

Extra-Disciplinary Writing in the Disciplines: Towards a Metageneric Pedagogy

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Abstract: Much of the foundational scholarship in writing across the curriculum and writing in the disciplines privileges pedagogies that introduce students to disciplinary writing. Recent scholarship, however, suggests that some faculty members do not want to teach disciplinary writing to their students, particularly in general education courses that cater to both majors and non-majors. This article investigates one such course, "Museum Appreciation," in which disciplinary writing appeared to conflict with extra-disciplinary writing, or writing that addresses audiences outside the academy or motives beyond the disciplines' knowledge-building goals, using genres that are atypical of the disciplines. To address this disconnect, the article turns to metagenre (Carter 2007/2012), a concept that coordinates multiple genres according to their similar ways of knowing, doing, and writing. Applied pedagogically, metagenre can help instructors in the disciplines, especially those teaching general education courses, integrate conflicting motives across disciplinary and extra-disciplinary writing assignments by emphasizing their common ways of building and shaping knowledge.^[1]

Much of the foundational scholarship in writing across the curriculum (WAC) and writing in the disciplines (WID) privileges pedagogies that introduce students to disciplinary writing—the rhetorical commonplaces, genres, and knowledge-building practices that professional academics use when they write in their fields. Rather than simply deliver established disciplinary knowledge to students (as in lecture-style courses), WAC and WID urge students to learn disciplinary discourse, produce disciplinary knowledge, and thus participate actively in their chosen disciplines (Bazerman, 1992; Herrington, 1981/2012; Herrington, 1994; MacDonald, 1994; McLeod, 1992; McLeod and Maimon, 2000; McLeod and Miraglia, 2001). However, recent qualitative studies in WAC and WID suggest that disciplinary pedagogies do not appeal to all instructors. For example, Christopher Thaiss and Terry Meyers Zawacki (2006) find that some instructors in the disciplines do not expect disciplinary practices when assigning writing:

[M]ost of our informants, while they may themselves write within the conventions of their disciplines, do not necessarily want undergraduates to learn to write within those conventions. Rather, for many, it is important for students to connect what they are learning in school with either their outside experience and/or ideas in the popular media and to write about these connections in a variety of forms. (p. 46)

Across the Disciplines

A Journal of Language, Learning and Academic Writing

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37514/ATD-J.2014.11.2.04>

wac.colostate.edu/atd

ISSN 554-8244

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In other words, disciplinary participation does not drive all writing assignments in college courses. Some faculty members would rather students connect disciplinary knowledge with their life experiences. In nursing and sociology, for example, instructors designed assignments that encouraged students to "experience a deep, emotional engagement with the topic and [. . .] in turn, convey this feeling to readers as a way to motivate some kind of social change" (p. 75). These instructors assign writing to foster personal engagement and to make course content relevant to students' professional goals as well as their individual experiences.

Such writing assignments resonate with general education principles that promote students' personal enrichment, critical thinking, or civic engagement. According to Mary Soliday (2011), instructors in general education courses often have to "assign genres for students who, required to take the course, usually do not intend to major in their special fields," which can cause conflicts when they expect, sometimes implicitly, that these students will use expert discourses (p. 47; see also Russell and Yañez, 2003; Yañez, Russell, and Smith, 2009). For example, she describes a common genre in music appreciation classes, the concert review, which "encourage[s] students to appreciate the uniqueness of live musical performance" (p. 47) without necessarily incorporating the "in-depth analysis of musical structure or extensive historical context" (p. 48) commonly expected of majors or music professionals. When five music teachers evaluated the assignment, they claimed to value expert analysis and historical context (despite the general education context). However, they gave higher marks to concert reviews that reflected deep personal involvement with the musical performance and lower marks to reviews that used disciplinary terminology without such personal involvement (p. 48-49). Within general education settings, Soliday suggests, students' use of disciplinary discourse may be less important than their engagement with the motives^[2] of the genres being assigned, which are not always equivalent to the motives of professional scholarship.

These studies pose an interesting dilemma for WAC and WID: how can instructors and students navigate possibly conflicting goals that often arise in general education courses? The traditional answer has been to make disciplinary ways of writing explicit for novice students. Laura Wilder (2012), for example, argues that literature professors should teach the "rhetorical process knowledge useful to experts" in literary criticism (p. 69), even when they espouse goals like civic participation or personal expression (p. 67-69). However, some instructors in the disciplines do not want to teach disciplinary writing to their students; they move outside porous disciplinary boundaries and teach students ways of writing and thinking that do not equate to disciplinary ones. Such writing is still academic, in that it "fulfills a purpose of education in a college or university in the United States" (Thaiss and Zawacki, 2006, p. 4), but it is also extra-disciplinary, addressing audiences outside the academy or purposes beyond the disciplines' goals for knowledge-building or social action, using genres that are atypical of the disciplines. When instructors assign extra-disciplinary writing, or blend it with disciplinary writing, conflicts may arise as students struggle to understand the relevant motives entailed in such a broad range of genres. How can we help instructors integrate these motives without imposing a disciplinary pedagogy on them?

To address these questions, I turn to ethnographic data I collected in "Museum Appreciation," a 200-level general education course that Lisa Draper, Associate Professor of Art Education, designed to teach students lifelong museum-going skills.^[3] If our university had undergraduate majors in museum studies or museum education, Professor Draper told me, "Museum Appreciation" might be the introductory course. When I observed the course, it fulfilled a fine arts requirement for elementary education and art education majors in the School of Education at the pseudonymous University of the Midwest (UMW). During the same semester, Professor Draper also had it approved for UMW's general education arts and humanities requirement. In keeping with this general education mandate, she tried to make the course useful for various majors—not only pre-service

teachers, who made up most of the class, but also students in diverse fields like art history and tourism studies. In the process, she drew liberally from museum studies, museum education, art history, the fine arts, and elementary education, but not to introduce or initiate students into any one discipline.

Rather, she developed the course over several semesters with two primary goals in mind. First, she wanted students to become more comfortable viewing objects in museums and writing about their reactions to those objects. As she told me in an early interview, "I want them to feel comfortable using museums in their teaching, feel comfortable looking at things in museums [. . .] as visitors, and begin to feel creative about how to explore objects and things." In other words, she hoped to foster students' personal engagement with course materials by addressing their comfort, creativity, and affective connections with objects. She developed the writing assignments associated with this goal to help students articulate their visual memories of artifacts, and, as I will discuss below, these assignments were often extra-disciplinary: that is, they were genres that professionals in museum studies^[4] are not likely to produce as part of their work, such as fictional dialogues between museum artifacts or diary entries told from the perspective of artwork.

