

Mapping Rhetorical Knowledge in Advanced Academic Writers: The Affordances of a Transactional Framework to Disciplinary Communication

Shakil Rabbi, Bowie State University

Abstract: Research on written communication shows that rhetorical knowledge is a key domain of disciplinary writing expertise (Gere et. al. 2019). Much of the recent work in this area has focused on the social dimensions of learning this knowledge. This article builds on these conversations with a presentation of two “advanced academic writers” (Tardy, 2009) and interpreting how they conceptualize rhetorical knowledge through an understanding of academic communication as transaction and symbolic exchange (Britton & Pradl, 1982). I make a case for the value of a transactional framework for interpreting writers’ performance of genre situations. I also show that this framework can provide a “metagenre” (Carter, 2007), a way of doing writing in the discipline, and a “threshold concept” (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015), a way of thinking about writing tasks that shapes writers’ experiences of and learning with them. The two case studies provide an argument for the efficacy of rhetorical knowledge in fostering disciplinary genres when it is framed as understanding situations of communication.

Introduction

It’s all about how you pitch it. If there’s anything I learned in this department, it’s that regardless of whatever research you’re doing you can pretty much submit it anywhere. You just have to know how to pitch it.

—Gunter, Ph.D. candidate in Entomology

I think political scientists find my research interesting, but at the same time not all of them buy my argument.

—Susan, Ph.D. candidate in Political Science and Women’s Studies

The epigraphs above present a common view professional, academic writers have of academic genres and their functions. Both espouse the perspective that writing studies call texts as transactional discourse (Britton & Pradl, 1982; Durst, 2015), framing disciplinary communication in terms of exchanging ideas with others to change or transform the status quo of the field (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2009). They also signal a sense that generic communication is not straightforward transmission of research information and that rhetorical knowledge is required.

There is considerable research on cognition in writing studies showing how unsuccessful communication and writing in the academy stems from an “underdeveloped image of [the] rhetorical

Across the Disciplines

A Journal of Language, Learning and Academic Writing
<https://doi.org/10.37514/ATD-J.2020.17.3.03>

wac.colostate.edu/atd

ISSN 554-8244

Across the Disciplines is an open-access, peer-reviewed scholarly journal published on the WAC Clearinghouse and supported by [Colorado State University](http://colorado-state.edu). Articles are published under a [Creative Commons BY-NC-ND license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) (Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs) ISSN 1554-8244. Copyright © 1997-2020 The WAC Clearinghouse and/or the site's authors, developers, and contributors. Some material is used with permission.

problem” (Flower & Hayes, 1980, p. 30; see Portanova et al. (2018) for recent work in the area of cognitive process approaches to understanding writing and genres). These researchers have persuasively argued that inexperienced academic writers understand communicative situations in ways failing to draw from their extant rhetorical abilities. Scholarship on this topic has focused on teaching academic texts in terms of their role in disciplinary situations (Carter, 2007; Hyland, 2006), understanding texts using genre approaches (Devitt, 2010; Devitt, Reiff, & Bawarshi 2004), or analyzing model texts (Brent, 2005; Wolfe, Olson, & Wilder, 2014). These works have advocated for comparing similarities and differences between communicative situations in writing pedagogy because such practices enable transfer (Nowacek, 2011; Rounsaville et. al. 2008; Wardle, 2007). They have also argued that students taught to analyze writing and theories of writing perform better in other academic situations when they apply that knowledge, especially when they are taught how to do so appropriately (Yancey, Roberston, & Taczak, 2014, Gere et. al. 2019).

Discussions of writing knowledge in academic writers now often proceeds within a framework of knowledge as performance *in situ*, an ability or skill in a given genre situation. These conversations have been careful, however, to use qualified, empirically-grounded claims because researchers recognize that arguments about writing competence can—more often do—lead to a framing of student writers as deficient disciplinary members needing fixing rather than to a meaningful discussion about what resources are needed to support students adequately (Trimbur, 1991). These conversations have also placed, I would argue, an onus on continuous examinations of how “advanced academic writers” (AAW) (Tardy, 2005) or “expert academic writers” (Emerson, 2016) perform situated communication to understand authentic academic genre performances. Examinations of AAWs’ writing activities (i.e., as writers in transition between being students and experts) also have the potential to highlight “certain pivotal points [in the long-term developmental process of writing knowledge] at which [academic writers] make visible leaps in knowledge. [And we have to better account for] high-stakes tasks with tangible outcomes and involve expert readers to whom the writers must present new knowledge claims of value and significance” (Tardy, 2005, p. 239).

Taking up James Britton’s foundational formulation of academic genres as instances of transactional discourse (Britton & Pradl, 1982), I provide an argument for considering how a transactional mode of thinking about communication can be generative to our understanding of AAW’s writing knowledge (Beaufort, 2007). I argue for the use of the conceptual framework of transactionalism to interpret the performance of rhetorical knowledge of two AAWs, a Ph.D. candidate in Entomology and a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science. Consequently, the pictures of AAWs communicating in genres reported here illustrate a transactional conceptual framework functioning as “a metagenre” (Carter, 2007) and a “threshold concept” (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015). It applies rhetorical knowledge, embedded in knowledge of genre and discourse community, as a “way of doing things” in respective disciplines. These case studies of writing as a “social and rhetorical activity” and as a “performance” enable me to discuss the writing of genres based on the perspective that “the ways people think about approaching a writing task affect their experiences with it” (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015, p. 72).

On Concepts and Metagenres of Writing

Two bodies of research on how writing is conceived of in given situations and on how it operates as a “metagenre” or “threshold concept” in given disciplines predominate in writing studies. The first has been the robust body of scholarship using the lens of rhetorical genre studies. This approach looks at writing knowledge as it is evidenced in genres, texts that are “typified rhetorical actions based on recurrent situations” (Miller, 2015), and holds wide currency in the fields of writing across the curriculum/writing in the disciplines (WAC/WID) and first-year writing. One consensus in this

research holds that genres represent textual sites of sociocognition (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Carter, 2007). Expertise in disciplinary writing in this approach comes through the “dynamic transformative interplay” between a “knowing *that* linked to a knowing *how*” (Geisler, 1994, p. 44). Successful socialization means writers acquire both declarative (“knowing that [knowing what]”) and procedural knowledge (“knowing how”) in their disciplines, and that non-members or neophytes struggle with the latter because they have not yet had sufficient experience with discourse community norms and expectations (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995). They do not know the metagenres needed to conceptualize and negotiate disciplinary genres. Academic literacy, Cheryl Giesler (1991) points out, ought to be approached in terms of “problem spaces where experts explore the domain content of a particular field in which they consider the field’s rhetorical dimensions” as “attributes of the social axis” (p. 182). Insights from these foundational studies have led to conversations on teaching for transfer in first-year writing and how it can align with WAC/WID. Anis Bawarshi (2017), engaging with recent conversations on writing for transfer through a cognitive perspective, has argued that writing instruction needs to move to a “*knowing-with* perspective on transfer [that] involves taking the knowledge, skills, or thinking strategies learned in one context (i.e., a *knowing-how*) and translating/transforming that learned knowledge, skill or thinking strategy to accomplish a task in another context” (p. 90, emphasis in original).

Empirical studies of advanced writing knowledge have backed up these theorizations of sociocognition and genre knowledge. They evidence that textual performances of rhetorical knowledge and metagenre knowledge (i.e., forms of genre knowledge) as significant for demonstrating what writers know and show how this knowledge is embedded in the contexts of respective disciplines (i.e., forms of sociocognition). Anne Blakeslee (1997, 2001) finds that audience-awareness is key to how disciplinary texts are developed by aspiring professional academic writers. Participating in conferences and the writing processes of articles for publications teaches a graduate student in Physics, Bouzida, to “present only that information that their audience members would find useful” (Blakeslee 2001: 91). Tardy (2009) illustrates how Chatri, a Ph.D. candidate, uses rhetorical strategies to signal his expertise the more experience he acquires writing research articles and working with others. In particular, using discursive tools such as “hedging and boosting” evidence, articulating an authoritative, rhetorical ethos, “show[ing] confidence in his work [,] and foreground[ing] the work’s contribution in accurate and meaningful ways” (Tardy, 2009, p. 245).

