



Writing across the University of Alberta

WRITING ACROSS A PANDEMIC



Featuring work by
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Mengjiao Zhao, Hayley Lunseth, Wei Luo,
Jiaxuan Tang, Rigvi Kumar, Ella Byrne,
Priya Khatri, Angela To, Carley Roth,
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and Christina Grant

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Writing across a Pandemic

Welcome to Volume 2 of WAUA

Dear Readers,

We are delighted to present the second issue of *Writing across the University of Alberta* (WAUA) journal, which features undergraduate student writing from Writing Studies courses at the University of Alberta.

All works published in the second issue were produced during a lockdown when all classes were taught remotely. Therefore, we decided to title our second issue “Writing across the Pandemic.” Given that this was a time of social isolation, we are amazed and humbled at the quality of work that undergraduate students were able to produce during such difficult times.

We received a great number of submissions for our second issue, and selecting texts was not an easy task. We want to thank all contributors for their fantastic work and for being available for editorial correspondence. We also like to thank our student volunteer, Rigvi Kumar, who served as a student editor, and who helped us with text selection, revision and editing.

The second issue of WAUA features written works by **Ruiyi Zhang** and **Wenzhe Kang**, **Mengjiao Zhao**, **Hayley Lunseth**, **Wei Luo**, **Jiaxuan Tang**, **Rigvi Kumar**, **Ella Byrne**, **Priya Khatri**, **Angela To**, **Carley Roth**, and **Shanice Banh**, and visual representations of writing by **Hailiang Hu** and **Yikun Wei**. These contributions explore a diverse range of topics and are presented in a variety of genres.

In this volume, we have also included a cartoon contrasting the typical writing processes of undergraduate students and expert writers. This cartoon was drawn by our former colleague **Christina Grant**, who is now an instructor at Okanagan College in British Columbia. We have shared this cartoon extensively in our Writing Studies classes and we are happy to have the opportunity to publish this gem in WAUA.

Students whose works are included in the second issue come from various linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, we did our best to keep their authentic voices intact in order to showcase and enjoy the Englishes spoken around the world.

To those whose works were not selected for this issue, we encourage you to continue honing your writing style, and we hope you will consider submitting new pieces to WAUA in the future.

With the publication of our second issue behind us, we are now accepting submissions for our third issue, which we hope to publish in Fall 2022. Students interested in submitting their work will find information on how to do so here:

<https://writingacrossuofa.ca/index.php/writingacrossuofa/about/submissions>.

We are also looking for volunteers to work as peer reviewers, designers, and copy editors. If you are interested, let us know at wauajournal@gmail.com.

Finally, we'd like to thank you, our readers, for choosing to read WAUA. We hope you will enjoy these lively and engaging written and visual compositions as much as we have.

Sincerely,

Nancy Bray, Anna Chilewska, and Rigvi Kumar

Co-editors

December 2021

Helping Second Language Student Writers Improve Their Revision

Ruiyi Zhang and Wenzhe Kang¹

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Keywords: second language writers, revision, academic writing

What Does Writing Studies Research Say?

Nowadays, most universities offer writing-related courses to help students lay a good foundation for writing and contribute to their subsequent studies. These writing-related courses often discuss the value of a thorough revision process. Compared with native English speakers, second language learners need to do more revision, which is a great challenge for them. Therefore, this paper aims to make second language students understand and apply revision more effectively.

The Importance of Revision

Students of a second language often subconsciously perceive revision as troublesome and formulaic. According to Nancy Sommers (1980), a writing researcher at Harvard University, students are used to paying more attention to other writing skills like proofreading, which deviates from the purpose of revision. However, revision is a critical step in determining the effectiveness of a text. In Christina Grant's (2012) "Writing processes" graphic (see p. 59 in this volume), the difference between getting an excellent final draft and a bad final draft is the writer's attitude and the number of revisions.

Before starting revision, students need to be clear about the definition and meaning of revision. Donald Murray (2005), an American journalist and English professor, introduces the meaning of revision: "revision means restructuring, adding, deleting, and rewriting sentences or even the whole paragraph to a certain extent" (p. 395). Revision with methods

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and goals will help students find a more positive attitude towards revision. In his video about revision, Obert Skye (2016) also suggests that revision is like a writing detective asking questions about his own articles. It provides an opportunity for a writer to rethink their writing from a new perspective, helping them find their writing dissonance. It can help structure an essay, allow writers to find relevance in sentences, and make arguments more logical. “Revision is actually where the magic happens, where banal words are carved and polished until it shines, ” says Obert Skye (2016).

Two Principal Forms of Revision

There are two main forms of revision: internal revision and external revision. According to Murray (2005), student writers enter the stage of internal revision after completing the draft, starting from rereading their writing, maintaining ignorance, that is, re-examining what they have written from the perspective of a stranger: “They read their own writing in order to find out where the content and form of their writing and where their language and sound will lead them” (p. 399). There is only one audience for internal revisions: the author himself. At this stage, the writer should find more ideas, because as Murray (2005) mentioned, internal revision is a process of discovery. As Sommers (1980) suggests, most students are used to proofreading habitually, but in reality, revision strategies should focus on identifying something larger, such as the design and structure of writing, the connection of arguments and arguments, rather than the tangle of spelling, grammar, and other problems that most second language students struggle with.