In addition to personal engagement, Professor Draper also wanted students to learn critical analysis—to interpret the meaning of objects according to their histories and contexts of display. "The real thing is to read or interpret the meaning of objects as they change according to the contexts in which they are displayed," she told me in an interview. "I want them to develop skills in decoding what the museum wants you to know about an object by the way it is displayed, and also what an object might mean according to other settings . . . because that's what museums do." Many of these assignments were clearly disciplinary: she often required students to write like museum curators, for example, to design museum exhibits for an imagined museum-going public via descriptive museum labels for artifacts and press releases. In the process, she wanted students to hone their "skills of observation, interpretation, and judgment of artifact displays and exhibitions," she writes in the syllabus.

Professor Draper also intended these goals—personal engagement and critical analysis—to be mutually reinforcing, and some assignments actually engaged both at the same time. However, as in many general education courses, she rarely drew explicit connections between the two (Thaiss, 1992; Russell and Yañez, 2003; Yañez, Russell, and Smith, 2009). As a result, her students experienced dissonance when moving between these goals because they believed the former goal was privileged, while the latter was less important, even ancillary to the course. Professor Draper was aware of the disconnect, though, and at the end of the term she shared with me her ideas for revising her course in future semesters: specifically, she wanted to better connect course readings and writing tasks by emphasizing their common analytical practices and habits of mind, despite the very different genres she assigned. In other words, she grouped her otherwise disparate reading and writing assignments into a metagenre (Carter, 2007/2012), or language that coordinates multiple genres according to their similar ways of shaping knowledge. With more attention to common metageneric ways of producing knowledge across different ways of writing, Professor Draper believed her students might better understand when to engage with museums on a personal level and when to write critically.

Used as a pedagogical tool, metagenre can promote students' and instructors' awareness of the rhetorical connections among readings and writing assignments. WAC and WID experts and instructors can use metagenre's coordinating characteristics to make explicit otherwise tacit knowledge about individual genres' salient rhetorical features and the larger inter-generic connections across the classroom genre system. Metagenre can also clarify the extent to which a genre mobilizes an extra-disciplinary motive, a disciplinary motive, or a combination of the two. Such

a conception of metagenre can bolster general education courses like "Museum Appreciation," in which instructors seek to integrate possibly competing disciplinary and extra-disciplinary genres according to their common, localized uses.

Methods

I studied "Museum Appreciation" in the Spring of 2011 as part of a larger research project investigating the relationship of writing to general education and disciplinary preparation in courses that are not part of a traditional WAC program or intensive writing (IW) requirement. Like other WAC and WID studies that use ethnographic or naturalistic methods (Walvoord and McCarthy, 1990; Herrington, 1994; Soliday, 2011), I hoped to develop a rich picture of the culture of these courses and the role writing played in teaching and learning according to the instructors and their students. Specifically, I was interested in understanding how general education principles like critical thinking, civic participation, or multicultural awareness manifested in writing assignments across the curriculum—and whether those assignments complemented or conflicted with instructors' expectations for students' disciplinary learning. UMW does have a WAC program, which includes an upper-level IW requirement and workshops for instructors assigned to teach IW courses. The courses in my study, however, did not include an IW designation, and to my knowledge, the instructors I interviewed, including Professor Draper, never attended one of the university's WAC workshops. By studying courses outside of the WAC program, I hoped to learn how instructors in local classroom contexts conceived of writing assignments without the input of a WAC expert—and thus without WAC's preference for disciplinary writing pedagogies. Of the three courses in my original study, "Museum Appreciation" is particularly instructive in this regard: as we will see, Professor Draper deliberately blended disciplinary and extra-disciplinary writing to address her course goals.

The course lasted 75 minutes, twice a week, and most class periods revolved around a visit to an area museum. On Tuesdays, Professor Draper previewed the museum visits with slides and a short lecture about the museum. On Thursdays, the class met at the museum, where she led them through exhibits while discussing activities from a pre-circulated museum visit worksheet (MVW), a one-page handout of six to eight writing prompts that focused students' attention on individual objects and interpretive relationships among objects and their contexts of display. On the following Tuesdays, the class reviewed their visit and their MVW answers (before discussing the week's readings and previewing the next museum visit).

I observed every other museum visit, along with the subsequent discussions, taking notes, and recording lectures and discussions. I conducted four interviews with Professor Draper, during which we discussed her course goals, assignment goals, and reflections on students' progress during the semester. I also invited students to participate in a semester-long focus group. Out of 25 students in the class, Meagan and Cindy, both majors in special education, were the only ones who agreed to participate. Although these two students constitute a limited sample, they also offered thoughtful, detailed accounts of their experiences in class, their writing processes, and their understanding of writing's function in the course. While their reflections may not be representative the whole class, they are instructive, offering a glimpse of the ways some students may struggle and succeed in courses like "Museum Appreciation." I also triangulated their comments by analyzing writing by the rest of the class (all but one student agreed to release work to me), along with Professor Draper's course documents, following the rubric for genre analysis described by Bawarshi (2003): "collecting samples of the genre, identifying and describing the context of its use, describing its textual patterns, and analyzing what these patterns revealed about the context in which the genre is used" (p.158). Based on this analysis, I constructed a well-rounded picture of Professor Draper's reasons for

assigning writing and students' responses to the tasks, all against the backdrop of genres' production, circulation, and reception in the course.

Course Overview

As I indicated above, Professor Draper often articulated two larger goals for her course. First, she hoped writing would help students better appreciate museums and articulate their reactions to art. The course description on the syllabus reflects this emphasis: "This class is designed to develop lifelong museum-visiting skills and enthusiasms, applicable especially to museums that exhibit human-made artifacts (especially art, history, and anthropology museums) but also to natural-history museums, heritage sites, children's museums, and other settings where objects are selected, arranged, and interpreted by museum professionals." This goal resembles one of the course textbooks, *How to Look at Everything*, in which photographer David Finn (2000) narrates his personal experiences viewing artful images in order to explain "how we can open our minds and hearts to see more than the literal image and be inspired by the vision that takes place in our minds" (p. 6). The assignments associated with this goal include:

- Weekly MVW activities that prompted students to write in different genres, such as diary entries and dialogues, and required students to respond to (or write from the perspective of) museum artifacts (four points each, totaling 36% of the final grade);
- The third component of the "Object Journey" assignment sequence, in which students composed imagined narrative histories of cherished objects (16% of the final grade).

