read every day and how I can effectively document the texts for my writing. In the future, I will start with reading when I need to write a review.

Reflection Questions:

1. Did your field ask for exhaustive reading for certain types of writing?
2. What is usually the most challenging part of your writing?
3. What are some successful strategies you have used to overcome the challenge(s) in your writing?

Reinforcing Transfer Skills Through Independent Practice

One significant criterion in developing transfer abilities, that is, being able to apply knowledge or skills from one context to a similar context, is to make you aware of the usefulness of what you are learning (Larsen-Freeman, 2013). So, you are going to bring in a

specific writing assignment from your disciplines. The writing assignments could be about writing a grant proposal, a conference proposal, a lab report, etc. Follow the specific steps mentioned above to practice the metacognitive analysis. What you need to submit is an analysis report and a reflection paper.

Writing as a Process

Let's start with a definition of writing. Complete the sentence: Writing is _ _ _ _ _ _ _.

How many of you have written it down that writing is a process? Probably not many. Why? If you are familiar with the TOEFL, IELTS, GRE, GMAT, or any other English language tests, you will not think writing is an *iterative* process, meaning that different parts of it are done and redone until they are high quality in a **process**. In those exams, you have to compose an essay within 30 or so minutes, which means you do not have the time to edit your paper. You may not even have the time to reread your writing after you drafted it. However, when you are in a college in the U.S., you will relearn what writing is. Most universities in the U.S. uphold that writing is a process, a series of writing steps that you need to be engaged in to reach a final writing product. The series of steps include brainstorming, drafting, receiving feedback, revision, editing, and reflection. How many of the steps are you familiar with?

Stressing the writing process is important because no matter which type of writing, going through a certain series of writing steps is helpful to enhance your writing skills; and it also guarantees writing quality. Particularly, through different steps, different layers of errors or problems will emerge, which gives you an extra chance to revise your writing. For example, during the process of receiving feedback, you can ask more experienced peers or professors to read your writing and give you feedback. International students from other countries with different writing conventions easily overlook written discourse in a specific field in the U.S.; therefore, having more experienced writers read their writing is beneficial. Giving feedback on others' papers is also a learning process, through which you can review the content and reflect upon your own writing.

Although writing as a process is widely accepted in the U.S., not all steps are needed for each time when you write. It depends on the

type of writing and the purposes of your writing. If you have never practiced writing as a process when you are in your home country, this will be a new learning experience for you. More importantly, you need to form your own writing habit that works the best for you. To begin with, your responsibility is to practice those practices and develop the skills in each step for your own benefits. Only when you internalize your own writing process or habit which works for you, you could probably utilize the skill in your future writing assignments, and more likely that you would adapt that process to new contexts.

Issues with Grammar

At this phase in your English language education, it can be reliably assumed that you have likely had hundreds and hundreds of hours using and practicing English grammar, that you have some refined skills, and some consistent problems. However, there are two things to keep in mind: (1) your skills and problems are likely different from your classmates since you each have different linguistic and educational backgrounds, and (2) literally everyone has problems with grammar in basically everything they write. This again is not a problem only for "non-native" English users. The best thing you can do is learn to be self-aware and review carefully. The simplest thing the authors can recommend is that when you review a text, try reading it **aloud**. When you read aloud, you are involving more of your linguistic faculties than when you are simply writing, as you see it, say it, and hear it all at once. Generally, if it sounds off, it probably is. Or, more pressingly, it may or may not be grammatical, but is there a clearer way to write what you are trying to say? If you have the luxury of co-authors, classmates, or editors, a second mind is an excellent resource–even if you do not think they are as qualified, they represent part of your potential readership, and you can consider writing for their greater understanding. There is, after all, no "correct" writing: the **only** kind of effective writing that exists is writing which **communicates with the reader**. That is all. Neither more nor less. In terms of grammar and otherwise, write and edit for clarity. On a related note, consider making confusing sentences more simple, as no one in academia will give you extra points for writing sentences readers have to go back to more than once to understand.