Steve Simpson et al. (2015) and Elliot Shapiro (2015), writing in a special issue of *Across the Disciplines*, point out that the mystification of writing must be overcome to develop advanced writing knowledge, and that practice accompanied by explicit writing concepts supports growth in this area. Teaching disciplinary writing to undergraduates, Shapiro (2015) argues, provides graduate writers the space to recognize the interconnected nature of writing knowledge, and thereby helps internalize the function of rhetorical knowledge in genres more clearly. The training graduate students receive through the socialization processes of their graduate education inculcates in them the belief that “teaching, writing, researching, and service can be mutually overlapping” activities of their professions (Shapiro, 2015, p. 12). Simpson et al. (2015) find that advanced graduate students develop their writing knowledge best when they are working with less experienced graduate writers because the activities of peer review and collaboration maintain their sense of how genres operate in practice, and that this is especially crucial for students completing their dissertations (an extended writing task often done in isolation and mostly in dialogue with experts rather than other graduate students). These articulations of community, Simpson et al. (2015) also find, are not uniform, and different groups and disciplines must adapt to the needs and complexities of different activities and disciplines, making use of online tools and asynchronous feedback and collaborative practices as necessary.

The second body of research on how writing is conceived and performed in formal academic spaces has been the critical work informed by the seminal theories on conceptual metaphors by George Lakoff and Marc Johnson, especially their assertion that “we act according to the way we conceive of things” (2003, p. 5). Evidenced by projects such as *Naming what We Know* (2015), this view has been prominent in work on composition and writing program administration. Metagenres and threshold concepts in this scholarship speak to the language used to understand writing and communication in the classroom, strongly shaping composition students’ performances. Nedra Reynolds (2007) pointedly argues that our use of spatial metaphors (e.g., discourse communities, communities of practice, speech communities, etc.) has uncritically shaped work in composition classrooms. It has made writing pedagogy too abstract and disengaged from its position within institutions, and the material conditions of teaching. Making writing scholarship more theoretically complex has masked the overcrowded classrooms—and more recently the adjunct crisis—that undermine appropriate writing instruction, on the one hand, and perpetuate an autonomous, incoherent view of communication, on the other. Innovations in the metaphors used to name writing are needed, it follows, that recognize the service function of the field, especially frameworks grounded in the material conditions of the labor of composition (see Horner et. al (2017) for more on recent discussions of this topic).

Illustrating the stakes of this agenda, Dana L. Driscoll and Daewoo Jin (2018) and Mary Jo Reiff (2011) provide examinations of academic writing using metaphors which have proved generative for teaching composition students or “neophyte” members (Dreyfus 2004, as cited in Collins & Evans, 2007). Reiff (2011) applies the metaphor of space (the concept Reynolds criticizes) for teaching students, stating that common, extant metaphors provide students a vocabulary that acts as “access routes” and “bridges” to disciplinary and professional writing situations (p. 212). Driscoll and Jin (2018), analyzing interviews with 13 students through a longitudinal study, argue that the metaphor of “box under the bed” is a generative epistemological framework that supports the transfer of writing knowledge across classes. They point to the metaphors’ efficacy “as a teaching tool that is accessible to students... a strategy for managing their learning, choosing what to keep and what to gather dust, depending on their immediate learning needs and contexts” (Driscoll & Jin, 2018, p. 17). Metaphors provide students with a language to raise their awareness of their own epistemology and learning transfer.

Daniel Richards (2017) and Philip Eubanks (2001), in more critical accounts, argue that the use of one conceptual metaphor over another in the classroom is less critical than how we use metaphors in the context of universities to understand contradictory conceptualizations of education. The current, dominant metaphor of the students as customers, they point out, speaks to the radical transformation of higher education in the neoliberal era. These ways of seeing represent “ideologically motivated mappings” of lexis across domains of activities (Eubanks, 2001) in ways that undercut the educational mission of the university for the sake of profit. Academics need to better communicate their missions for better writing pedagogy. The education as a commodity and the student as customer metaphors place teachers and students at odds in the classroom, and present writing as an autonomous set of skills applicable to all situations rather than as a metagenre, creating an untenable situation for teaching writing effectively (Richards, 2017).

Studies of graduate writing support programs in recent years also evidence the affordances of metaphors to organize activities for AAWs. Susan Lawrence and Terry M. Zawacki (2019) point towards the widely circulating metaphors of “entering the conversation of mankind” (Bruffee, 1984) or “inventing the university” (Bartholamae, 1986) as ways for writing centers to sponsor literacy relationships, supplementing the dyadic sponsorship practiced in the dissertation adviser-advisee model. The articulation of group collaboration is found to benefit the AAW experiencing a “sense of isolation” during their states of transition from a student to a professional member of their field (p.

40). Steve Simpson et. al (2016) profile graduate writing support programs internationally and how they have developed to meet specific institutional needs of AAWs even while supporting a coherent sense of disciplinary identity. This has been accomplished, Simpson et. al (2016) find, through a reliance on the conceptual frameworks of community building, whether in terms of investing in writing centers that cater explicitly to them or through “intensive writing support activities such as dissertation boot camps” (p.8). Despite the militaristic conceptual metaphor often underlying the framing of writing retreats, Simpson et. al (2016) find that writing support activities are taken up as a space to connect and build community, actualizing the conceptual metaphor of entering a conversation through peer connections.

Building on the conversations represented above, my case studies discuss the utility of a transactional framing to interpret academic genres, wherein communication is conceptualized as symbolic exchange and metagenre for AAWs. As the research discussed above shows, work on rhetorical genre studies has identified the ways writers, advanced writers especially, perform situated cognition within a developmental perspective. These studies have recognized the value of conceptual metaphors to coordinate activities supporting advanced writers or experts at the programmatic level. This study adds to these insights by providing a documented picture of the performance of writing knowledge of AAWs *in situ*. It examines rhetorical knowledge and its affordances for AAWs by presenting case studies that engage with the following question:

- How is rhetorical knowledge performed by advanced academic writers?

This question is then broken into two facets focused on the utility of a transactional framing for interpreting this performance:

- How does a transactional framing highlight discrete aspects of the performance?
- How does a transactional framing integrate discrete aspects of the performance?

Methods

Data Collection

The case studies presented here come from a multi-year, expedited IRB-approved, ethnographic study of the academic socialization of graduate students in Ph.D. programs. I recruited the two subjects, Gunter and Susan because they represented AAWs who are “proficient members” in their disciplines (Dreyfus 2004, as cited in Collins & Evans, 2007) in the final all-but dissertation phase of their Ph.D. programs.

Data were collected utilizing an “intermittent time mode” (Heath and Street, 2008) for this ethnography. Three rounds of semi-structured interviews were conducted over several months, with questions focusing on general backgrounds and interests, attitudes toward writing and writing processes, and knowledge of disciplinary genres (see Appendix for interview questions). Additional discourse-based interviews were conducted afterward on selections of texts provided by them; these were “talk around texts” interviews (Lillis, 2008) that asked about specific texts, the writing process that composed them and their functions in their socialization. There were no fixed questions used for these follow up interviews.

Data collected during the larger study were considerable and represented a picture of their practices at the end of the program (both defended and moved to formal academic positions during the study). In this paper, however, I only look at a limited subset of the data for Gunter and Susan: a series of interviews and a selection of drafts of a published research article, as well as the cover letters and

documents making up the “genre-set” of that text (Devitt, 2010). Nevertheless, the greater body of data comprising the larger study has greatly informed my analysis and interpretation.

Gunter

Gunter was Ph.D. candidate in Entomology at a large R-1 institution and attached to a well-regarded Entomology laboratory at the time of the data collection. Though international, he had already been living in the US for several years when data collection started. Gunter had previously received his education in his home country in Europe, but also had experience in the US model of higher education—and writing scientific genres in English—because 1) his previous institution was modeled on US research universities and 2) English is language used internationally for scientific research and communication (Gordin, 2015).