Occasionally, Professor Draper did remind the class that these activities could be useful in an elementary school classroom, thus addressing those students who were teachers in training. In the end, however, any professional motive remained secondary in these assignments, since students neither wrote lesson plans nor addressed state or national learning outcomes. Instead, these assignments encouraged students' imaginative and personal engagement with objects in museums.

Second, Professor Draper wanted students to learn critical analysis of museum objects and displays. She designed tasks that asked students to take on multiple academic and professional roles and write to a range of audiences. Sometimes, they had to write as museum curators, representing imagined museum exhibits for a general museum-going public via descriptive labels and press releases. Other times they had to act like scholars, interpreting the meaning of objects according to their histories and contexts of display. Such writing assignments include:

- Museum visit worksheet activities like newspaper articles, playbills, and real estate listings, which invited students to contextualize museum objects
- The first two "Object Journey" components, which included descriptive museum labels and a museum press release about students' cherished objects
- A time capsule of objects that reflect the contemporary culture of our university's town, along with an imaginary newspaper article from day it was buried or opened (10% of the final grade)
- An artifact research paper, which was a comparative analysis of three objects or images from different time periods or cultures that could be placed together in a museum exhibit (10% of the final grade).^[5]

For Professor Draper, these tasks were valuable because they encouraged contextual analysis of museum artifacts' formal and functional features. Often, Professor Draper supplemented such assignments by sharing with students her specialized knowledge about museums' day-to-day operations and curators' processes when designing artifact displays. The other course textbook, *Art: A World History*, by Elke Buchholz, et al. (2007), also provided students with essential background on artistic styles and periods. In the following section, I will fill in this sketch by analyzing the rhetorical dimensions of three major assignments: select MVW prompts, the object journey, and the artifact research paper. Taken together, these three assignments illustrate the oscillation and overlap between Professor Draper's course goals of personal engagement and critical analysis.

Competing Motives in Course Assignments

While Professor Draper's goals in "Museum Appreciation" could have been mutually reinforcing—indeed, she intended them to be—they often competed with one another because she and the students emphasized and privileged the creative, extra-disciplinary writing assignments without drawing explicit conceptual and generic connections to the disciplinary ones. Professor Draper sought students' personal engagement most overtly on the weekly MVWs, particularly through extra-disciplinary "point of view" activities. These activities required students to take on the perspective of an object and imagine how it feels or where it has been. For example, in the University Art Museum's (UAM) Western art collection, the class viewed a sculpture by conceptual artist Sol LeWitt. The sculpture sits on the floor, a series of nine metal cubes arranged in a row, with the smallest cubes on the outside, increasing towards the largest in the middle. The MVW prompts the students to "*either a) Suggest 5 questions you would want to ask this work if you could interview it, and answer one of them from the work's point of view, or b) Write a diary entry (first person) expressing how this work feels when it looks in the mirror*" (emphases in original). Answering the second option, Meagan writes:

Dear Diary,

I think that I am getting fat and depressed. My middle is so big and then I have these little boxes on the ends. My metal is heavy and weighs me down. My figure is so different than all the other pieces of art in my room. All I do is sit here all day and do nothing but stare back at the people who walk by me. They don't even stop to read my label anymore. They pass by me and they don't say hello or even bother to know my name. They just pass right on by me after one glance. I hope that someone will come by and look at me longingly like some of the other paintings around me. I am so lonely!

Meagan takes up the second prompt's genre suggestion: she writes a relatively standard diary entry from an anthropomorphic perspective, imagining the sculpture's innermost thoughts. Her writing resembles what Katherine Gottschalk (2012) calls "imaginative personal writing," engaging in an "imagined rhetorical situation [that] draws students into perspectives and events from which they might otherwise remain disengaged and voiceless". Because Gottschalk works with Cornell University's long-standing WID program, which strongly emphasizes disciplinary writing beginning in first-year seminars (Gottschalk, 1997; Monroe, 2002), she argues that imaginative personal writing can "enrich students' experiences in disciplinary work" (2012).

Indeed, this imaginative personal writing did allow the students in "Museum Appreciation" to engage with some of the objects' pertinent features. Meagan discusses significant aspects of the sculpture, including form (big in the middle, smaller at the ends) and material (metal). She also suggests an aesthetic judgment, hinting that museumgoers might overlook it because of its plainness, compared

with more beautiful paintings that are worthy of "longing" stares. By implicitly comparing LeWitt's sculpture to other pieces of art around it, Meagan also attends to the context in which it is displayed. In short, this prompt actually lays the groundwork for critical analysis of museum objects.

However, for my focus group, this detail analysis was secondary to creating a relationship with the objects. Sometimes, they told me, they would even impose their personal feelings on the object, thus cultivating a personal connection with it. When I discussed the point of view activities with them, they said they enjoyed this kind of writing for that very reason:

Cindy: I feel like it's just cool to pretend like you are an object in a museum.

Meagan: I feel like it's easier to imagine yourself as the object, to connect with the object.

Cindy: It's like a different perspective. You can always take on someone else's perspective, like oh, he's a businessman, he works 9-5, but to take something that's an inanimate object, and totally give it its own feelings, and its own thoughts? It's really cool-

Meagan: It's fun to do versus [a traditional paper]. And we can personalize it to what we're feeling that day . . . I feel like every time I do a first person diary, I take it as how I'm feeling that day, like my own personal feelings, if they apply to the object.

The students' perception that "you can say whatever you want almost," as Cindy put it, suggests a one-sided relationship, with some students imposing their perspectives on the objects without learning much about their artistic history or curators' reasons for designing exhibits. Indeed, Meagan's diary entry suggests more about her reaction to LeWitt's sculpture: she's the one who finds it dull compared to the vibrant paintings around it. Despite the potential for critical analysis, therefore, personal engagement appeared to be the primary motive driving students' responses.

Professor Draper's commentary on the MVWs was limited to small notes of encouragement (e.g. "Funny!") or brief encouragement for more detail. She mainly guided students' writing via oral explanations of the MVW prompts—explanations which tended to reinforce personal engagement. She hoped anthropomorphizing objects would help students create a personal connection with those objects, thus demystifying the artwork. At the end of the semester, she explained to me, "I think what those [point of view activities] do is they individualize or personalize the objects. My whole point as a museum educator is to reduce the distance between you and this famous thing sitting there. I want students to realize that things have contexts, and they're only temporarily here. The point of view stuff helps them to see that point. I think it demystifies the object." Indeed, she believed the activities counteracted students' tendency to see museum artifacts as famous, untouchable items, to be viewed at a distance and revered for their iconicity. She also told me that these point of view activities were some of the most successful writing activities in the class because the students "seem to get into the role, and they seem to speak with a voice that sounds like the objects." Success, for her, meant "they've made a leap from themselves to becoming this object that they're reporting from." Thus, she used these extra-disciplinary genres to make museums accessible for students so that they could feel authorized to write about (and discuss) images and artifacts.