Follow-Up Questions for Reflection or Discussion

After reading the chapter, please discuss the following questions:

1. What are the weaknesses of your writing? How do they relate to your discipline?
2. How does what you learn from this chapter (particularly on analyzing and reflection skills) help you enhance your writing?
3. What do you think about the emphasis on student agency?
4. What suggestions do you want to share with your peers about enhancing writing for career development?

Assignment #4: Rough Draft

In a strange way, by now, the actual process of writing the paper may seem fairly uncomplicated. By now, you have a thesis, you have sources, and you have notes. There are two important steps for this assignment.

Step 1: Writing an Outline

Your instructor may ask for you to prepare an *outline* before you begin writing. An outline is like a list of your main points, designated for importance with different numbering: I, II, III, IV, V, etc. for main points; A, B, C, etc., for subpoints; 1, 2, 3, etc. for sub-subpoints; and so on. This document is like a **list**–do **not** write out your whole paper as an outline. Each point in an outline has little more than a sentence of explanation; perhaps only a few words. Consider the following example, an outline for a short essay designed to persuade U.S. employers to offer paid maternity leave for both parents:

I. Introduction

      A. Thesis: The U.S. should offer paid maternity leave for both parents of a child.

      B. Foreshadow points; see below

II. Demographic Need for Children

      A. The U.S. population growth is sustained largely by immigration

        1.   Large-scale immigration is not as reliable as domestic birth rate

      B. Even if a population is allowed to decline,

the decline must be gradual to prevent economic collapse

   C. Paid leave helps to incentivize potential new parents.

III. The Importance of Parents

    A. Children form intense bonds early in life

     1.   Both parents should be involved in this
     2.   These bonds take time to develop

    B. Healthier families contribute to a more productive workplace

     1.   A family in which both parents are more able to fulfill the needs of child care is more flexible and in turn healthier and more able.
     2.   A family in poverty will reduce work efficiency

IV. Conclusion

    A. Review points and restate thesis; see above

Whether or not your instructor wants to collect your outline, it is good to have a general plan for your paper written out going into it, so that there are not redundant sections and so that each part has clear evidence and clear transitions.

Step 2: Composing a Rough Draft

After outlining, it may even seem simple to just explain each point more until it becomes a paragraph, adding sources, etc. This is the part where your paper finally looks like a paper. Make your main points into separate sections, and remove the numbering. Add an introduction which presents your thesis and summarizes

your points with a hook, and add a conclusion which presents your thesis again with your argument summarized in full in a way that reconnects to the immediate concerns of your readers. (The difference between the summary of the points and the thesis in the conclusion versus the summary of the points and the thesis that was in the introduction is that by the time your readers get to the conclusion, they should have seen your evidence and accepted each of your points–in your conclusion you can bring those together so that they accept your thesis.) In your field, you may need other sections, such as a Discussion section, etc. Add those. The rough draft does not need to be correctly formatted or perfect, but know that in the next phase, when people are reviewing your work to make suggestions, attempting to have correct formatting will allow them to point out possible formatting errors as well. Even expert writers can make formatting errors, so do not underestimate how common they can be.

No example of a rough draft is provided here because the rough draft will vary depending on the nature of the intended finished project. Your instructor may have more specific and appropriate examples for what you are doing. Consult your instructor about whether or not they would like you to submit your rough draft and how.