Open and sociable as a person, Gunter shared most of the texts he produced during his final years in his Ph.D. program. His performance in these tasks showed him to be a competent member of the professional, academic discipline of Entomology. Though he was not a full expert, Gunter possessed all attributes of full discourse-community membership and advanced academic writing knowledge.

Susan

At the time of the study, Susan was a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science and Women’s Studies at a large R-1 institution. Susan was from East Asia, but, like Gunter, she had considerable experience with the US system of higher education: she went to high school and college in the United States. Before starting her Ph.D., Susan had worked at an NGO engaged in women’s reproductive care in New York state, a role in which she regularly wrote professional reports.

Susan, who was invested in her writing process, attended the graduate writing center regularly and was a part of multiple writing groups. Like Gunter, she wrote multiple conference papers, research article drafts, and grants during the time of data collection. She shared most of these texts with me and her performances in them showed her to be a good communicator and arguably an expert-in-waiting in Political Science.

Data Analysis

Case studies, while not generalizable, provide “ideals” through which “theoretical perspectives and principles manifest themselves in a given circumstance” (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 4). Consequently, I addressed the research questions listed above through an ethnographic triangulation methodology. Firstly, I coded their utterances (i.e., interview data and text of the drafts of the research articles) to identify and interpret performances of rhetorical knowledge. In this process, I was informed by definitions of writing knowledge by Anne Beaufort (2007, 2012) and Christina Tardy (2009), and identified all pertinent instances of such writing knowledge within my categories. These codes were then sorted into axial codes and finally thematic codes. During the axial coding stage, for example, utterances coded as both “editing for succinctness” and “data representation” (“My research team is very fact-based people. They want every sentence to be backed up. If I do research sloppy, they find loopholes instantly. So I learned to design research to avoid pitfalls and fix the loopholes. That helped me with my research designs” (Gunter, Interview)) were combined under the single code “genre knowledge.”

Table 1. Thematic Codes and Definitions

Rhetorical Knowledge	Definition of Label	Samples from Interviews Corresponding to Label	Samples from Genre Sets of Published Articles Corresponding to Label
Textual Purpose	Knowledge relating to the functions of the text in terms of its genre and communicative situation.	<p>If there’s anything I learned in this department, it’s that regardless of whatever research you’re doing you can pretty much submit it anywhere. You just have to know how to pitch it. (Gunter, Interview)</p> <p>When I say that I try to tailor [a paper] to the conference, I say how it will contribute to the conference. (Susan, Interview)</p>	<p>Our results also suggest that floral diversity and abundance around an apiary are positively correlated with the overwintering success of the colonies. (Gunter, RA)</p> <p>I kept in mind the word limit for [articles in the journal] when incorporating necessary changes in response to the feedback (Susan, CL)</p>
Audience Expectations	Knowledge relating to discourse community-based readers’ expectations of a given genre or text.	<p>If you are submitting [a grant] to the USDA you have to think about real life. But if you are submitting to the NSF they only care about creating knowledge. (Gunter, Interview)</p> <p>some reviewers... want the paper to be really political sciencey [sic].... If you are gonna talk about that, just talk about how they are correlated (Susan, Interview).</p>	<p>Thus, these studies should be of interest to the broad readership of [journal it is published in]. (Gunter, CL).</p> <p>I carefully edited my entire manuscript to remove any language that may imply that there is only one mechanism in which female politicians could serve as role models. (Susan, CL)</p>
Writer’s Task	Knowledge relating to the job or action writers must do or perform textually in genre and communicative situations.	<p>We’re going to try to make this story into a form. That you know overwintering is critical for economic purposes of beekeeping because the losses happened there (Gunter, Interview);</p> <p>I should play it up just a bit more and then really argue why these cases are worthy of studying or why these cases are comparable. (Susan, Interview)</p>	<p>Our results suggest that 1) honey bees may use similar strategies to cope ... in both southern and northern regions, 2) colonies must reach a population size threshold to survive ... (an example of the Allee effect), and 3) landscape nutrition is a key component to colony survival (Gunter, RA)</p> <p>Contrary to extant literature ..., this study illustrates a backlash effect on women’s political engagement in ESA (Susan, RA)</p>
Discursive Forms	Knowledge of the linguistic and semiotic forms that characterize the text of a genre.	<p>Most of the time the feedback I get is about toning it down... I get bored when I read my own things. And I’m sure everyone gets bored, but they like being bored. (Gunter, Interview)</p> <p>[It] is pretty much a social science model. You talk about why the question is important. I guess methods is important... (Susan, Interview)</p>	<p>Hypothesis prioritization;</p> <p>Textual hedging of claims;</p> <p>Visualizations;</p> <p>Headings and Subheadings.</p>

During this stage, however, “in vivo” codes were preferred (when possible) to identify aspects of these performances and “preserve participants’ meaning of their views and actions” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 55). For example, the code “pitching” (from Gunter) or “selling” (from Susan) was used to annotate all utterances related to genre-specific communication as “a way of doing” (Carter, 2007). This process enabled me to “constantly compare” (Heath & Street, 2008) Gunter’s and Susan’s utterances to arrive at a triangulated, third position. The resulting contours are the thematic codes subcategorized into four aspects of rhetorical knowledge operating simultaneously and discretely (Tardy 2009). These themes and examples of coded performances are listed in Table 1.

Finally, Susan and Gunter were provided my initial, general analyses to verify the “credibility” of my interpretations (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Their responses and concerns were incorporated into my revisions. For example, Susan, though agreeing with my interpretation, raised concerns about the use of her paper titles and disclosure of her nationality in the text. I consequently removed those details both for her and Gunter (even though he did not have similar reservations), which resulted in a tighter argument. Member-checks, in sum, helped me ensure my interpretations were valid and ethical (Daniell, 2003).

The pictures provided here are renditions of the performances of rhetorical knowledge of these two AAWs. These portrayals present my take of rhetorical knowledge *in situ* of these two writers. They provide my own “interpretative narrative” (Brodkey, 1987) of what Gunter and Susan might be doing, showing how readers might identify expert or advanced writing knowledge that is tacit (Beaufort, 2007; Russell, 2002) using a transactional framework. My argument follows Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln’s (1981) point that case studies and narrative research, in general, provide the reader a setting for a “transference of the substance of a case” (p. 377) communicated in the details.

Transactional Frameworks and the Performance of Rhetorical Knowledge

Focusing on rhetorical knowledge—textual purpose, audience expectations, writer’s task and discursive forms—can productively interpret Gunter’s and Susan’s genre performances (refer to Table 1 for definitions and examples). More so, these two stories illustrate how conceptualizing this knowledge in terms of transactionalism and symbolic exchange might be useful for identifying how its discrete aspects are integrated (Tardy, 2005). They also, I contend, add evidence of a metagenre and threshold concept of performing a communicative “doing in professional academic disciplines” (Carter, 2007) in terms of both the general and situated purposes.

Rhetorical knowledge is acquired through academic writers’ long-term socialization process (Beaufort, 2007). Writers develop genre competence not in isolation, but by their involvement and investment in their respective disciplines. Consequently, Gunter’s and Susan’s case studies evidence a view of writing as “social and rhetorical activity” and “performance” (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015) that might afford these dimensions of socialization. They also illustrate how framing learning through these threshold concepts might identify the operationalization of writing knowledge to communicate appropriately. In the following sections, I discuss aspects of my interpretations of Gunter and Susan performing rhetorical knowledge. I argue that approaching communication in terms of symbolic exchange provides a way to understand rhetorical knowledge, enabling the negotiation of readers’ interests, constraints, and values in given utterances and the generation of texts in given genres. Based on the “interpretive narratives” of these case studies, I then move to my broader argument informed by the pictures provided in the final section.