The second stage of revision is external revision when the author needs to convey his views to the outside world. At this stage, the reader of the text is no longer the author himself but the professor and classmates who evaluate it. They are great resources for prompting authors to burst out new inspirations and examine the article from a new perspective. In accordance with Nancy Ami (2020) and her co-authors, “No one can write alone” (2020, para 1). When writing alone, students will subconsciously create content in accordance with their own thoughts and habits, where it is easy to neglect the feelings and understanding of readers. However, external feedback can make authors pay more attention to thinking from the readers’ perspective and help them find the gaps and omissions in the content of the article. The “peer review” activity Ami (2020) refers to, for example, is a form of external revision that can help bridge the gap between what kind of feedback an author needs to be given, thereby reducing the author’s revision anxiety.

Problems Faced by International Students

Compared with native speakers, second language students need to overcome cultural and communication problems when making external revisions. According to LaRay Barna (2007), Professor Emerita at Portland State University in Oregon, the reason why

international students feel anxious about communication is cultural diversity. During external revision, international students may receive many suggestions different from their cultural background, and students need to integrate these suggestions and keep their own characteristics. At the same time, second language students need to communicate with others in a second language, which is a great challenge. Still, more communication is conducive to the development of external revision.

The Revision Process

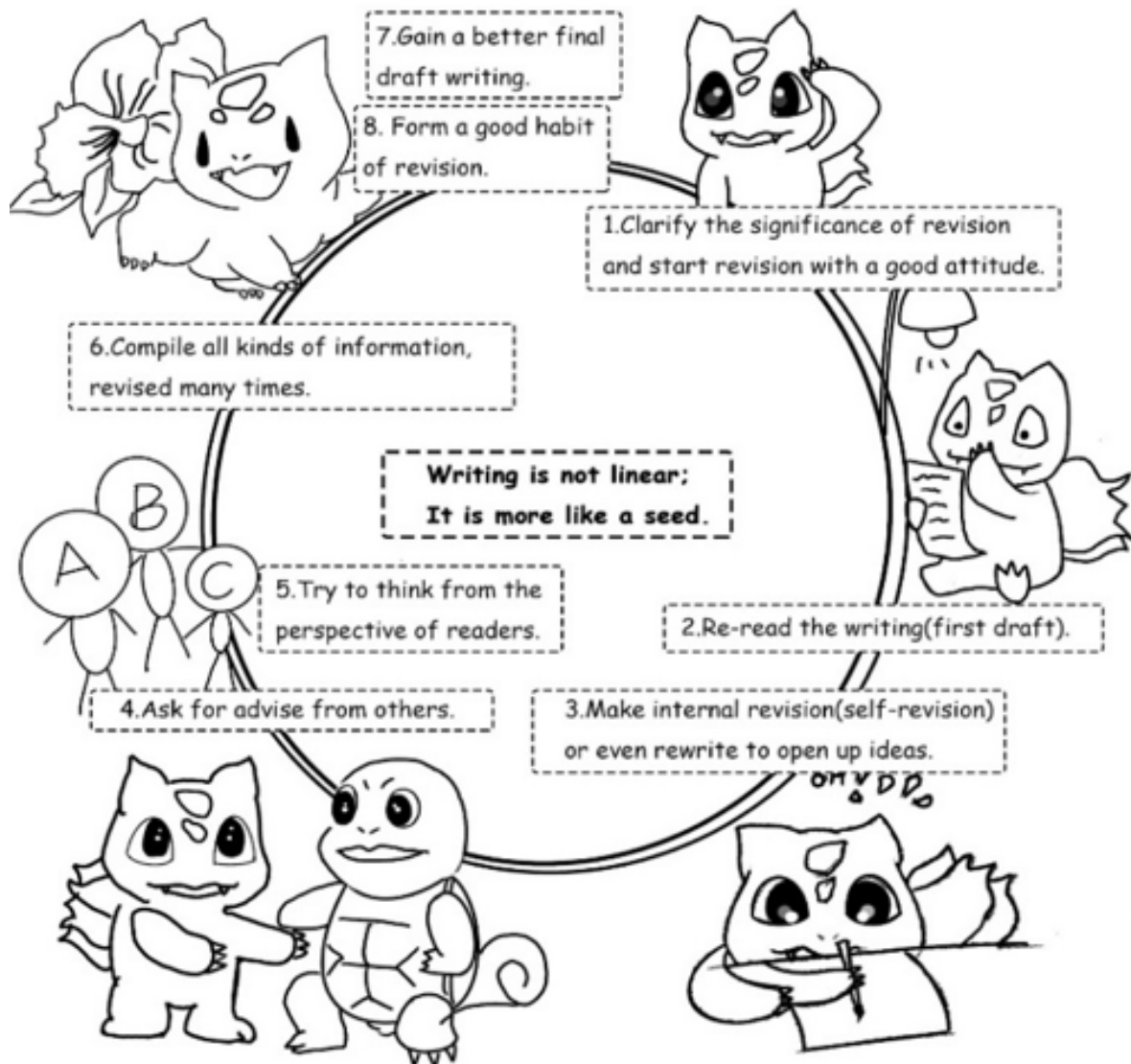


Figure 1: Writing as growing a seed. Cartoon image by Ruiyi Zhang and Wenzhe Kang

A vivid illustration can help students understand the process and method of revision more clearly. Sommers (1980) proposed that “writing is not linear; it is more like a seed” (p. 384). The illustration in Figure 1 uses a popular cartoon pattern in Asia, which started with Bulbasaur (the Miaowa seed) and later with the Miaowa flower. Writing is like planting a

seed, and it requires care and attention to grow into a flower. Most of the second language students in first-year writing courses at the University of Alberta come from Asia. The illustrations that conform to Asian culture will make second language students feel more cordial—hoping that second language students can take the revision process seriously and create better writing.