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COMMUNICATION IN AMERICAN CLASSROOMS

Introduction

As alluded to in the first chapter, classroom communication could be very different from what you were accustomed to in your home educational systems. In many countries in the world, students are expected to be obedient and listen to teachers' lectures

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quietly during class time. Knowledge in this case is transmitted through teacher-centered modes of delivery. Student-student interactions and student-teacher communications are constrained, a constraint reflected in the narrow rows and columns in which chairs and desks are arranged, all facing the front of the classroom as if the podium was a font of supreme knowledge. However, in many other countries, such as the U.S., classrooms are often full of chairs and desks that can move around easily. Sometimes teachers would ask you to arrange your chairs in a large circle or several circles with your group members. Whole-class discussions and small-group discussions are common in *participative learning* (Rubin, 1993). Participative learning may feel foreign, but it has some common features (Rubin, 1993, p. 189):

- answering instructors' questions with elaboration
- asking questions during class
- responding directly to what other students say in class
- expressing a point of view by offering pertinent and original illustrations, challenges, and extensions
- contributing to small-group problem-solving exercises
- engaging in role-playing and simulation exercises
- choosing one's own topics for projects and papers

In this classroom model, students are required to contribute to the discussions by listening to their peers' ideas, sharing their thoughts, and being agentic learners. Teachers are most of the time the facilitators in classroom discussions and other activities. Knowledge in this case is therefore acquired through free and open exchange of ideas. If you are not from the educational system, you may feel a sense of inadequacy and frustration while participating in oral classroom activities (Kim, 2006), especially if it feels as though speaking in the classroom feels like some kind of high-stakes assessment one was not able to somehow practice for.

But indeed, how would one "practice" for a class discussion anyway? Each teacher might have different requirements for classroom discussions leading to slightly different classroom norms, even comparing classrooms within the same larger culture. Make sure you communicate with your instructors and check the course syllabus carefully to be aware of the course requirements relating to working with your classmates, as sometimes classroom discussions are **graded**. This means your instructors will keep track of your classroom participation and assign scores at the end of each class or by the end of the semester. That said, do not panic: experienced teachers know that conversations in class are organic events, and it should not become some kind of contest to say the most words. Teachers are more likely to notice that a particular student never participates in class discussions or activities rather than trying to rank who participates the most.

Some of you might wonder why it is important to engage in classroom discussions. One basic fact is that classroom teaching and learning rely on interactions between students and teachers as well as between students and students. Through interactions, ideas are exchanged and could be expanded. More questions could be raised and lead to major discoveries. More importantly, participating in those discussions is preparing you to **become** a scholar in the field. Professional communication skills need to be learnt through practice. Only through your active participation, you learn ways in

terms of how to ask questions and how to comment on answers in a professional and respectful manner.

Different Classroom Expectations

As mentioned in the introduction, each instructor might have different requirements for classroom discussions. Let's review two examples.

Example 1:

Here is the teacher expectation on classroom participation from a class on Ethnography:

> Class discussion. Seminar-style as in this will be organic, give-and-take, opinions and positions respectfully exchanged. For the first three weeks, I'll take the lead in running the class. After that, I'll do this in coordination with one of you who will circulate a series of questions/issues to organize discussion—to be posted the night before (Sunday) on our sakai site by 6 pm. These initial remarks/questions will start the class after which we will go into a more seminar-like exchange. (Allison, [Critical Ethnography/Ethnographies,](#) Spring 2020)

Example 2:

Here is another example from a class at the Department of Civil, Environmental, and Geodetic Engineering:

> Advance reading and active participation are critical

elements of success in this course (and in life). Lively and active classroom discussions are effective learning mechanisms for you and your peers (and thus incorporated into your class participation grade), so be prepared to contribute to the discussion during class. You are expected to engage in the learning environment that will be created within the classroom, and it is important for each student to engage deeply and critically with the material. Consequently, laptop computers, tablets, and other devices will not be allowed unless specifically stated that they may be used to look up some information related to class, or you use them to take notes. If you choose to use such a device to take notes, the wireless capabilities must be turned off (otherwise known as "Airplane Mode"). Similarly, mobile phones must be turned off, unless you are awaiting an important phone call (e.g., your pregnant wife may be close to labor, the Chicago Cubs are about to win the World Series, again). If you are expecting such a phone call, please tell me before the start of class to get permission to leave your phone on (in vibrate mode, please). Courtesy and respect for your colleagues during class discussions will be enforced. Out of respect for my schedule and yours, class sessions will begin and end on time. (Bielicki, Science, Engineering, and Public Policy, Spring 2016)