Case Study 1: Gunter Learns to Pitch

Academic communication outside of the classroom is a primary mode of academic socialization in Entomology. It is an applied science and advanced (graduate) students work in a laboratory under a principal investigator (PI) who is often also their advisor. Membership is recognized through participation in research and communication activities (i.e., “authentic genres”), such as lab and conference presentations, grant proposals, and research articles (Gardner, 2008; Mahler et. al., 2014). Consequently, communicative competence *in situ* is prioritized in the discipline, especially those aspiring to work as researchers (Emerson, 2017). Gunter’s case shows this. The majority of the textual genres he participates in his Ph.D. program are communicative rather than pedagogical and are composed in collaboration with his PI and others in his lab. A communicative ethic is especially identifiable, I would argue, using a transactional framework to interpret his performances associated with the research article. Examining Gunter’s performances with this lens foreground his awareness of the audience’s constraints and interests in the genre. He supports the communicative exchange by situating the article in the journal effectively and supports the reading process by providing descriptive headings in the text.

Gunter reports that research must be exchanged in the sciences and that the *textual purpose* of articles is to perform this through communication. He repeats this view throughout his interviews, explained tellingly as knowledge acquired during his doctoral program (see Rabbi & Canagarajah (2018) for more). Before his Ph.D. program, Gunter says he considered the generation of data—forms of “declarative knowledge” (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995)—the primary aim of scientific activities. Before his Ph.D., Gunter seems to have subscribed to the common neophyte belief that writing and communication are not essential to science but ancillary (Poe et. al., 2010). He says about his change of thinking:

Now I will say nobody cares if you have good data, you *need to communicate it to others...* five years ago I would have said the opposite... *Writing is a way of showing it to people. Good efficient writing is key. Oral presentations and videos are other ways.* (Gunter, emphasis added)

His Ph.D. program, as Gunter says, was key to developing this dynamic, transactional view of research and the corresponding sense of textual purpose for scientific genres. It does not matter if one has good data (“nobody cares”), he says: the scientist must communicate and “show it to people” using “good efficient writing,” and “oral presentations and videos.” He also articulates a sense, I would argue, that scientific communication includes persuasion, that scientists must make audiences care about the data. In other words, his academic socialization has inculcated a rhetorical approach and disciplinary orientation corresponding to the “knowledge transforming” stance marking expert writers (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2009).

I believe that *audience expectations*, for Gunter, function as a threshold concept in performing this purpose for a reader (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015). A research methods class taken during his first year in the graduate program stressed this consideration of audience. During an in-class activity, students were provided grants submitted to the National Science Foundations, broken into groups, and asked to evaluate the texts. This taught Gunter to keep in mind that the texts he writes have readers, a primary audience who read in particular ways. Gunter describes what he thinks about the professionals generally reading genres:

So they have to read hundreds of proposals in one night...So, they read the titles, *throw it out if they think about anything [disqualifying]* then they read the abstract. *I was taught to*

write as if a sleep-deprived six-year-old on five cups of coffee is reading it. That's my audience. That's what your brain is reduced to (Gunter, emphasis added)

A professional, academic reader as a “sleep-deprived six-year-old on five cups of coffee” is a novel image of the audience, one that goes against normative images of scientists as idealized experts. A less experienced member might assume that a professional member of a field is highly competent cognitively. Yet, the academic audience that Gunter thinks about as the primary reader—an image he repeats in another instance talking about conference presentations (“I can give that talk to a six-year-old and he will be like ‘Oh yeah, I understand that’”)—conceptualizes the professional audience as severely constrained by the sheer volume of information-heavy texts they must process quickly and continuously. In such constrained situations, Gunter imagines that academics read intending to filter out texts (“[to] throw out”), and texts not written in alignment with forms that facilitate communication are the first to be disqualified for consideration.

The *writer's task*, it follows, is to respond appropriately, balancing audience expectations and textual purpose, using normative *discursive forms*. Explaining how he prepares a research article for a journal focusing on pollinator management, Gunter says that he writes it as: “[a] *story into a form that you know*[:] overwintering is critical for economic purposes” (emphasis added). That is, his task as the writer is to compose a narrative that informs the reader about how bees surviving over the winter relates to the economics of beekeeping, the general topic the journal is known for. This conceptualization of the task might be a reason why he stresses the pragmatic takeaways of his research in the cover letter accompanying the article. He writes in the cover letter that the article provides “a simple and cost-effective means of predicting overwintering survival” and “thus should be of interest to the readership of the [journal]” (Gunter). In other words, Gunter is performing an extended, multi-text articulation of the knowledge (“keep[ing the] story together” (Gunter)) that a research article is a part of the “social and rhetorical activity” (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015) of a journal and not a general, autonomous text presenting set data or findings.

The text of the research article he publishes with other members of the lab (as the lead author) arguably also performs this knowledge. Throughout the writing process, the text becomes more communicatively effective and shaped to meet the rhetorical situation. Firstly, statements are added that support a reading of the text as a story of better bee management that do not necessarily change the interpretation of the data. For example, the phrase “positively associated” in the title of an earlier draft of the article is replaced with “predicts” (Gunter, RA), boosting the claims of the statement (Hyland 2006). Phrases and sentences are added to the abstract to emphasize exigence: “colonies must reach a population size threshold to survive adverse conditions” (Gunter, RA) and “There has been great interest in breeding for ‘locally adapted stocks’ which survive winter conditions in a particular region” (Gunter, RA). The conclusion includes a statement of contribution or takeaway for a readership interested in bee management: “Our study demonstrated the importance of colony size in overwintering success” (Gunter, RA).

Secondly, subheadings in his results section become more detailed and descriptive of the content of the sections, shown in Table 2. The revisions, I contend, perform a rhetorical move of responding to the contextual expectation that the writer facilitates the audience’s uptake processes. The new subheadings help the reader judge whether that section is of interest to them or whether they can skip to the next section without having to read the information therein.

Table 2: Results Section Subheadings in Draft and Published Versions of Gunter’s Article

Results Section Subheadings from RA, Draft	Results Section Subheadings from RA, Published Version
Genetic Background	Evaluating Genotypic Differences Among Stocks and Between Stock Region of Origin
Winter Survival	Impact of Stock and Stock Region of Origin with Winter Survival
Colony weight and size in October	Association of Colony Metrics with Winter Survival
Location	Impacts of Apiary Location and Stock on Colony Metrics
Geographic Information System (GIS) Analysis	Analysis of Landscapes Surrounding Apiaries

Finally, during the peer review process for publication, 13 new citations are added, 11 of which relate to bee management and pest control, and 3 are sourced from the specific journal the article has been submitted to. Citations are a normative expectation of the field. Gunter knows support must be provided for everything he writes (“My research team is very fact-based people. They want every sentence to be backed up” (Gunter). Since he makes substantial changes during the revision process of the publication in response to the feedback he receives, these new citations partly “back up” these changes. At the same time, these citations also operate rhetorically, shaping how the research question and contribution are articulated (Bazerman, 1988). This can be seen performatively given the fact that the new citations specifically situate the research article within the journal and makes its “economic purpose” argument stronger. They are a fitting response to the exigence and context of the rhetorical situation.

Case Study 2: Susan Plays It Up

Susan learns more about academic genres in classrooms than Gunter because Political Science relies on seminars and individual research activities to socialize graduate students. At the same time, despite disciplinary differences, the socialization trajectory of the two Ph.D. candidates is parallel. Political Science, like most academic disciplines, prioritizes peer-reviewed journals as the most important measure of professional participation (Brown, 2015). These pressures mean that Susan submits multiple articles for publication to well-regarded journals by the end of her program; that is, she has experience rhetorically negotiating disciplinary audiences in authentic genres (Blakeslee, 2001).

Susan reports being frustrated by the values and epistemological norms of her discipline while trying to publish her research. She explains in an interview about the type of feedback she receives about her use of case studies from political scientists is different from other academics:

And I think that is the biggest problem with case studies. The reason geography’s and women’s studies folks [I work with on my committee] don’t have to justify their cases is because they don’t have to care about generalizability. That is not a concern for humanities scholars. But the social sciences have to care about generalizability. (Susan, emphasis added)

Susan’s commentary here speaks to issues that writing studies might interpret as “discourse community knowledge,” specifically “the underlying values and goals for the community that

influences all aspects of text production” (Beaufort 1997, p. 489). It articulates her sense that Political Science scholars are invested in the generalizability of findings as a professional community. Rhetorical knowledge means appealing to this value and so her genre performances respond accordingly. A focus on a transactional approach to disciplinary communication suggests how this orientation shapes Susan’s performances of rationalizing case selection into an argument. Her development of this expectation of the research article in terms of “playing up” aspects of the text so that other researchers “buy [her] argument.”