Indeed, Professor Draper believed perspective taking and narrative helped "art novices" make meaning from artful and everyday objects, and she designed an entire assignment, the "object journey," around this concept. For this assignment, students had to choose an important object from their lives, describe where it might have been in its past, and imagine where it might go in the future. In the prompt, she explains, "This assignment evolves over the semester as an exercise in assessing artifacts' histories and changing meanings/values." More than any other assignment, the object journey blended disciplinary and extra-disciplinary genres. The assignment began with a series of

five "object journey stops," the first of which included a sketch of the object, a one-page report describing its background, and a short museum label. In keeping with Professor Draper's goal of critical analysis, students had to explain to an imagined museum-going audience, she said, "how and where this kind of object was made, its cultural traditions, [and] other general 'facts' about it"—in other words, to consider the influence of context on the meaning(s) of the object. The remaining four stops asked students to "*sketch* this object in different possible settings [. . .] along its life story" and write a museum label "*describing the object in its setting*," real or imagined (emphases in original).

The students followed these guidelines rather closely. For example, in her first object journey about two stuffed bears, Teddy and Franklin, Cindy explains that Teddy was part of Ganz Items' Heritage Collection, which no longer exists, while Franklin came from the University of Notre Dame bookstore and was given to her as a gift. In the third object journey, Cindy pictures them in a crib:

These are two teddy bears that have been placed in a crib, possibly like the one they once belonged in. These teddy bears date back to the late 1980's and early 1990's. At that time this style of teddy bear was quite popular. They are placed in a crib that was originally built in 1989 and was [. . .] placed into storage in 2011. The companies that produced all three objects in this display are no longer in business and all are rare items today.

In keeping with the museum label genre, Cindy gives some historical background about the bears. She acts like a curator by explaining her objects' material and cultural history, taking up the motives Professor Draper hoped to mobilize through a typical disciplinary genre.

The assignment's second component likewise uses a disciplinary genre to foster students' critical analysis of museum objects: the students had to repurpose their museum labels into a press release "tell[ing] the object's story on the day it is being welcomed into a museum's collection," according to the prompt. Following Professor Draper's genre guidelines,⁶¹ Meagan's press release describes an exhibit for a family heirloom, an antique Victorian-era cake stand. In her introductory sentence, she writes, "New object is added to the Molly Museum's collection. Its addition is welcomed and celebrated." Although Meagan leaves out essential information here—the object is a cake holder—she nonetheless attempts to catch the reader's attention. She also uses a formal tone appropriate to the genre. In the second paragraph, she writes, "The Molly Museum is a specialized museum that holds unique furniture and household items. The museum received a generous gift from Susie Smith today. Smith donated an antique cake holder to the museum's china collection." Writing for an imagined audience, Meagan describes the object's possible significance for the museum's collection. Taken together, then, the object journey stops and the press release ask students to interpret objects' meanings and communicate with an audience as a museum professional might.

However, the project's third component represents a turn toward personal engagement, using an extra-disciplinary genre. Like the MVW point of view activities, this "imaginary history" required students to repurpose the five object journey stops into "a first-person tale told by the object itself," as Professor Draper put it. Because students had to anthropomorphize their cherished objects, this final component of the assignment shifted students' attention away from the contextual analysis and professional roles entailed in the first two components and towards personal engagement with objects. Cindy, for example, fleshes out her teddy bears' stories through two separate, first person accounts. Writing from Teddy's perspective, she explains how he was created: "First they attached my eyes, then decided they would leave my tongue sticking out. After that the people making me attached long, floppy ears and an adorable little bow tie." Similarly, from Franklin's point of view, she writes, "The earliest memories I have of my life were at the University of Notre Dame bookstore, in South Bend, Indiana. I remember sitting on a shelf with at least thirty other bears that looked exactly

like me." Although these narratives offer more detail than the object journey stops, their purpose is not to present new information about the objects, nor to engage critically with their histories and contexts of display. Rather, like the point of view activities on the MVWs, they primarily invite students to identify personally with objects.

Both in class and in interviews, however, Professor Draper described the entire object journey assignment sequence in disciplinary terms, calling it a provenance activity—that is, records of artifacts' origins and ownership. She told the class, "With any object in a museum, the staff are going to know its provenance, where it came from...What I'm inviting you to do with your object journey is to place it somewhere now and then figure out what its history has been and will be." In other words, she designed this assignment to approximate the work of museum professionals. However, despite this nominal disciplinary goal, Professor Draper replaced actual provenance research—including item descriptions, auction records, bills of sale, insurance documents, and other archival materials—with students' memories (or speculations) about the objects' past locations and an imaginary history told from its point of view. Because the imaginary history came at the end of the assignment, it confirmed personal engagement as a privileged goal for the course.

Although Professor Draper and her students privileged personal engagement as a course goal, the final project, an artifact research paper, emphasized critical and contextual analysis. For this assignment, students had to choose three objects that "*will be displayed together in a museum case*," according to the prompt (emphasis in original). Professor Draper required the students to select two "museum" objects from the course textbook, *Art: A World History*; the third object could be any from today's culture. Taken together, all three should be related by "style, function, medium," or some other formal or thematic feature. Furthermore, the prompt asks, "[W]hy is [each object] important enough for a museum collection, why should visitors see it, [and] what does it tell us about its culture?" Such questions about form, function, and contextual significance had appeared in earlier writing assignments, particularly the MVWs,⁷¹ and they represent common disciplinary concerns in museum studies.

The students had little trouble applying this analytical approach in their papers. Cindy, for example, chose similar subjects—historical leaders—as she discussed busts of Caesar and Nefertiti and a wax sculpture of President Barack Obama from Madame Tussaud's. She describes each piece, explains its creation or circumstances of discovery, offers some historical information about the leader depicted, and suggests the sculptures' cultural significance. She concludes, "The popularity of creating life like sculptures of famous or important people has been seen throughout the years and remains in today's pop culture. By studying these objects we can see how the styles of creating busts or representations have evolved. The changes in material, subjects to represent, and reason to be created have all changed dramatically." Meagan, meanwhile, analyzes three works of art: the Venus of Willendorf, a silk screen of Marilyn Monroe by Andy Warhol, and a mass-produced print (sold at Target) of a woman in a red dress. The most significant relationship among the three is formal: they all contain the color red, which she argues represents "life and vitality," fertility, and beauty. Because of these qualities, Meagan adds, all three objects are idols, whether a goddess, a pop culture icon, or a mass-produced print of a beautiful woman. Both students chose objects based on common features and then considered the possible significance of each given its history and function. They analyzed and constructed a common interpretive context for the three objects, thus engaging in the kind of critical analysis Professor Draper sought.