Conclusion

Students need to realize that revision is an important part of writing. Writing is difficult, so is revising, especially if you are learning a second language as there are more things to consider when revising. It is not only a process of broadening one's mind but also a process of blending into local academic culture.

Five Key Points When Revising

1. *Keep an open mind*

Accepting revision as an important part of the writing process may allow you to be honest with yourself without being lazy and finding out what you really think.

2. *Reread your own work as a stranger*

Find out where you stumble or get lost in a sentence, where you are distracted or bored, and what needs to be modified or deleted.

3. *Check the key points of the paper*

Focus on something larger. Students should first pay attention to the large issues in the paper, such as topic, argument, etc., rather than grammar and spelling. Make sure you stay on track throughout the entire paper.

4. *Don't revise alone*

Not only will your professor look at your writing, but also your classmates, colleagues, and friends can help you find issues you have overlooked before. They are great resources for getting a fresh, outside look at your work.

5. *Be more confident in revision*

You should honour your own thinking after getting other people's suggestions, and don't blindly follow other people's recommendations and lose your own direction.

Unanswered Questions

1. Barna (2007) argues that international students are anxious when it comes to communication because of cultural differences. How should students cope with the anxiety, and how is communication for different cultures related to writing for different cultures?
2. Murray (2005) mentioned in his article that many people focus on internal revision but do not clearly indicate whether this is correct. How should future students allocate time and energy for internal and external revision?
3. Sommers (1980) proposed that student writers should discover the meaning and “disharmony” of writing like experienced writers. This is just a big concept. What should student writers do specifically?

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My Reading and Writing Experiences: Snowball

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Keywords: learning English, literacy narrative, language teachers

Whenever I think back on my past experience of learning to read and write, I find that this process was like snowballing. I was very grateful to the several English teachers I had met since my childhood. They have appeared at different stages of my life and have seen me grow. If my goal in life was to roll a big snowball, then they were undoubtedly the biggest help in my life.

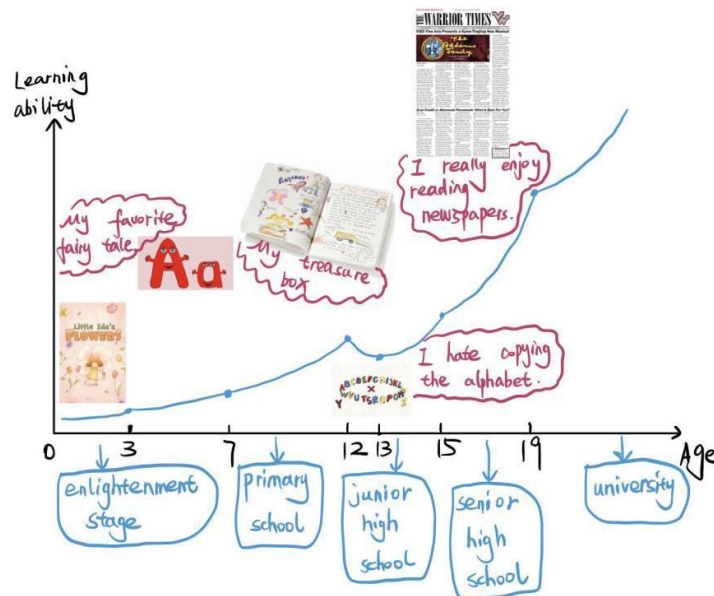


Figure 1: My process of learning English

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Part 1: The First Snowball in My Life (Enlightenment)

You would never believe that I bought my first storybook at a children's hospital. When I was young, my mother often needed to take me to the hospital for vaccinations, but to calm my nerves, as I was so afraid of injections, my mother would reward me with a picture book every time I was vaccinated. There was a glass window in the lobby on the first floor of the hospital with all kinds of children's books in it. The first picture book with typeface in my life was Hans Christian Andersen's *Fairy Tales*. Since I didn't know how to read at that time, my mother would tell me stories when I was nervous, and the first story she read to me was "The Flowers of Little Ida." What impressed me most were the smiling faces of the flowers in the illustrations of the story. Many people might think these illustrations were childish, but for me, who was afraid of injections, the smiling faces of the flowers had given me great comfort at that time. This story remained number one on my list of favourite and most memorable stories to date.

I wanted to thank my mother. Because she read me those interesting storybooks, I discovered that writing could bring so much warmth to people. If the storybook was the snow all over the ground, my mother made me the first snowball in my life. At that moment, I saw the beauty of a snowball for the first time in my life. Then, a bold idea came into my mind — I want a bigger snowball.