The need to justify case selection I interpret as performing *audience expectations*. Like Gunter, Susan initially learns and enacts a threshold concept to frame her disciplinary communication. Specifically, I argue that she understands that “writing is performative” (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015) early in her program and this frames her subsequent approach to writing. She learns this through a list of research articles in the class that serve as models for the genre, texts she continues to draw from even in her final years in the program. However, unlike Gunter, Susan’s conceptualization of *audience expectations* gels around negotiating the epistemological values of her discipline and that case studies must always be rationalized in the genre of the article. This knowledge is reinforced and developed further through the feedback she receives on articles she submits for publication. She reports in an interview her understanding of the “revise and resubmit” she received on a research article thus:

the major issues with the reviewers is [sic] that I need to justify why I could compare like southeast Asia and east Asia in a systematic way. Since there is so much diversity within Asia. So I need to justify why [I look at the selection of countries I look at in my research]. So again it is the justification. Case selection. That's a major issue they have. and I've always had to deal with that. (emphasis added)

The frustration Susan expresses here performs her view that the reviewers expect something she has trouble articulating in her research genres. However, her academic socialization has taught her that she must “always deal with it” when the “it” is something her professional readership has “a major issue with.” She cannot ignore their concerns if she wants to communicate successfully in the genre.

The *writer’s task* within this framework is to negotiate these requirements *in situ* and the development of the article shows how Susan innovates a new argument in response. Despite her frustrations, or because of them, she reports rethinking her use of cases from Asia in terms of showing that Political Science knowledge derived from studies of Western democracies is not uncritically applicable to Asian democracies:

Which is why I say that... let's look at Asia. I need to argue why, I think, what I find, what's been found in Western models, is not generalizable to Asia. So with the case selection of my four cases [of non-Western democracies], I could make all these different arguments and justifications. (Susan, emphasis added)

It is a sophisticated rhetorical move Susan is performing here. She uses the terms of her discipline (“Western models” and “generalizability”) to justify her case selection. Especially, Susan argues that her cases cohere and her selection is justified because they show limitations of Western models. In effect, she creates a significance or research contribution for her findings: her research argues for a critical reconsideration of status quo disciplinary knowledge. She believes—accurately since the article is accepted for publication—that such a framing will lead to a satisfying communicative exchange in the peer review process. It fulfills her task as the writer, as she says, “to play it up just a bit more and then really argue why these cases are worthy of studying or why these cases are comparable” (Susan).

This is not to say that I believe Susan is opportunistically rationalizing her use of the cases. When she says that the writer must play up certain parts, I am not suggesting that Susan is solely responding to audience expectations that the requested change be made. Rather, I want to suggest that this is an example of performing the genre. The exigence of justifying case selection elicits a response for recursively considering why she chose the data set she did and how the data sets are comparable, which are crucial considerations for a social scientist. The *textual purpose* of disciplinary communication in her case is to provide “a story [and that] ... people need to buy it” (Susan). It is also a framing that foregrounds a tacit view that academic knowledge is rhetorically constituted through a series of argumentations that must convince its audience through disciplinary communicative activities (Blakeslee 2000; Poe et. al., 2010). We can see how her approaching the research article as an exchange might explain why she reports that the text tells a story that the disciplinary reader buys: it affords a focus on seeing how Susan tacitly knows that a text must be a presentation of findings and this tacit knowledge lets her compose an acceptable articulation of case justification.

Furthermore, even though Susan refers to her article and argument as “a story,” it does not mean the text departs from the normative *discursive forms* of the genre. She does not write what rhetorical scholars would categorize as a narrative; her article adheres to the IMRAD model and uses quantitative evidence. She explains about her revision and how it tells a story: “I reframed the paper by adding like *tables and figures to sort of tell my story of the role model effect ... so, I think that’s the selling point of this paper*” (emphasis added).

“Tables and figures” stand in for a set of disciplinary norms and values in Political Science (Harwood, 2007). The audience values empirical framing of data, Susan says, because it helps them interpret her research as well as provide information for their research (once published, other political scientists can also use her data in their work). Therefore, she observes this norm because “tables and figures” would help it “sell” in a legitimate way and enable her readership to see how her findings are “very different from what people assume”.

These dimensions of negotiating disciplinary values and epistemological norms to facilitate exchange and “playing up” her findings might be argued as evidenced by the development of the text during the writing process. Firstly, her title is rewritten using more general language. The final title is shorter and made up of a question about role models in politics (an object of analysis in her discipline), with the phrase “Lessons from Asia” inserted to answer it. Not only does this framing boost her statement (Hyland, 2006), this rephrasing also signals that the article will problematize assumptions of status quo knowledge in the field. In other words, its argument provides a critical corrective.

Secondly, statements are added throughout the text that emphasize a concern about treating the topic for role-models uncritically. In the abstract of the research article, she writes that “My results suggest that the female legislators’ role model effect found in existing literature on Western democracies does not apply to East and Southeast Asia.” In the introduction, Susan states that “I contend that the current understanding of the impact of women’s political representation [i.e., the role model effect] on women’s political participation is not generalizable across contexts.” And in the conclusion, she argues that “Contrary to extant literature that suggests the role model effect of female politicians, this study illustrates a backlash effect on women’s political engagement in ESA.”

This emphasis, I would argue, stems from the importance the reviewers place on role models and how they are treated in her text. She writes in a cover letter for the revised article that “Per the reviewer’s suggestion, I moved what I had stated in the footnote to the main body of the text, as well as added a few more sentences to more thoroughly explain the literature on the role model effect.”

Finally, the published version of the article includes 38 new citations, 26 of which relate to women and politics. Many of these citations emerge out of the feedback Susan received from reviewers and correspond to the analysis she made during the revision process. These additions can be understood

as rhetorical, providing support for her claims and situating her appropriately in terms of the field (Harwood & Petric, 2012; Hyland, 2012).

Implications for Writing Pedagogy

This study provides my analyses of Gunter's and Susan's performances of rhetorical knowledge. In it, I interpreted how this knowledge operates in both discrete and integrated ways. I also tried to develop an argument about the efficacy of using a transactional framework to interpret genre performances. What I have provided here are not generalizable claims. Nonetheless, I think we can recognize that these AAWs possess a well-developed sense of rhetorical knowledge, even if they are never provided formal instruction in rhetoric. A transactional framework brings this ability into focus and shows how it operates simultaneously in discrete and integrated ways. My analysis also makes the case that their performances preclude views of communication as a one-way transmission of information within a given genre. Rather, writing an article is understood as shaping or composing for a set of expert readers *in situ* as well as representing research.

Writing scholars have argued that an issue with disciplinary experts teaching writing and disciplinary communication is that such competencies operate as tacit knowledge for these writers (Beaufort, 2007; Russell, 2002). The internalization of rhetorical knowledge makes it difficult for experts to instruct new members on writing. Yet, Gunter and Susan's performances—when interpreted through the lens of transactional discourse—shows that they nonetheless acquire the various aspects of this knowledge through textually-mediated interactions with experts and communities in their respective disciplines (Blakeslee, 2001; Lawrence and Zawacki 2019). Transactionalism or a symbolic exchange framework functions as a “metagenre” (Carter, 2007), a way to conceptualize communication in the culture of academic disciplines and facilitate the acquisition of this knowledge.