Professor Draper also believed the artifact research paper integrated her course goals: she hoped students would analyze objects in order to grow more comfortable viewing, understanding, and interpreting them. However, she drew a distinct generic line between the artifact research paper, on the one hand, and the MVWs and the imaginary history, on the other. As in many general education

courses, this genre distinction separated the extra-disciplinary motives from the disciplinary ones, despite her intentions to the contrary. Although she saw conceptual overlap among these assignments, she told me in an interview:

[The artifact research papers are] term papers, so I expect their writing to be better than these little [MVW] activities we do. I expect them to be more careful, better organized. I expect there to be a fair amount of research about facts. We're no longer doing imaginary histories. They should be able to connect these three objects factually and defend their thematic similarities. They should be taken seriously. They should be fun, but I don't see them as being fun like the worksheets are supposed to be.

At base, she thought facts were more integral to the artifact research paper than the imaginary histories and point of view activities. She also prompted students to write the paper for museum staff, as "background information for the curator to use in writing display labels." Significantly, she adds, "[T]his is a real-life assignment: museum interns do this kind of work." By using the term "real-life," Professor Draper sets this assignment in stark contrast with the other assignments in the course.

For students, these genre distinctions masked the conceptual connections among the assignments, setting personal engagement and critical analysis in opposition to one another when Professor Draper hoped they would be complementary. At the end of the semester, Megan and Cindy told me they had trouble understanding the purpose of the artifact research paper:

Meagan: This had nothing to do with I feel like what we did throughout the class.

Cindy: I think like the only thing that helped me do this was the outline. We didn't research any artifacts. When we went to museums, maybe she'd be like, this is from 1925--

Meagan: She barely ever even mentioned the book that our artifacts had to come from . . . We didn't research in this class.

Cindy: It wasn't a research class. Going to museums is what we did.

Meagan: It was one of those things where it was a standard of the class. It was a class requirement that she kind of had to have us do a research paper. That's not what she wanted to focus on.

Professor Draper might be dismayed to learn her students did not see museum going itself as a form of research. Instead, Meagan and Cindy thought the assignment shifted their attention unnecessarily, from personal engagement with images and artifacts in museums to impersonal analysis of objects from a textbook. They did not see this as a logical progression of assignments; they thought the artifact research paper existed in the course because Professor Draper felt obliged to include one, not because it represented the culmination of skills they had learned during the semester. Despite their success addressing the assignment prompt, they misrecognized its purpose in the course; as a result, the course assignments and their associated motives remained separate for students.

Approaches to Integrating Motives

Megan and Cindy thus struggled to understand the relationships among course goals and assignments, despite the fact that Professor Draper saw them as complementary. This disconnect is a common problem noted by WAC scholars. McCarthy (1987), for instance, found that one student, Dave, struggled to write in his Introduction to Poetry course, a lecture-style class in which the professor positioned students as disciplinary outsiders writing to himself, the insider and expert (p.

256). Opportunities for social interaction through writing were limited—students "never read each other's essays at all" (p. 258)—which left Dave without a personal motivation, only "writing to demonstrate academic competence" (p. 253). According to Walvoord and McCarthy (1990), such struggles are "often directly traceable to mixed signals by the teacher, or to instruction that was needed but not provided" (p. 237). To resolve mixed signals, McCarthy (1987) concludes that instructors need "to appreciate just how foreign and difficult their language is for student new comers," and she urges them to "make explicit the interpretive and linguistic conventions in their community"—what I would call the genre expectations—"stressing that theirs is one way of looking at reality and not reality itself" (p. 262).

Cindy, Meagan, and Professor Draper all had ideas for clarifying genre expectations and thus better integrating the course goals through writing assignments. Early in the semester, Cindy and Meagan said they enjoyed the open-ended nature of the artifact research project because they got to choose objects that interested them, but by the end of the semester, they were more frustrated with what they felt was a lack of direction. They told me they wanted more guidance from Professor Draper so they could better understand the assignment. As Meagan put it, "I would rather have her explain it and have us ask questions in class versus just a written [prompt]." Cindy added, "It's great that [the assignments are] all explained . . . but at the same time it's really nice when a teacher goes over and tells you what they want from it." In other words, the students wanted more metageneric guidelines on the paper. Janet Giltrow (2002) defines metagenres as "atmospheres of wordings and activities, demonstrated precedents or sequestered expectations—atmospheres surrounding genres" (p. 195). Typically, metagenres manifest as talk (or writing) about genres, including heuristics and proscriptions on how and why a writer may write in a particular genre. They can take stable forms like written guidelines or handbooks, or they can take more ephemeral forms like teacher talk or marginalia on papers. Both stable and ephemeral metagenres reflect "regularities in the way readers and writers translate their tacit know-how into discursive knowledge" (p. 191). By regulating form, content, citation practices, and the like, metagenre "teaches and stabilizes uptakes"⁸⁹ and "provide[s] shared background knowledge and guidance in how to produce genres within systems and sets of genres" (Bawarshi and Reiff, 2010, p. 94).

Professor Draper often gave detailed metageneric guidelines of this regulative kind, such as her descriptions of museum labels or press releases, but Megan and Cindy believed she neglected oral explanations, which they saw as an essential metagenre. More metageneric talk in class about goals, methods, and sources may have helped them feel more comfortable completing that assignment, but the extent to which metagenres can help students see the relationship among the course's larger goals remains an open question. After all, Giltrow (2002) warns, such instructions "may only reinforce insiders' mutual understandings while estranging newcomers," particularly when taken out of their contexts of use (p. 196). Without clear descriptions of the contexts and exigencies driving a genre, metageneric guidelines risk devolving into so many decontextualized rules. Regulative metagenres alone may be insufficient for mitigating students' sense that critical analysis was secondary to personal engagement and that research was ancillary to the course.

Although Professor Draper was not privy to these students' criticisms, she intuited them, and in two separate interviews, she suggested another avenue: better contextualizing her assignments in relation to course readings. Mid-way through the semester, she worried that too many students were still writing their object journey stops in the first person when they were supposed to be museum labels in which the first-person is inappropriate. To address the problem, she reflected:

I need to structure the stops a little bit better. I should ask them to explain, where is your object now? And maybe I should say, give it two prior points and two future points . . . If I

were to require it to have at least two prior stops, I would have to get into its manufacture, so it might be a richer exploration of the object itself, rather than its whimsical travels—more context, and I need to guide it.