Part 2: Snowballing Slope (Primary School)

When I was in the third grade, I met Anna, who was my first English teacher. "Don't forget to keep an English diary!" Anna would remind me. It was one of my childhood nightmares, and I heard it almost every day before school. For me at the time, it was a very difficult task to write an English diary every day. At first, I was really worried about the diary's contents every day, because I didn't know what to write. I had to write down what I did every day, like a journal account, to finish my homework. I hated writing because the process of writing was boring. Even though I didn't like reading my diary, I thought it was a waste of my life to spend time writing these things. Therefore, I decided to talk to Anna with a little trepidation.

"Honey, you can write whatever you want. Why not broaden your mind?" Anna said to me softly.

Anna's words reminded me immediately. Why did I have to write about my daily life? I could write about anything if I wanted to.

After that, I began to think about the contents of my daily diary seriously. When I felt I had no idea what to do, I sat quietly and observed my surroundings. Sometimes on my way

home, I would watch the direction of the trees swaying in the wind, and sometimes I would squat under the trees and listen to the cuckoo.

"John, look at the way the cypress trees are swaying in the wind. Do you think they're welcoming us home for the weekend?" I said to John.

"What did you say? I don't think so. They're just shaking," replied John. Whenever I shared how I felt about observing things around me with my friends, they thought my ideas were strange. I didn't know if I was too sensitive, but I enjoyed the feeling, and these seemingly ordinary things also gave me a lot of inspiration and material.

I would write these findings and feelings in my English diary, and then I found that Anna would write her feelings at the bottom of my diary every time. But, most importantly, she would also draw me a smiley face every time. I liked this smiling face very much because it gave me more encouragement and confidence. After that, I gradually fell in love with writing.

Of course, I sometimes used diary writing to vent my emotions (because only I could see it). Over time, diary writing became a habit of mine, and the diary was like my treasure box, full of my various growing-up experiences. When I was in fourth grade, Anna became an English teacher in another class.

Since I was a very sensitive person by nature, most of the time, my classmates and friends couldn't understand my ideas, so that as time passed, I began to doubt whether I was born different from others. This idea had troubled me for many years. Finally, however, I accidentally learned some of journalist Donald Murray's (2005) writing habits through my university writing course, and I found that the habits of awareness he mentioned were consistent with my observation habits. At that moment, I felt so excited because I finally met someone who had the same habits as me. After that, I began to apply this writing habit more in my writing process.

I guess diary writing was my earliest exposure to free writing. I liked this free way of writing very much. Now I still could open my diary from time to time. I often thought the ideas in my diary were childish, and there were many misspelled words and bad grammar. I didn't think anyone other than me could understand my diary content. However, the content of the diary was my best memory.

Keeping a diary stimulated my interest in writing, and it also allowed me to understand myself better. I was grateful to Anna because she helped me find a long slope filled with thick snow, making my snowballs roll up naturally.

Part 3: Why Was My Snowball Getting Smaller ? (Junior High School)

At this stage, I met Hathaway, a woman in her fifties, who was my worst English teacher by far. She was my English teacher for a whole year when I was in the first grade of junior high school. During that year, our daily homework was copying the alphabet. In

Hathaway's class, you could easily find that most of the students were doing other things besides learning English because her class was boring, and she seldom taught us some substantive content. Therefore, in that year, my reading and writing abilities had no improvement. On the contrary, I thought my English ability also regressed a lot (because I forgot many words and writing methods that I had learned before). Fortunately, I transferred to my high school in the second year.

If knowledge was the snow all over the ground, then I thought the snowfield that Hathaway provided me was unsuitable for me (there was too little snow). Although my snowball was smaller than before, I was still very grateful to Hathaway because she taught me the importance of a good snowfield for snowballing.

Part 4: How Did My Snowball Get Bigger? (High School)

"Do you have any better ideas for this problem?" My classmate asked me. If you went to high school with me, you would hear it at least ten times a day in my English class.

When I was in high school, I met Serena, who was an excellent English teacher. Every day, she would let us read English newspapers and some biographies of people and make comments on the books. To be honest, in the beginning, I was very uncomfortable with the learning method of reading while annotating. Still, after a long period of practice, my reading ability had improved a lot. Reading English newspapers allowed me to learn a lot of new words, while comments deepened my understanding of the article's content. Moreover, whenever I turned to my previous reading notes, I would immediately remember my thoughts and feelings at the time. Therefore, this was a very good way to learn English.

In her English class, I always needed to keep up my spirits. I felt her class was like a marathon; although you would feel exhausted at the end, you would get a sense of achievement. Serena divided us into different groups, and we always had a heated discussion about the exercises in the English newspaper.

"Okay, which group is going to talk about this?" Serena said to us. When Serena gave us a chance to answer questions, we would scramble to raise our hands because, at the end of each semester, she would reward the group that had done well in class (students who performed well could get rid of writing summer homework). However, I always thought I was holding my team back because my English score was very poor at the beginning, and I was always at the bottom of the class. Therefore, I felt that I couldn't keep up with the pace of our group during this time. As a result, I had low self-esteem, and I never dared to speak up in class.