Rhetorical Knowledge Matters for AAWs

There is a view in the field that calls for deferring writing pedagogy to disciplinary experts. This view goes that the specifics of disciplinary and professional communication are based on context and are always situated, and therefore, instruction on general writing knowledge (such as rhetorical knowledge) is ineffective (Starke-Meyering et al., 2011). The efficacy of teaching general writing and communicative knowledge is questioned within this perspective (Friedman et. al., 1994). There is opposition to this view, however, which contends that general, rhetorical knowledge remains useful even for communicating in the highly differentiated and contextualized parameters of academic, professional writing. It is valuable precisely because it is a general domain of knowledge—or threshold concept—that affords the acquisition of other disciplinary knowledge regarding communication in advanced activities and genres (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015; Driscoll & Jin, 2018)

My interpretation supports this latter position by making the case that rhetorical knowledge facilitates genre performance, often operating tacitly. The value of employing a transactional framework to interpret writers' performance is that it makes this tacit knowledge explicit for stakeholders of writing (Gere et. al., 2019). This is the first implication of my case studies. Both Gunter and Susan refer to knowledge about disciplinary communication learned early in their respective programs, even as advanced PhD candidates. They remember the concepts of “readership” or “justification of case selection” years after they initially learned it through disciplinary activities (e.g., classrooms) because these concepts are procedural knowledge that they must continuously negotiate and perform in genres. Gunter learns to consider the cognitive constraints of disciplinary readers and provides more detailed headings to facilitate reading. Susan revises her writing to

articulate an argument justifying her case selection, a point of value for her discourse community. Writing pedagogies, therefore, I contend, should continue to focus on teaching rhetorically-based threshold concepts—i.e., “social and rhetorical activities” or “performances”—for disciplinary contexts. In other words, writing pedagogy must teach students to account for rhetorical situations in their disciplines.

Rhetorical concepts might be taught as general, decontextualized knowledge, but, once learned, AAWs proceed to fill them in with specific, experiential knowledge. The abstract processes I interpret as rhetorical knowledge here index specific contextual formations and subjectivities that flesh out writing as “an activity” and “enacting and creating identities and ideologies” (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015). When advanced writers communicate, they consider local knowledge to operationalize and integrate this knowledge. *Textual purpose*, to paraphrase Gunter, comes to be imagined as a “pitch” of research for an academic user. The academic writer, as these case studies suggest, also comes to understand what I interpret as *audience expectations, discursive forms, and writer’s task*.

Both Gunter and Susan understand rhetorical knowledge in terms of the contours of their respective discourse communities: readers have certain values, interests, and goals as well as epistemes. They also have disciplinary roles and material constraints. Their expectations of the genre and the text are constituted within these dimensions. Successful disciplinary writing in the academy is not communicating generally and ensuring that writing is clear. The context means, my interpretation of Gunter’s and Susan’s performances evidence, that the writer’s task is to ensure genre “uptake” (Reiff, 2011) in the audience by constituting knowledge that accounts for disciplinary norms and expectations in creative and interesting ways (Swales & Feak, 2004).

Abstract knowledge is transformed into local, situated competence through such disciplinary socialization. Audience might start as fiction, but it becomes real: primary and secondary audiences, readers of this or that journal, political scientists or entomologists, etc. The disciplinary values of discourse communities shape genre performances (Tardy, 2009). A transactional framework is useful for interpreting agency and creativity even in normative instances of disciplinary writing expertise, wherein general knowledge is seen as intentionally and appropriately applied to different contexts because the writer has been successfully socialized and possesses substantive insider information (Beaufort, 2007; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2009).

Framing of Writing Activities Matters for AAWs

The second implication of my study is the value of the cognitive axiom that framing writing activities and performing genres matters. A transactional framework to rhetorical pedagogy might be problematic for its association and reproduction of neoliberal hegemony in the academy (Rabbi & Canagarajah, 2017; Brown, 2015), which can continue to feed into an instrumentalist view of education that reproduces and reifies a pedagogical situation to undercut our ability to teach writing appropriately (Richards, 2017; Fisher, 2009). At the same time, framing communication as a symbolic exchange, I argue here, is useful because it can prime writers for the types of generative thinking represented in these two case studies.

Thus far, transactional discourse has been used in writing studies as a type of textual discourse, a category of writing in the classroom. What I present here, however, is a case for transactionalism as a way of thinking about disciplinary communication by AAWs themselves. It provides a way to interpret the performance of multiple aspects of a rhetorical and communicative circumstance simultaneously. Put another way, transactionalism is an example of a conceptual metaphor: “ideas are products” grounded in an experiential “imagined rationality” of a discipline as a collective knowledge-producing community. Transactionalism names a metagenre of the discursive practices

of the academy because it synthesizes general rhetorical and local disciplinary “ways of doing” communication in “a conceptual system grounded in our successful functioning in our physical and cultural environments” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 194)

A transactional framework is not simply naming what Gunter and Susan are doing when they transmit what they are researching through texts. It is more than a category of discourse to understand writing. Rather, seeing communication as transaction or symbolic exchange means always foregrounding purpose in the tangible and material tasks AAWs are asked to do in disciplinary genres. Both Gunter and Susan represent their task in the genre as “telling a story,” and I argue for thinking about how this metaphor might shape our interpretation of their performances and our understanding of “ways of doing” in their disciplines. It seems that framing genres with this vocabulary is a way of possibly integrating disparate aspects of knowledge (Shapiro, 2015, Tardy, 2009). Gunter seems to report a sense that creativity and selection are at play in disciplinary communication, and a writer must pitch the research as a “story” so that the reader knows “overwintering is crucial for economic purpose” (Gunter). Susan makes a similar move in her research articles: her changes seem to “play up” those parts that would help her argument “sell.” My interpretations provide a way to frame their genre performances in ways useful to writing researchers: a transactional reading shapes the disciplinary significance of the text.

Writing studies practitioners should rethink how we define the tasks of given genres in more nuanced and metaphorical ways using ordinary language (Austin, 1975). Framing genres in more creative and ordinary ways aligns with the type of design Driscoll & Jin (2018), Daniel Richards (2017), and Philip Eubanks (2001) call for in teaching the use of metaphors in writing. Asking AAWs to identify and perform the type of transactions that take place in their disciplines and then communicate them via conceptual metaphors based on ordinary language would position them as experts who recognize the communication abilities they already possess (Swales & Freak, 2004). It would also task them to interrogate their concepts about genres and communicative situations even as they recognize the formal requirements of the text. This questioning of their processes in the context of disciplines might elicit more investment and ownership of their writing processes, since they would be tasked with the textual activities on their own terms.

Concluding Thoughts

The field recognizes the need for more *in situ* research on writing practices and writers (Canagarajah, 2013). The assumption is that a focus on identifying what writers and writing do will lead to pedagogical developments in teaching and working with writers and students. This article aligns with this agenda. The fact is that writing, whether within the institutional space of the classroom or the professional academic space of the disciplines, is a social activity, and this gives the field an infinitely variegated object to organize around. At the same time, it also leads back to questions of pedagogy because writing is not a natural operation, but a code that requires instruction. Researchers of writing cannot think about studying it without also thinking about how it might be taught.

In sum, the case studies here provide an argument for the value of rhetorical knowledge to interpret the performances of AAWs in ways that may inform how writing studies might think about writing expertise as such (Beaufort, 2007; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2009). They offer a discussion of pedagogy to foster general writing knowledge and benefit genre performances. The depictions I show here can help writing researchers think through agency operating in genres even when the text remains formulaic and normative (Alvarez et. al., 2017). The onus is certainly on specific communities and students to create situations and activities that might lead to authentic communicative experiences and “visible leaps in knowledge” (Tardy, 2005, p.239). At the same time, writing pedagogy can

provide the threshold concepts for understanding writing and language that are needed to grasp and make use of these tacit pivot points if transfer is to lead to learning.

Conclusions from case studies and my interpretations of genre performances are limited. For every interpretation of transactionalism and symbolic exchange communication as generative, there are also multiple examples of problematic mindsets emerging out of a utilitarian approach that runs contrary to the educational process (Rounsaville et. al. 2009; Wardle, 2012). A transactional framework for understanding genre performances highlights how dispositions shape and are shaped by genres, and it is in this vein that further work might be developed. We might also continue to ask additional questions about how advanced writers frame their performances on their own terms, how their conceptual frameworks differ from the terms used by writing studies, and how such disjuncture impacts genre uptake of writing instruction (Simpson et al., 2015). Such research will help writing pedagogy better support academic and professional socialization of students into disciplines.