Her desire for a more controlled structure makes sense because, taken together, the museum labels should represent a coherent narrative for a museum exhibit within the ambit of the assignment. She also indicates that the assignment did not promote students' critical analysis skills explicitly enough. She wanted a more concrete sense of the objects' histories, but what she often got were their individual, "whimsical" stories, in part because the assignment solidified personal engagement as a motive.

Professor Draper wanted to use various genres as "different angles on how the meanings of objects are affected by their context and their point in history." For her, the disconnect arose from her lack of attention to course readings, which she saw as a key oversight in her own pedagogy. Because she is a deeply reflective teacher, she developed an idea for revising the object journey that could better integrate her assignments. At the end of the semester, when I asked how she might change the course, she said:

One is to beef up the object journey . . . I'm thinking I might have them do a little more research on their object. So if it was a Barbie doll from 1995, where would it have been made, what were the styles that were available then, why did your mother choose this one for you? . . . It feels a little flimsy until the end, until the imaginary history and the press release, and then it comes together. I'd like to make it a little more research-based and maybe tie it to the evolution of the fork. Have them look at what versions of this thing existed before and how has this kind of thing changed since you acquired yours.

By "the evolution of the fork," Professor Draper was referring to "How the Fork Got Its Tines," the first chapter of civil engineer Henry Petroski's (1992) *The Evolution of Useful Things*, which she assigned early in the semester. Petroski (1992) traces the incremental, evolutionary changes in the fork's design to argue that designs "do not spring fully formed from the mind of some maker but, rather, become shaped and reshaped through the (principally negative) experiences of their users within the social, cultural, and technological contexts in which they are embedded" (p. 19-20). Because Petroski's words mirror Professor Draper's academic goal, it seems she is on the right track by connecting the object journey to his book. By asking students to apply Petroski's method, students might better contextualize their cherished objects.^[9]

Professor Draper's suggestions for integrating motives in her writing assignments resonates with a second conception of metagenre: a tool for describing the relations among otherwise disparate genres according their similar genre functions. Unlike Giltrow, who describes metagenre as talk about genres, Michael Carter (2007/2012) calls metagenre "a genre of genres" that "directs our attention to broader patterns of language as social action, similar kinds of typified responses to related recurrent situations" (p. 218). Further, he explains, "[T]he genres that compose a metagenre point to a social formation composed of individual disciplines that emphasize the way of doing defined by the metagenre" (p. 218). In other words, metagenres are collections of genres with similar language and structural features functioning within similar rhetorical situations; in the context of undergraduate education, for example, lab reports, scientific papers, and poster presentations are all tied "to learning situations that call for empirical inquiry" (p. 218). Beyond its regulative role, then, metagenre also plays a coordinating role, connecting genres through their shared rhetorical characteristics and knowledge-building practices—or, as Carter (2007/2012) elaborates, "[A]

metagenre indicates a structure of similar ways of doing that point to similar ways of writing and knowing" (p. 218).

Carter (2007/2012) uses metagenres to suggest higher-order groupings of similar disciplines, which he calls a meta-discipline—a concept that he argues breaks down notions of insular disciplines based solely on "content knowledge" (p. 227). But the concept of metagenre can also problematize "container" notions of disciplinarity at the localized level, within individual classrooms, not just across departments and disciplines. Bonnie Devet (2008) suggests as much in her description of a first-year writing course in which she asks students to write business sales letters about a short story and then repurpose them into literary analyses. When coupled with reflective writing, her students were able to see how these genres, despite differences in discipline, audience, and style, nevertheless entail "the use of analytical thinking, the need for persuasion, and the importance of stylistic choices," higher-order ways of knowing and writing that she views as a metagenre (p. 180). In this way, we can use metagenre to describe, and therefore clarify, the relationships among genres in specific classrooms without assuming they automatically and only serve disciplinary education.

As I have described them, the main course goals in "Museum Appreciation," personal engagement and critical analysis, appear to describe conflicting metagenres. With personal engagement, students cultivate a personal relationship with objects by writing from those objects' perspectives, which resembles Carter's (2007/2012) metagenre, "Responses to Academic Situations that Call for Performance" (p. 224)—in this case a performance denoting an individual connection with art and artifacts. With critical analysis, students analyze objects in their contexts of display, often to represent them to an imagined audience, which resembles Carter's (2007/2012) metagenre, "Responses to Academic Situations that Call for Research from Sources" (p. 222), with museum artifacts and textbooks as the sources.

In other words, these goals appear to require different ways of knowing, doing, and writing, to paraphrase Carter. And yet, the assignments associated with each course goal do not split into such neat categories. When they manifest as generic motives, the course goals describe clusters of attributes and emphases that sometimes overlap. During our final interview, Professor Draper connected the MVWs to the research paper explicitly:

I hope the [museum visit] worksheets are preparing them to look carefully at objects, and to understand that the objects' actual or imaginary histories can help us understand them. So I think that all this work with the worksheets should give an idea of the kinds of things that can be talked about in the papers—the kinds of facts that exist about objects and the kinds of interpretations we can make about them.

Professor Draper believed the MVWs taught students a general analytical approach that they could then adapt to the artifact research paper—a potential we witnessed in Meagan's Sol LeWitt diary entry. Despite the disparate disciplinary and extra-disciplinary ways of writing, the underlying ways of doing remained largely the same: museum going; inquiry into objects' historical, cultural, and display contexts; and analysis of significant formal features. These common ways of doing also point to common ways of knowing: that artwork and artifacts are open to interpretation; that they are spatially, culturally, and historically embedded; and that their meaning depends on how they are embedded within those contexts. In other words, Professor Draper had developed a metagenre. To echo Carter (2007/2012), we might call it "Responses to Learning Situations Involving Objects on Display." This metagenre has larger disciplinary characteristics, to be sure, but it is necessarily more specific than Carter's more generalized metagenres because it arises out of a localized context. It also gains specificity because of Professor Draper's emphasis on personal engagement. Rather than being

opposed to the disciplinary ways of knowing and doing that I have described, personal engagement runs parallel to them and supports them across the metagenre.