Reflection Questions:

1. What are the specific expectations of the teachers on classroom participation and discussions?
2. What do you learn to be professional in classroom discussions

from the two examples?
3. What are the classroom expectations in your home country? Be specific, if possible.
4. What are the classroom expectations in your discipline in the U.S.? Be specific, if possible.
5. Which classroom participation is more challenging to you, whole-class discussion or small-group discussion? Why?
6. What's your concerns in terms of classroom participation, particularly for oral participation?

Strategies and Skills in Classroom Participation

Participating in classroom discussions is not always easy if you are not used to this kind of classroom participation. Also, discussions depend on your understanding of the content in question, your listening skills, and your speaking skills. Below are some strategies that are perceived useful for novice graduate students.

Strategy 1: Always prepare well before the class. This means read materials assigned by your professors and always write down notes you have. These notes could be questions you have about the materials, questions about how the materials apply to the larger

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subject of the course, or any valuable observations you may have about the material or subject that occurred to you in reading it. Do not assume that your ideas are not worth sharing: your perspective is likely unique, and all research depends on people looking at human knowledge from different angles until they realize how they might learn something new. When people stop asking questions or rethinking the way those questions are answered, all science will die.

Strategy 2: Ask questions if you are not ready to make comments on your peers' responses or do not feel confident in answering questions. Your instructor may appreciate a thoughtful question just as much or more as an insightful observation, and there is a strong chance other people in the class have similar questions.

Strategy 3: Increase and diversify the types of oral participation in class. After you learn how to ask questions in class, you should start

to comment on your peers' responses or answers. There are three ways: (1) You can **add to** your peers' responses by saying "I want to add to X's answer that…" or "I agree with what X just said, and I want to add to their point that…"; (2) You can **disagree with** your peers' point of view by saying "Thank you for sharing your ideas. I have a slightly different understanding that… " or "My understanding is very different. I think…"; and (3) You can ask for **clarifications** from your peers by saying "Your point is very interesting, but I do not think I understand it well. Do you mind giving us some examples?" or "If I understand correctly, you mean that…"

Tip: At the beginning of the semester, if you are not sure how to participate in class, you can **observe** how your peers engage themselves in classroom discussions. Learning from those more experienced graduate students will be very helpful. Talking to them directly when possible can help you be more integrated into the department community, and help lead to productive academic collaborations in the future.

Classroom Communication Anxiety

Communication anxiety in class is a common phenomenon for all students, including domestic and international students. Many factors can lead to communication anxiety for international students. Here are three scenarios.

Scenario 1:

I have been trying very hard to prepare myself for class everyday. But I felt so nervous when it was my turn to present my ideas. I was too nervous to speak clearly, and I even stuttered when I got anxious. Now I feel so stupid. I am not sure how my professors and peers would think about me.

— Ming Chen, Department of Geography

Scenario 2:

I felt so conscious about my English accent. I started to learn English when I was in third grade, but my speaking is my weakness. I have a strong accent, and I am worried that my American peers would not know what I was talking about. I sometimes do not know how

to express natively like Americans. I felt like speaking Chinglish.

— JunJin Wang, Department of Chemistry

Scenario 3:

When I was with my classmates who are also from my home country, I did not know which language I should use. I felt I should speak English, but as all of us are from the same country, am I allowed to use my native language in class? I felt weird speaking either language.

— Melissa Kim, Department of Sociology

Reflection Questions:

1. Do these scenarios resonate with your own experience in class?
2. Where does the students' anxiety come from?
3. What might be some other sources of anxiety for international graduate students?