Serena seemed to feel what was going on inside me, so she called me into her office every day to help me with my lessons. When she was busy, she would ask another boy in our class who was very good at English to help me. Then, she would ask me to do a lot of exercises for each knowledge point. After a lot of practice, my basic skills had become quite

solid. Half a year later, I was among the top 15 students in my class out of a total of 70. I was thrilled and grateful to Serena for helping me, and I became more confident than before. I began to like this way of competition. Although I was under a lot of pressure during that time (sometimes it even took my breath away), the pressure made me become a better person. Moreover, I still worked very hard to learn English because I set a higher goal for myself, inspiring me to constantly improve my English ability.

Serena gave me a lot of useful writing advice, but I didn't get used to making an outline before writing. However, in learning to write, when I read an article about freewriting written by the American writing studies scholar Peter Elbow (1973), I learned that he had the same views as I do. He said that if we had an outline before we write, it would limit our ability to generate new ideas. I quite agreed with him. So many of my best ideas came to me casually while I was writing, and I usually didn't know what to write if I outlined it before writing.

Serena also encouraged me to rewrite my essay a few years ago, but I didn't understand why. In most cases, I wouldn't rewrite it if it wasn't off-topic because I didn't think it made much sense to me. Not long ago, however, I had the opportunity to read Nancy Sommers' (1980) "Revision strategies of student writers and experienced adult writers," and some of the things she said in her article changed my view of rewriting. I realized that I hadn't figured out what I was trying to say most of the time. I just wrote, and what I wrote wasn't what the reader wanted to read. Sommers said we need to break out of my conventional thinking mode, think from a different perspective, and get used to the process of rewriting. Although this was very challenging for me, it made it more clear to me as to what I wanted to express.

I wanted to thank Serena for providing me with such a good snowfield and teaching me how to make my snowball roll faster. With her help, my snowball got bigger and bigger.

As I was learning reading and writing, I was fortunate to meet these several excellent teachers. Without their help, I couldn't find such a long slope and such a good snowfield. Now I have found a better snowfield (my university) and a longer slope, and my snowball was rolling fast there.

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The Effects of Positive Affirmation and Constructive Criticism on Student Writing and Success

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Keywords: writing studies education, teacher feedback, constructive feedback, positive affirmation

Is it more helpful for an individual such as a teacher to provide a student with constructive criticism or positive affirmations in relation to their writing? Which method is helpful in pushing the student to prosper and which can be detrimental when utilized inappropriately and ineffectively? Do positive affirmations provide students with a false sense of confidence with little knowledge of what they can improve upon, or does constructive criticism dismantle the faith an individual has in their writing capabilities causing them to produce work that is not of their best quality? This paper explores both forms of feedback often employed by educators through the utilization of various research papers and sources to determine which method of response or assessment is most useful in order for a student to reach their full writing potential.

“As teachers, we want above all else for our students to learn and succeed” (Barr & Tagg, 1995, p. 14). A student’s success is directly determined by their teacher and the methods they utilize. Two approaches often used when reviewing a student’s written work are validation, in the form of positive affirmation, and constructive criticism. It often becomes problematic for a teacher as they decide upon which role to assume in the classroom; whether they be a “friendly supporter”, or a “critic” (Edington, 2016, p. 69). Both processes, when expressed towards an individual’s writing, evoke a sense of self reflection and allow the individual to develop the motivation to advance themselves as a writer.

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While some individuals believe that the preferable approach is to use positive affirmation, thus providing an individual with a sense of validation and appreciation, others view constructive criticism and the act of critiquing another's work to be the most superior way to motivate others to improve their work (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 83). Is one approach more effective than another, and what are the effects that result from utilizing either method? More specifically, how is a student's writing affected when their work is critiqued or praised by a superior figure, such as a teacher? Along with the findings from several researchers such as Brown, Payne, Lankewich, & Cornell (1970), Hattie & Timperley (2007), Williams (1998), and my own experiences, both methods are explored thoroughly in order to determine the beneficial results and consequences for each. This allows me to argue that positive affirmation is more beneficial when applied in a situation where an individual is to give feedback regarding a student's piece of writing than its counterpart, constructive criticism, which ultimately causes the student to develop emotions of self-consciousness and defeat. Both methods should be applied towards student writing, but positive affirmation should have a more prominent role in the classroom in order to be most effective.

Positive Affirmation Is Key to Motivating a Student

Providing a student with verbal acknowledgement for an exceptional piece of work is necessary for the student to gain confidence and to encourage maximum effort. As quoted by Brown, Payne, Lankewich, & Cornell, "Verbal reinforces that connoted praise or correctness increased the amount of time spent attending to the assigned task" (1970, p. 373). When a student is placed in an environment that they view to be "emotionally safe" and free from harsh criticism, they are able to produce optimal work and reach their full potential (Williams, 1998, p. 15). When an individual is immersed in a setting where they are not concerned about being ridiculed for their efforts towards a task, they develop a sense of confidence and are able to "think outside the box" without worrying about making an error (Williams, 1998, p. 15).

My Experience with Verbal Affirmation

My experience with the influential force of validation came early in my writing career. I was in tenth grade when I entered the English class of a teacher who was passionate about writing and his students' success. It was after I handed in my first essay on the play *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare, that I received the validation that was necessary to gain the confidence to prosper. Mr. Raible confessed that he believed I was one of the few individuals capable of scoring one hundred percent on my grade twelve English diploma. Because I was provided with the incentive I needed to prosper, I was motivated to expand my

vocabulary, learn how to implement a stronger voice into my writing, and better develop my style. If it were not for this affirmation and positive reinforcement, I would not have been able to win the top academic awards for all three years of high school English, as well as score the exceptional mark that I achieved on my diploma.