Professor Draper indicated that the object journey could help students bridge these ways of knowing and doing: by asking students to take up Petroski's method and apply it to their objects, as she suggested, the object journey could serve as the course's lynchpin. Personal engagement would still remain in play because students would write about their cherished objects, even in an imaginary history. At the same time, though, students would have to learn more about their objects through some historical research, using Petroski as a model—a different way of writing that nonetheless uses similar ways of doing to address similar ways of knowing. Then, having practiced historical research and contextual analysis in the object journey, and understanding the connection to professional research through Petroski, the students might be in a better position to shift into the artifact research paper, to understand that the paper requires them to apply similar ways of doing and knowing to a new problem in a new genre. By emphasizing these links among the MVWs, the object journey, the artifact research paper, and the course readings, Professor Draper could bolster students' metageneric awareness and thus better integrate personal engagement and critical analysis across disciplinary and extra-disciplinary genres, which are different ways of responding to common problems that arise when viewing objects in museums.

Conclusion: Towards a Metageneric Pedagogy

According to Carter (2007/2012), "WID professionals can use [. . .] metagenre to help faculty in the disciplines recognize the broader ways of doing in their own disciplines and to understand how different individual genres can be used as tools for teaching disciplinary ways of doing, a shift in focus from the isolated genre to the metagenre" (p. 226). To be sure, higher order metagenres can enable students (and even professional academics) to produce discipline-appropriate genres, but we need not limit our understanding of metagenre to disciplinary or professional ways of writing. Rick Carpenter (2009), for example, extends metagenre beyond the disciplines: he argues that electronic genres can "share similar ways-of-doing with activity systems of home and school" (p. 144). Metagenres thus constitute "interfaces" (Carpenter 2009) that mediate seemingly distinct realms of discursive production. Ann Johns (2008) suggests that this mediating potential can benefit students when they write in school and outside of school. While she emphasizes introductory writing courses that "educate for broad knowledge of academic disciplines" (p. 249), she also suggests that a metageneric pedagogy can encourage "students [to] frequently ask questions of texts and contexts therefore enabling them to become academic ethnographers," a process that, ideally, can lead them "to reflect on their experiences with texts not only in classrooms but also in their other communities" (p. 250). We can extend metagenre beyond disciplinary ways of knowing, doing, and writing to *anyset* of linked activity systems, communities, or cultural contexts in which multiple genres perform similar social actions.

In this way, metagenre can expand upon writing-to-communicate pedagogies that typically emphasize disciplinary writing. Metageneric language promotes specific genre knowledge, suggesting when and why students should move among different authorial roles, attitudes towards other texts, and textual forms. As Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) write, "[M]eta-genres form part of our genre and uptake knowledge, and hence play a role in distributing cognition and shaping how we navigate genre systems and their genre sets in order to enact meaningful, consequential actions" (p. 94). Thus, metagenres do not just describe the links among similar disciplines with similar ways of knowing and doing, as Carter claims. Neither do they describe a corpus of genres that instructors might assign in their courses, such as Gardner and Nesi's (2013) genre families. Rather, metagenres connect certain kinds of responses to certain kinds of situations, providing heuristic value for

responding to situations we construe as similar and delimiting the range of responses we may have. By describing and prescribing the form, function, purpose, and context of genres, metagenre is one way genres can become typified, as well as one way writers can recognize a situation as recurring.

Metagenre also contextualizes specific genre knowledge: instructors like Professor Draper can use metagenre to articulate and integrate possibly conflicting motives among disciplinary and extra-disciplinary writing assignments, particularly when they engage common ways of doing and knowing. According to Soliday (2011), "[W]hat matters is less the amount of overt instruction"—such as regulative metagenres—"and more how well professors *contextualize* genres in their classes, aligning the genre's motive with course material, which might include explicit discussion of a field's rhetoric" (p. 72). Metagenre can promote precisely this kind of contextualizing conversation without necessarily imposing disciplinary ways of knowing, doing, and writing where they are not wanted.

Although instructors might use metagenre to map their course assignments for students, they can also invite students to create these maps for themselves, to reflect upon common metageneric principles underlying the genres they must use in local contexts. As Johns (2008) suggests, students can write about the limits and potentials of individual genres and the rhetorical and epistemological shifts required when moving from one to another. In so doing, they would still be writing-to-learn, not only to express reactions to readings or make sense of complex concepts—a typical definition of the term (McLeod and Maimon, 2000)—but also to express how and why to shape and reshape their writing for different audience, purposes, forms, and contexts. Through metagenre, writing-to-communicate and writing-to-learn can become intertwined with one another in ways suggested by McLeod and Miraglia (2001)—inseparable ways of developing and enacting higher order knowledge about the purposes and contexts for writing in college courses and beyond.

Because metagenre is an abstract concept, however, WAC experts and instructors may have trouble implementing it. Guidebooks like Gottschalk and Hjortshor's (2004) *The Elements of Teaching Writing* and Bean's (2011) *Engaging Ideas* already help faculty teaching writing in the disciplines envision rhetorical contexts for their writing assignments in light of their goals for student learning. The following questions take up where these guidebooks leave off. They offer ways of mapping the relationships among course goals, curricular goals, course texts, and writing assignments; they also suggest opportunities for prospective and reflective writing. Instructors can start by articulating goals of disciplinary preparation and general education in their courses:

- **Disciplinary Goals:** Do you envision your course as an introduction to your academic discipline for majors, an intermediate course for majors, or an upper-level or capstone course? Do you hope students will learn to write like academics in your field, or at least approximate that writing?
- **General Education Goals:** Does your course play a role in students' general education? How do you imagine writing will help students achieve general education goals like critical thinking, civic engagement, lifelong learning, or collaboration? Do you want to include both disciplinary and general education goals as part of your course, and if so, how do you envision the relationship between them?

With these larger goals in mind, instructors can then describe their courses as genre networks. The following questions invite them to connect readings, course documents (e.g. syllabi), and writing assignments to one another via the underlying ways of knowing, doing, and writing entailed in larger course goals. Instructors might first want to ask about the curricular function of course readings:

- What purpose does this reading play in your course? How does it help you address your course goals? How does it relate to your disciplinary and/or general education goals? How do you want students to use it (e.g., to learn content knowledge; to use key concepts for analysis; as a model)?

Instructors can then turn to each writing assignment and consider:

- What purpose does this writing assignment play in your course? How does it relate to your disciplinary and/or general education goals?
- In what ways is this assignment similar to and different from course readings? Are they the same genre? Can students treat any readings as a model for this assignment? Which ones?
- In what ways is this assignment similar to and different from other writing assignments in your course? Are they the same genre? To what extent do they serve similar purposes for students? To what extent do assignments serve similar purposes for your course, such as furthering a general education or disciplinary goal? Does this assignment build upon the skills or knowledge of a previous assignment? Does it serve as a foundation on which to build more complex writing tasks? How so?