Communication anxiety is also related to *identity* issues. In many cases, your anxiety is linked to your concerns about your English accent, your "nativeness" or "non-nativeness" in English expression. In your home culture, you may have some sense of pride or entitlement about using the language of your home culture, but in a foreign country with a mixture of contexts, people may or may not identify with your home culture identity. For some people,

coming to a new country is about having a brief, new experience as a part of their larger identity with their home culture; for others, the new country can be a way of starting a new and better life, and they have no desire to be closely associated with a "home" culture which to them carries many troubling memories. Either of those kinds of people, and others, could feel to you like your compatriots, but you may witness them responding differently to the stress of a new lifestyle and culture. All these concerns, theirs and yours, are legitimate and common among international students, and are something that must be respected and valued for what it is rather than concerning oneself with who is living abroad "the right way". However, when there are obstacles to your English language development and the clarity of your communication, you should be aware of the issues. Acknowledging those concerns is the first step you should take to empower yourself, and then you should transform your "inferior English learner" identity into **a professional multilingual and multicultural identity** for yourself. It is a process you alone have the most control over, but it is not a journey one must make alone. Balancing your needs with those of your "home" (wherever you find that to be), your professional and academic development, and your immediate community is the challenging and rewarding substance of your newly forged identity as a person, a person of the present and the past, but also of the future.

Remember that you are speaking a second language in this country. How many people can speak a new language fluently and even pursue a degree through that language? You should be proud of yourself that you can speak two or more languages proficiently and are knowledgeable in different cultures. You are free to speak a language at your discretion for different communicative purposes. Therefore, instead of worrying about your accent and the nativeness of your English, you should pay more attention to the intelligibility and clarity of your English. The decision on which language to use should also be based upon the **context**: whom you are talking to, what you are talking about, and what your purpose

is. Being multilingual and multicultural means you can be more strategic in your language use for your communication goals. All in all, language should not be used as a tool to divide people but unite people all around the world.

The Issues of Naming

Non-Western names, often transcribed from non-Roman writing systems, present basic problems in pronouncibility and memorability. Some internationals believe that North American professors simply avoid interacting with them because of discomfort with knowing what to call them. Some internationals are resigned to that fact, others are incensed. (Rubin, 1993, p. 188)

You might have already noticed that your American professors or peers may not know how to pronounce your name. You might also find that many students adopted new first names "to make matters easier for North American professors and to avoid hearing one's legitimate name butchered by inexpert speakers" (Rubin, 1993, p. 189). You would also find that some international students "practice gambits for presenting their names to professors and for gently tutoring them in acceptable pronunciation and naming practices" (Rubin, 1993, p. 189). The issues of naming are also issues of personal and professional identity representation for international students. For graduate students, the issues might become more worthwhile to discuss because what you choose to be addressed (either stick to your original name or adopt a Western first name) might influence how your colleagues and professors remember you for the rest of your professional career. In American English, it is not uncommon for a nickname to appear between the personal and family name in formal documentation, usually in quotation marks or parentheses, e.g. Percival "Percy" Detone, so there is a precedent for how people change their name according to their context.

Reflection Questions:

1. What's your opinion on the issues of naming? Do you think it affects your personal and professional identities?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the two choices, adopting a Western first name or sticking to your original name?
3. Which choice did you make? Why?

All of these factors contribute to classroom interactions uniquely for each student and in turn for each classroom. "Class discussion" is a common approach to education, but what that means for each class and each student can vary. Additionally, some discussions, such as those which require taking and arguing a stance or which require critiquing the work of a published author or fellow classmate can become a "high-stakes interaction", that is, an interaction in which there is a danger of embarrassing oneself or others if the interaction is not handled gracefully and strategically. That said, much of academic work is sharing, arguing, and critiquing ideas, so learning to participate in these high-stakes interactions effectively is a valuable skill for any graduate student. One example is the process of peer review, discussed in the assignment below.

In any case, do not forget: "A critique is not a complaint" (Shore, p. 54). You and your classmates, in all your courses, are working together to help each other create better scholarship, even when there is disagreement about the best way to do so.