Constructive Criticism and Improvement

It is argued that constructive criticism given by a superior figure motivates a student to gain the knowledge necessary to improve their writing. As demonstrated by Sherman Alexie's previous experiences, by growing up alongside various negative forces that continually criticized him as an individual and his work, Alexie was spurred into greatness and became a well-accomplished writer (2014, p. 28). Similar to receiving validation, criticism can also challenge an individual to accomplish greatness. Research evidence conducted by John Hattie and Helen Timperley at the University of Auckland (2007) has proven that when a student is praised for their performance on a task, nothing is learned; therefore, this method becomes ineffective (p. 85). It is when the student is "receiving information feedback about a task and how to do it more effectively" that change is able to occur (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 83).

My Experience with Criticism

My personal experience with effective criticism stems from my grade eleven English class. Unlike the tenth grade, my grade eleven teacher felt indifferent towards my style of writing and often provided me with ways in which I could improve. Although I felt frustrated and confused, I eventually came to the realization that there were new methods available and ways in which I could vary my sentences, unlike I had before.

The Superior Method

Not all criticism is beneficial. Research done by Baron in 1988 has proven that criticism causes detrimental effects on an individual, as it results in the individual becoming less motivated and developing feelings of "anger and tension" (p. 238). This is why professor Charles Madsen, of Florida State University, campaigns for a "four to one compliment-criticism ratio," as he believes it is the most effective way to motivate students to improve upon themselves, without dismantling their efforts altogether (Brown et al., 1970, p. 373). Since verbal affirmation has proven to be more beneficial when influencing an individual's work, the use of four compliments for every critique given is needed in order to reduce the consequences of too many destructive comments. With this in mind, when an educator is faced with the dilemma of deciding how to respond to a student's paper (Edington, 2016, p.70), they should follow in pursuit of this "rule," as it allows the student to acquire the information necessary to understand their errors and how to further improve,

but also allows them to develop a sense of self-assurance and validation, thus permitting them to remain motivated.

Conclusion

Although constructive criticism is necessary in order for a student to improve in areas such as writing, the emotional and academic effects on a student can be devastating. While both methods should be utilized, it is vital that an educator places more importance on positive feedback rather than criticism in order to prevent the student from experiencing frustration and despair. I have found both methods have their place and were advantageous for me in becoming a more effective and confident writer, but my grade ten teacher's words of motivation are what ultimately allowed me to advance my writing. I plan to utilize this research in the future when I, myself, become a high school English teacher.

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I, a Girl Who is New to the World of English Academic Writing

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The magical realizations and enlightenments in my mortal life generally do not happen with signs like rainbow clouds showing up in the sky or lotus petals leading me onto an adventure path. Most of them happen after my professors ask to talk with me. And not to lie, I have had quite a bit of talk ever since I started university.

It was a -35 Celsius degree winter school day, a typical school day for anybody who studies at the University of Alberta or the University of North Pole. My professor, who was teaching me Introduction to Christianity, asked me to come to his office to discuss my paper.

Old St. Joseph College needs to renovate its heaters for the basement. When I was sitting inside my professor's office, listening to him talking about how unpolished my ideas were, I felt super cold. Professor Zelyck, a top-notch biblical scholar who sure knows his business, has memorized at least a hundred of both contemporary and early commentaries of the Nicene Creed.³ Of course, he did draw me a handwritten list with the help of his brain instead of the all-mighty Google and said, "Go read these, and you will be fine," with his kindly Canadian accent. I said, "Thank you, Professor," while thinking: "wait, what, did he remember all those by heart? Who are you? Are you Elijah, the miracle worker?" This was perhaps the first moment when I had a clear picture of what it is to be a good scholar.

I began wondering what made up a good scholar: a Ph.D.? Or a solid amount of publications? In order to feed my craving for answers, I started my journey to ask as many

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³The Nicene Creed (Greek: Σύμβολον τῆς Νικαίας) is one of the most influential Christian statements of faith that is broadly used in Christian faith service such as liturgy.

professors of mine about their origin stories as academics. The answers were varied and sometimes conflicted with each other. Still, they all seemed to lead to three significant clues for my question: the ability to research one subject, examine materials, and, most importantly, the ability to deliver one's ideas within one paper.

'Unpick the Complexity into Simplesness'(化繁为简/Hua Fan Wei Jian)

As a person who has never received any systematized English training, my English writing ability was terrible. Back in the first year, when I got into the U of A, my academic school life was like a 5-cent supermarket paper bag appointed to contain dangerous chemical goods for a lab, and I am talking about things like sodium cyanide. In other words, I did not feel like I could even handle papers, let alone write a good one. But I sure love my major, religious studies, and am willing to bug my professors as much as I can so that I can survive in the field and find some success.

Through the charity English writing training given by my professors, who are actually teaching me Buddhism studies and classical theories of religions, I began to enter a minor stage of Nirvana (a Hindu idea of enlightenment). This is just a fancy way of saying that I realized that the contents matter the most in an academic paper. I began to write as straightforwardly as I could, for I remembered Professor Quinter once said to me, "if you can show your understanding of Shingon Buddhism to seven-year-old children and successfully make them understand, then you made it to the highest stage of a Religious Studies scholar." It was perhaps what Taoism refers to as 'unpick the complexity into simplesness'(化繁为简/Hua Fan Wei Jian).