These questions provide a framework within which instructors can articulate the ways of knowing, doing, and writing that connect the various texts in the course. Finally, in keeping with my recommendation that students themselves should be invited to create their own metagenetic maps of courses, instructors can consider opportunities for assigning prospective and reflective writing:

- What genres (i.e., journals, forums, design plans) can help students plan their writing projects, given your course goals? What genres can students use to reflect upon their writing projects, given your course goals? How can students use these genres to connect their writing assignments to course goals, curricular goals, and readings?

With such knowledge in hand, students can develop a rhetorical awareness of the purposes of and relationships between the reading and writing tasks they might encounter in their courses, whether these tasks entail disciplinary or extra-disciplinary motives. Indeed, I see a big payoff for this conception of metagenre in general education courses like "Museum Appreciation." As I explained above, such courses often employ competing motives in their writing assignments, and Professor Draper's course was no exception. Rather than settle for a disciplinary motive over an extra-disciplinary one (for instance), instructors can use these questions to clarify when each is in play, to what degree, and in what proportions.

Some might argue that instructors like Professor Draper are at a disadvantage if they are not working with a WAC expert who can guide them. Without support from a WAC program, how can they learn about metagenre? We might answer by calling for a renewed emphasis on WAC's longstanding roles in curriculum design and faculty development. To my knowledge, Professor Draper was not opposed to WAC in any way; her emphasis on writing bespeaks the opposite. A stronger WAC program might attract faculty like Professor Draper and teach them how to use metagenre to integrate writing tasks in their courses. However, at schools like UMW, programmatic histories, institutional inertia, budgetary constraints, and other contextual factors can limit WAC's power and visibility.

Recent trends suggest the another avenue: as Rita Malenczyk (2012) argues, "WAC [. . .] is gradually being subsumed or dispersed into other disciplines or programmatic structures, and therefore being

transformed into something other than what it was before, something perhaps less obviously about writing alone" (p. 90). Signs of WAC's dispersal arise at North Carolina State University, Carter's own institution, where the Campus Writing and Speaking Program (CWSP) puts each academic department in charge of developing and assessing its own communication outcomes. Anson and Dannels (2009) believe this setup promotes each department's ongoing investment in communication instruction: "[E]ach department [...] evaluate[s] the ability of its majors to write and speak competently in the discipline according to department-specific writing and speaking outcomes" (p. 29). This department-based CAC model derives from Carter's conception of metagenre: essentially, each program is responsible for articulating and executing its own ways of knowing and doing through writing and speaking (Anson and Dannels, 2009). The program thus decentralizes CAC administration, training, and oversight; the CWSP offers faculty development workshops and departmental consultations, but only to serve each department's own disciplinary communication outcomes (Anson, et al., 2003, p. 29).

But if conflicts like the ones that arose in "Museum Appreciation" are most common in general education courses, then perhaps WAC experts' energy is best spent working with faculty, staff, and administrators who work in general education programs. General education programs can sponsor faculty workshops that promote a metageneric writing pedagogy. General education curriculum committees can ask the questions I posed above of courses applying for an IW designation. Similar questions can also figure into general education assessment rubrics. Generally speaking, those of us invested in robust writing curricula can fold metageneric language into conversations with our colleagues who design, teach, administer, and assess general education. In this way, metagenre stands to make general education courses not sites of conflict, but sites of integration, curricular spaces where students can connect their personal lives, their academic lives, their professional development, and their disciplinary preparation.

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Notes

[1] My deepest thanks go to Professor Draper, Cindy, and Meagan for lending their time during this study. Many others also played a hand in helping me develop it. Christine Farris, John Schilb, Dana Anderson, and Joan Pong Linton all guided me through the process, and they deserve much gratitude. My thanks also go to Michael Carter, Mary Soliday, Michael Pemberton, Martha Townsend, and two other anonymous reviewers. This article benefitted immensely from their insightful feedback on earlier drafts.

[2] Although motive is often associated with socio-cultural activity theory, in which it designates the object of a group's ongoing activity (see Russell 1997), I follow Bawarshi (2003), who argues that motives are "genred," arising out of typical rhetorical situations and recognizable rhetorical responses: "[G]enres," he writes, "are sites which enable and shape communicative actions by first staging the social situation in which communication takes place and then motivating the way communicants rhetorically act within it" (p. 45). In other words, motives inhere in genres—hence why I limit my use of the term to discussions of genres specifically. Goals, meanwhile, are broader: they cut across genres and situations—hence why I speak of course goals, disciplines' goals, or professions' goals, which may become motives through genres that students and instructors use in courses.

[3] In accordance with approved institutional review board protocols, the names of the course, instructor, and students have been changed to protect anonymity. Likewise, all participants agreed to release written work, interviews, and focus groups for this study.

[4] As a field that includes academics and practitioners (with many playing both roles), museum studies entails both scholarly genres (such as art criticism) and professional genres (such as press releases and museum labels). In fact, professional genres often draw from scholarly genres.

[5] The remaining 28% of the final grade came from three other assignments: students had to complete four reading journals during the semester (16%) and answer weekly reading questions (8%). A brief, reflective take-home essay exam counted for the remaining 4%.

[6] Professor Draper provided guidelines for press releases by showing them a website, called WebWire, which outlines a basic press release format. According to WebWire (2010), "You must report in the 'third

person," include a "creative" headline, and begin with an introductory sentence "that captures the reader's attention and contains the information most relevant to your message such as the 'Five W's' of (W)ho, (W)hat, (W)hen, (W)here, and (W)hy, when applicable."

[7] For example, when the class visited the Anthropology Museum mid-way through the semester, Professor Draper discussed with students how professional anthropologists and art historians understand and analyze objects, using questions from an exhibit in the museum. On the MVW, she had students choose an everyday object and discuss its materials, how it might be made, when and where it might be used, and other significant features of its appearance.

[8] "Uptake" refers to the relationships among genres—that is, the process whereby rhetors make use of the generic materials to which they respond, or the way one genre enables a subsequent genre (Freadman, 1994, 44-45).

[9] Professor Draper actually offered this option to students for the artifact research paper. Rather than discuss three objects, they could choose one and, following Petroski, research the development of its use and design. Unfortunately, few students—and none of the samples I collected—took up in this alternative.

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Complete APA Citation

Basgier, Christopher. (2014, December 22). Extra-disciplinary writing in the disciplines: Towards a metageneric pedagogy. *Across the Disciplines*, 11(2). Retrieved from <https://wac.colostate.edu/docs/atd/articles/basgier2014.pdf>