Follow-Up Questions for Reflection or Discussion

After reading the chapter, please discuss the following questions:

1. What are the strategies you have used in classroom discussions? Anything you want to add to the strategies shared above? (What strategies have worked the best for your past presentations?)
2. What have you found difficult in participating in classroom discussions? Is it more related to your linguistic ability or cultural and social ability?
3. What are some other situations in which you have to orally participate? How did you prepare for those situations?

Assignment #5: Peer Review

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the highest common standard in academic writing are peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes assembled by respected academic publishers, in which different expert scholars critique each submission before it is published. This is a useful model for the writing classroom, and by imitating it, you will be more prepared for the realities of academic publishing awaiting you as your career expands.

Now that you have created a rough draft for your paper, the next natural step is to have peers review it and give comments for it to be improved. "Peers" in this case refers to your classmates, who have experience with writing under similar circumstances, and perhaps some expertise in your field. Ideally, your instructor will have arranged peer review groups based on who is mostly likely to be able to give meaningful suggestions for your paper. Even if a reviewer is not an expert in your field or about your topic, they still represent part of your potential audience, and so if they are not able to understand something, that can lead to valuable revisions to your paper.

Perhaps it is confusing why peer review is the assignment related to this chapter on classroom communication. However, the process of getting feedback from a peer about your paper in a respectful and meaningful way is a delicate one, in which there is a complex subject matter with a high-risk interaction, that is, one can risk offending others. It is an excellent opportunity to practice academic professionalism. An important scholarly skill is providing unbiased critiques of others' work, and receiving them gracefully so that everyone's work might be improved.

Peer review can be conducted in class or among cohorts outside of classrooms. Based upon the specific requirements of the writing tasks, you want to provide constructive and helpful comments to your peers. Comments can be both negative and positive in terms

of content, structure, and language use. The comments can be provided throughout the paper, at the end of the paper as a summary, or both. A comprehensive feedback, at most times, is appreciated. In any case, peer review is not merely leaving comments on papers about grammar: it is a **dialogue** about how a paper can be improved, one which can take place in person in a classroom with printed copies, or in a digital space with document files. How your instructor wants to review the peer review process depends on the mode that the process takes, whether it is marking physical papers, making digital comments, etc. How your instructor wants to review the peer review process depends on the mode that the process takes, whether it is marking physical papers, making digital comments, etc. Below are the general rules in conducting peer review.

Rules for reviewers:

Rule 1: Read the paper more than once and each time focus on different aspects of the paper. Always focus on the content of the paper first rather than focusing on grammar.

Rule 2: Provide comments based upon the requirements of the writing task and the specific type of writing. Sometimes you can ask the person what feedback they are looking for.

Rule 3: Use friendly and encouraging words. Just imagine how you will feel when you read the comments. It does not mean that we are not allowed to give negative feedback. We can give negative feedback but our tone can be more friendly and encouraging–reviewers should give comments not because they think that the writing is bad, but because they want it to be better.

Rule 4: Name two areas that the writer has already done well and name at least two areas in which this writer could further improve. Also, please explain in 3-4 sentences.

Rule 5: Remember, you will not help your classmate if you just tell them that their writing is "fine" or "great." Be as specific and as honest as you can.

Rules for the one receiving comments

Rule 1: Review the comments on time. Sometimes you might want

to ask clarification questions. Bear in mind that if it takes a long time for correspondence with the reviewer they might not remember what they have commented.

Rule 2: If possible, have an interaction with the reviewer, if it is not a blind review. Oral communication is very helpful to clarify confusion and confirm your understanding of the comments.

Rule 3: Do not take the comments personally. Reviewers may not know how to give comments in a tactical way and the phrasing of the comments might hurt your feelings.

Rule 4: You do not always accept the reviewer's comments. Not all comments are helpful. You need to be selective in taking their advice.

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