Although my case is not like that; I do not have the ability to deliver the message with more complex writing, and my pen cannot write as precisely and luxuriously as a native English writer. Still, I say, I have entered the gate of English academic writing ever since then. In my view, non-native English writers should try to become good writers rather than perfect writers when they just start to write in English.

Breaking the Taboo in My Mind

Good research work includes many things, and in my field of Religious Studies, it involves encountering and examining as many relevant materials as one can. The core of this matter is that scholars in Humanities can never go further without the collected wisdom from the people who came before them and their peers.

In the field of Writing Studies, scholars have been discussing the uniqueness of academic readings for a long time. Scholars such as John C. Bean, Virginia A. Chappell, and Alice M. Gillam suggest that "Academic reading has unique demands and pleasures," and

doing those readings is like listening to logical debates that require readers to observe and critique in particular ways (2-5). Very often, students in my field will have to read more than a thousand claims from different scholars on one subject before writing a 3000-word research paper. Thus, while unpacking the tangling issues on a controversial topic, one can often find that scholars from different fields or even from the same field disagree with each other. It is even unlikely that everybody would agree on one approach. When I realized this, my mind completely changed, for I realized the fact that there are not that many universal truths and that disagreements in academia happen more often than I think. I was liberated because my writing sometimes can be controversial or non-mainstream, and it freed my pen from the fear of disagreeing with others who are more knowledgeable than I am. After I broke the taboo, I actually gained more respect for the world of academics, for it is filled with competition but is always inclusive of conflicts and different opinions.

The Love Potion From *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

As a student writer who fears having my peers read my papers deeply, I always want to meet the forest fairies and get some purple flower juice to put on my classmates' eyes so that they are going to love my papers blindly. But since I could never find the fairies' business number, I asked the university's Centre for Writers instead. Most of the tutors there don't have pointy ears, but their degrees in English and Film Studies seem very convincing to me.

All of my writing tutors had mentioned to me that a good writer should know how to communicate with their readers, and the critical point is to make sure the writer has an idea of their audience before starting to write. Perhaps the love potion for writing is to write the contents that the targeted audience might like, or even just try to give the pieces to the right audience.

Once I received this information, I began to do experiments as any good humanities student would. I started by communicating with my peers from my classes first to see what interested them in the class, what kinds of topics spoke to them the most and what they would say about my previous papers. For sure, I do feel like a clout chaser while doing it. Still, preparation activity like this actually ensures that I will explain certain contents that others are unfamiliar with, will give me inspiration for topics, and most importantly, help me to develop a writing style that is more understandable to others. As a Chinese student from China, I received a very different education than most of my Canadian peers, which means that my writing style is foreign, and some of my punchlines in papers might seem artificial or confusing to them. For example, I will always have to explain my jokes related to Eastern Asian folk cultures in my writing, which kills the fun part of making jokes, but it sure clears the clouds for my audience when they are reading my compositions.

Professional speech trainer Sheila Heen argues in her presentation “How to use others’ feedback to learn and grow” that many people have learned about giving feedback from life but have not learned much about receiving feedback (2:04- 2:39). In my view, it echoes my experiments of trying to get feedback for my previous papers and listening to the preferences of my peers in advance of writing a new paper that is going to be reviewed by them. Thus, I suggest other non-native English writers do the same activity before their writing, and it is likely that they will be able to have a clear picture of the audience while writing. They might even be able to deliver ideas more clearly to their audience.

Speaking in Tongues

Civilizations are often associated with different languages, and the brightest works of each civilization are often passed down through written accounts. When I stand before tremendous ancient pieces of literature and literature of my time, the desire to understand these works has made me become a better reader. The beauty of knowledge and literature encourages me to develop skills in my second language ability, for I am the smallest sand on the beach of human civilization, but I dare to be able to leave some words for the world I love when I leave. The countries of Earth are now closer than ever, but I know that in turns of cultural exchanges, most of us are just like the scene of “speaking in tongues”⁴: we gather together but cannot understand each other. Throughout my paper, I elaborated on what kind of enlightenment made me become a better second language student writer. Still, the biggest motivation that carries me on this path is my dream to communicate with more people, and the hope is when they read my works, it will not be like “speaking in tongues” anymore.

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⁴**Speaking in tongues** is also known as glossolalia. In the Christian belief system, it is viewed as a practice in which people speak languages unknown to the speaker; people can tell that the speaking is fluently speaking a language, but no one can understand it.

Three Attitudes Towards My Bilingual Writing

Jiaxuan (Lillianna) Tang¹

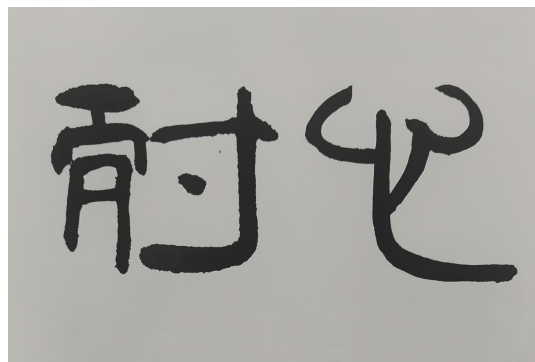
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Keywords: learning English as an additional language, Chinese calligraphy, attitudes towards writing, bilingualism

Enthusiasm for writing has lasted for more than 4000 years in China. Indeed, Chinese people regard writing as a sacred thing. An old Chinese proverb says that “after seeing the sunrise, you should always keep to the dawn,” which means you must insist on finishing things you do. Thus, Chinese writers are not allowed to be distracted when they are creating their work, especially when they practice calligraphy, the strictest form of writing in China.