Appendix: Interview questions

Interview 1: Background (approximately 1 hour)

1. Tell me a little about yourself (guardian's profession)
2. Tell me about your educational background. What countries did you attend school and postgraduate school?
3. What sort of writing was expected of you in each of these schools?
4. How was this education funded?
5. Do you consider yourself a good writer and communicator? What do you find easiest about your professional communication? What do you find hard?
6. Did you enjoy writing as a child? If so, did it last? Why or why not?
7. Did you take any writing courses in your undergraduate or graduate school, i.e., English or History or social studies? Did you get any other types of writing or training in communication?
8. Was there anyone or anything that has had a major influence on you as a professional writer or communicator in your discipline? Was there anyone or anything that had a negative influence?
9. When looking back at your development as a writer in your discipline, is there anything you wish you'd done differently?
10. Is there any kind of writing or reading you do outside of your profession or discipline? Do you do it for pleasure often?
11. Is there anything else about the general topic of writing, your background, and education that you would like to add that was not asked? Are there other people you could recommend that I should talk to about this project?

Interview 2: The writing process and attitudes toward writing (approximately 1 hour)

1. What is your major or professional focus? How do you perceive the role of writing and literacy-based communication in your discipline?
2. What is the way to produce effective communication for you? What are the stylistic elements required and how do you fit into that?
3. What are the resources you rely on to develop your write-ups (peer groups, advisors, graduate tutors, professional editors)?
4. How do you understand the role of language in this? Do you speak other languages?
5. Are you a part of other communities with language practices—writing practices—distinct from your disciplinary ones? What do you do in these other communities that you think is sophisticated language and communication use? How does this relate to what you do in your professional life or do not relate?
6. How does working with other people shape your communication and writing?
7. Have you ever attended a workshop or other training activity on writing or communication by your organization?
8. Do you use writing to conceptualize your project? Or do you start writing when the project or research is fully complete?
9. Are you aware of audience when you write? When does it become a factor—the beginning or when you are writing up your work?
10. Could you describe in detail a process you went through in writing or communicating a project? Could you start from the beginning—for example, could you think right back to the conceptualization of the project?
11. Do you feel that when you are writing or communicating in disciplinary contexts that you are being persuasive or do you think you're reporting facts? Do you think there is a role for persuasion in research or disciplinary writing?
12. What are the changes in your writing or communicative ability you have understood over the last few years, from when you started your post-secondary studies to now?
13. Is there anything else about writing and communication in your discipline that you would like to add that was not asked?
14. In the last 6 months, have you conducted any of the following activities: written teaching materials; written research articles for publication; written project reports for an organization; emailed a colleague to discuss an idea in detail; brainstormed an idea through writing on a project; taken notes or looked at notes made during a group discussion on a new project; drafted or edited a research proposal (something you might be involved in or might not be involved in—i.e. edited or provided feedback); peer-reviewed an article for publication; been peer-reviewed for something you wrote; engaged in creative writing; written an in-house document; written a thesis/dissertation; or written for a specific topic on the website.

15. Of those activities described above please indicate which ones have taken up the majority of your professional time. Can you provide me drafts of these documents?

Interview 3: Genres (approximately 1 hour)

1. Have you ever written a large writing-based project? It could be an MA thesis or a Ph.D. dissertation? Can you walk me through the process and how it fits into your overall postsecondary education? Did you work on it as a part of the course work and build it up over a long time or did you work on it outside the program and finish it out as was needed?
2. Was that a standalone project or did it fit with your work in your professions?
3. How helpful was it to write your large-project? What were some of the biggest problems you face in writing it? Looking back on it is there anything else you would do differently if you had to do it over again?
4. How did you get into the project? Was it part of the work in your graduate program and you fit into it? Or did you initiate it yourself?
5. How did you learn about the specifics of that genre? Did you have models from people? How would you differentiate that from other types of writing in your profession? How would you explain the genre to someone outside the field?
6. How do you view the role of feedback in getting better in your writing and communication? How do you view collaboration in such writing activities? How do you revise your work and how important is it to develop your genres?
7. What do you see as you communicating about yourself as the writer of the genre? What do you think the audience is understanding you as a professional?
8. How do you connect your work with other work in your writing? How do you choose to connect it with certain types of work over others?
9. How has writing these genres helped you learn the things you needed to learn as a professional?
10. What are the general communicative genres you've had to master and how do you use it in your professions? Do you have other types of genres you use to do your work (to-do lists, process manuals, etc.)?
11. How has technology and visual communication impacted your genre use? Do you make use of visual communicative tools? Do you use digital communicative tools (i.e., social media or video presentations)? How do they relate to your literate genres?
12. Is there anything else about specific types of writing you've done that you would like to add that were not asked?

References

- Adler-Kassner, Linda, & Wardle, Elizabeth. (Eds.). (2015). *Naming what we know: Threshold concepts of writing studies*. Utah State University Press.
- Alvarez, Sara P., Canagarajah, Suresh, Lee, Eunjoeng, Lee, Jerry W., & Rabbi, Shakil. (2017). Translingual practice, ethnic identities, and voice in writing. In Bruce Horner and Laura Tetreault (Eds.), *Crossing*

- Divides: Exploring Translingual Writing Pedagogies and Programs*, 31–47. University Press of Colorado/Utah State University Press.
- Austin, John L. (1975). *How to do things with words* (Vol. 88). Oxford University Press.
- Bawarshi, Anis. (2017). Economies of knowledge transfer and the use-value of first-year composition. In Bruce Horner, Bryce Nordquist, and Susan M Ryan (Eds.), *Economies of writing: Revaluations in rhetoric and composition*, pp. 87–99. University Press of Colorado/Utah State University Press.
- Bazerman, Charles. (1988). *Shaping written knowledge: The genre and activity of the experimental article in science*. University of Wisconsin Press.
- Beaufort, Anne. (1997). Operationalizing the concept of discourse community: A case study of one institutional site of composing. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 31 (4), 486–529.
- (2000). Learning the trade: A social apprenticeship model for gaining writing expertise. *Written Communication*, 17(2), 185–223.
- (2007). *College writing and beyond: A new framework for university writing instruction*. Utah State University Press.
- (2012). Review: The matter of assignments in writing classes and beyond. *College English*, 74(5), 477–485.
- Bereiter, Carl, & Scardamalia, Marlene. (2009). *The psychology of written composition*. Routledge.
- Berkenkotter, Carol, & Huckin, Thomas N. (1995). *Genre knowledge in disciplinary communication: Cognition/culture/power*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Berkenkotter, Carol, Huckin, Thomas N., & Ackerman, John. (1991). Social context and socially constructed texts: The initiation of a graduate student into a writing research community. In Charles Bazerman and James Paradis (Eds.), *Textual dynamics of the professions: Historical and contemporary studies of writing in professional communities*, pp. 191–215. University of Wisconsin Press.
- Blakeslee, Anne. (1997). Activity, context, interaction, and authority: Learning to write scientific paper in situ. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 11(2), 125–169.
- . (2001). *Interacting with audiences: Social influences on the production of scientific writing*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Brent, Doug. (2005). Reinventing WAC (again): The first-year seminar and academic literacy. *College Composition and Communication*, 57(2), 253–276.
- Britton, James., & Pradl, Gordon. M. (1982). *Prospect and retrospect: Selected essays*. Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.
- Brodkey, Linda. (1987). Writing ethnographic narratives. *Written Communication*, 4(1), 25–50.
- Brown, Wendy. (2015). *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. MIT Press.
- Canagarajah, A. Suresh. (Ed.). (2013). *Literacy as translingual practice: Between communities and classrooms*. Routledge.
- Carter, Michael. (2007). Ways of knowing, doing, and writing in the disciplines. *College Composition and Communication*, 58(3), 385–418.
- Charmaz, Kathy. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. Sage Publications.
- Collins, Harry, & Evans, Robert. (2008). *Rethinking expertise*. University of Chicago Press.
- Couture, Barbara. (1999). Modeling and emulating: Rethinking agency in the writing process. In Thomas Kent (Ed.), *Post-process theory: Beyond the writing-process paradigm* (pp. 3–48). Southern Illinois University Press.
- Daniell, Beth. (2003). *A communion of friendship: Literacy, spiritual practice, and women in recovery*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Devitt, Amy J., Bawarshi, Anis, & Reiff, Mary Jo. (2003). Materiality and genre in the study of discourse communities. *College English*, 65(5), 541–559.
- Devitt, Amy J. (2010). *Writing genres*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Driscoll, Dana L., & Jin, Daewoo. (2018). The box under the bed: How learner epistemologies shape writing transfer. *Across the Disciplines*, 15(4), 1–20.

- Durst, Russel. K. (2015). British invasion: James Britton, composition studies, and anti-disciplinarity. *College Composition and Communication*, 66(3), 384–401.
- Emerson, Lisa. (2016). *The forgotten tribe: Scientists as writers*. The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado. <https://doi.org/10.37514/PER-B.2016.0759>
- Eubanks, Philip. (2001). Understanding metaphors for writing: In defense of the conduit metaphor. *College Composition and Communication*, 53(1), 92-118.
- Fisher, Marc. (2009). *Capitalist realism: Is there no alternative?* John Hunt Publishing.
- Freadman, Aviva, Adam, Christina, & Smart, Graham. (1994). Wearing suits to class: Stimulating genres and simulations as genres. *Written Communication*, 11(2), 193–226.
- Gardner, Susan K. (2008). Fitting the mold of graduate school: A qualitative study of socialization in doctoral education. *Innovative Higher Education*, 33(2), 125–138.
- Geisler, Cheryl. (1991). Toward a sociocognitive model of literacy: Constructing mental models in a philosophical conversation. In Charles Bazerman and James Paradis (Eds.) *Textual dynamics of the professions: Historical and contemporary studies of writing in professional communities*, pp. 171-190. University of Wisconsin Press.
- . (1994). *Academic literacy and the nature of expertise: Reading, writing, and knowing in academic philosophy*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gere, Anne R., Limlamai, Naitnaphit, Wilson, Emily., MacDougall Saylor, Kate, & Pugh, Raymond. (2019). Writing and Conceptual Learning in Science: An Analysis of Assignments. *Written Communication*, 36(1), 99–135.
- Gordin, Michael D. (2015). *Scientific Babel: How science was done before and after global English*. University of Chicago Press.
- Guba, Egon G., & Lincoln, Yvonna S. (1981). *Effective evaluation* (1st ed). Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Harwood, Nigel. (2006). (In)appropriate personal pronoun use in political science: A qualitative study and a proposed heuristic for future research. *Written Communication*, 23(4), 424–450.
- , & Petric, Bojana. (2012). Performance in the citing behavior of two student writers. *Written Communication*, 29(1), 55–103.
- Heath, Shirley Bryce., & Street, Brian. V. (2008). *On ethnography: Approaches to language and literacy research*. Teachers College Press.
- Horner, Bruce, Nordquist, Brice, & Ryan, Susan M. (Eds.). (2017). *Economies of writing: Revaluations in rhetoric and composition*. Utah State University Press.
- Hyland, Ken. (2006). *English for academic purposes: An advanced resource book*. Routledge.
- . (2012). *Disciplinary identities: Individuality and community in academic discourse*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, George, & Johnson, Marc (2003). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.
- Lawrence, Susan, & Zawacki, Terry M. (2019). *Re/writing the center: Approaches to supporting graduate students in the writing center*. University Press of Colorado.
- Lea, Mary. R., & Street, Brian. V. (1998). Student writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach. *Studies in Higher Education*, 23(2), 157–172.
- Lillis, Theresa. (2008). Ethnography as method, methodology, and “deep theorizing”: Closing the gap between text and context in academic writing research. *Written Communication*, 25(3), 353–388.
- Maher, Michelle A., Feldon, David F., Timmerman, Briana E., & Chao, Jie (2014). Faculty perceptions of common challenges encountered by novice doctoral writers. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 33(4), 699–711.
- Miller, Carol. (2015). Genre as social action (1984), Revisited 30 years later (2014). *Letras & Letras*, 56–72.
- Nowacek, Rebecca. S. (2011). *Agents of integration: Understanding transfer as a rhetorical act*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Poe, Mya, Lerner, Neil, & Craig, Jennifer. (2010). *Learning to communicate in science and engineering: Case studies from MIT*. MIT Press.

- Portanova, Patricia, Rifenburg, Michael J., & Roen, Duane H. (Eds.). (2018). *Contemporary perspectives on cognition and writing*. The WAC Clearinghouse.
- Reiff, Mary Jo. (2011). The spatial turn in rhetorical genre studies: Intersections of metaphor and materiality. *JAC*, 31(1), 207–224.
- Richards, Daniel. (2017). Dwelling in the ruins: Recovering student use of metaphor in the posthistorical university. *Composition Forum*, 37(1).
- Rounsaville, Angela, Goldberg, Rachel, & Bawarshi, Anis. (2008). From incomes to outcomes: FYW students' prior genre knowledge, meta-cognition, and the question of transfer. *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, 32(1), 97–112.
- Russell, David. R. (2002). *Writing in the academic disciplines: A curricular history* (2nd ed). Southern Illinois University Press.
- Rabbi, Shakil & Canagarajah, Suresh. (2017). Socialization in the neoliberal academy of STEM scholars: A case study of negotiating dispositions in an international graduate student in entomology. *Humanities*, 6(2).
- Starke-Meyerring, D., Pare, Anthony, Artemeva, N., Horne, M., & Yousoubova, L. (Eds.). (2011). *Writing in knowledge societies*. WAC Clearinghouse ; Parlor Press.
- Simpson, Steve, Clemens, Rebecca, Killingsworth, Drea R., & Ford, Julie D. (2015). Creating a culture of communication: A graduate-level STEM communication fellows program at a science and engineering university. *Across the Disciplines*, 12(3).
- Simpson, Steve, Caplan, Nigel A., Cox, Michelle, & Philips, Talinn. (2016). *Supporting graduate student writers: Research, curriculum, and program design*. University of Michigan Press.
- Shapiro, Elliot. (2015, August 25). Towards an integrated graduate student (training program) [Special issue on graduate writing across the disciplines]. *Across the Disciplines*, 12(3). Retrieved from <https://wac.colostate.edu/docs/atd/graduate/shapiro2015.pdf>
- Swales, John M., & Feak, Christine B. (2004). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills*. University of Michigan Press.
- Tardy, Christina. M. (2005). "It's like a story": Rhetorical knowledge development in advanced academic literacy. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 4(4), 325–338.
- . (2009). *Building genre knowledge*. Parlor Press.
- Trimbur, John. (1991). Literacy and the Discourse of Crisis. *The Politics of Writing Instruction: Postsecondary*, 277–295. Heinemann.
- Wardle, Elizabeth. (2007). Understanding "transfer" from FYC: Preliminary results of a longitudinal study. *Writing Program Administration*, 31(1–2), 65–85.
- Wardle, Elizabeth. (2012, September). Creative repurposing for expansive learning: Considering 'problem-exploring' and 'answer-getting' dispositions in individuals and fields. In *Composition Forum*, 26 (1).
- Wolfe, Joanna, Olson, Barrie, & Wilder, Laura. (2014). Knowing what we know about writing in the disciplines: A new approach to teaching for transfer in FYC. *The WAC Journal*, 25(Fall), 42–77.
- Yancey, Katherine. B., Robertson, Linda, & Taczak, Karen. (2014). *Writing across contexts: Transfer, composition, and sites of writing*. University Press of Colorado.

Contact Information

Shakil Rabbi
Assistant Professor
Department of Language, Literature & Cultural Studies
Bowie State University
Email: srabbi@bowiestate.edu

Complete APA Citation

Rabbi, Shakil. (2020, December 31). Mapping rhetorical knowledge in advanced academic writers: The affordances of a transactional framework to disciplinary communication. *Across the Disciplines*, 17(3/4), 69-91. <https://doi.org/10.37514/ATD-J.2020.17.3.03>