When I created the calligraphy compositions shown in this essay, I adhered to three Chinese attitudes towards writing from ancient times to the present: being patient, persistent, and curious. And I found that it also makes me effective in writing in English when I use these skills.

Patience



“耐心 (Nai Xin)” translated into English means ‘patience.’ The Chinese analyze the words based on their written symbols. “寸” means the rule. In addition, “心” means heart.

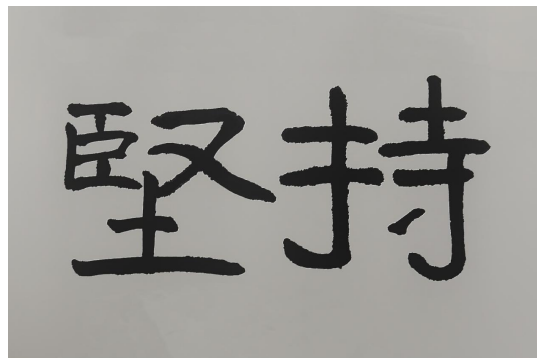
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Thus, “耐心” encourages writers to write at a peaceful pace and follow their hearts. In English, the dictionary definition for patience is “the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, problems, or suffering without becoming annoyed or anxious” (Oxford University Press). Both of those attitudes make me write more effectively. When I do calligraphy, I need to be patient and attentive. Otherwise, the lines I write will become thick and thin. The quality of my compositions depends on my writing attitude. I will stop writing when I feel emotional and impatient and have no idea how to continue with a fancy thesis. If I start to write with a gentle attitude, I can write my thoughts in a lively way.

This opinion is reflected in the article “In Praise of the Humble Comma” by Pico Iyer (2001). Iyer (2001) highlights that “punctuation, one is taught, has a point: to keep up law and order” (para. 2). Writers must follow the rules in writing if they want a structured essay. It is important to always write the introduction and thesis statement at the beginning of an essay. This principle also applies beyond punctuation. If I make an outline and research patiently before writing an essay, the content and structure will not be wrong. Writers need to be confident so that they can produce more effective work under rational and patient conditions.

Persistence



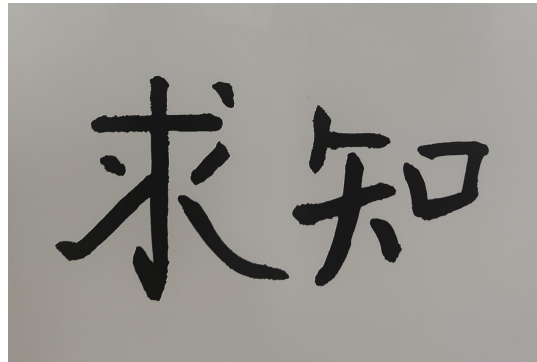
“坚持 (Jian Chi)” in English means ‘persistence.’ Chinese people use this word to encourage others to continue working. They generally believe that the decisions must be completely wonderful. The first symbol in the word “Jian Chi,” “坚,” describes a scene that a person stands on the ground (土) and writes again and again (又). In addition, “持,” tells people that they need to keep doing their work. Putting those symbols together explains that being persistent in writing can help people find inspiration.

In Chinese, each word symbol may have more than one meaning in the different dynasties. Therefore, calligraphers need to research dictionaries to find the correct Chinese

symbols they want to use. I must stand my ground and search again and again for the definition of Chinese symbols every day to produce good calligraphy for people.

It is the same concept when I write in English. When I am editing my essay, I only edit one of the paragraphs for one day. Then, I have more time to think and keep editing. Being persistent and trying, again and again, results in a higher quality of writing. Also, it helps me to release pressure when I am creating compositions.

Curiosity



The third word that Chinese people attach importance to in writing is “求知 (Qiu Zhi),” which translates into English as ‘curiosity.’ The symbol of “求” means to request, and “知” is knowledge. In Chinese schools, teachers say that “after you have enough knowledge, you should continue to explore more.” Our teachers believe only new objects can arouse the students’ curiosity and help them create more amazing writings. In China, there are thousands of ways to write Chinese symbols. Therefore, Chinese people have to gain a thirst for knowledge during writing. Otherwise, it is hard to find the correct form. They need to explore the time, place, historical background, and origin of each stroke on a word. Only then can they judge the correct use of that word in writing.

When writing an essay, students need to be curious to find all kinds of materials and resources to prove their point of view, or else it is hard for them to write their essays specifically. As composition scholar Donald Murray (1995) writes, “this experience--observation, thought, or feeling--has not existed until I write it. As writers, we must value our response to our world” (p. 83). Writers should be curious about the world and keep exploring new things.

Learning the writing process and techniques of other authors makes me curious. When I learn new writing skills, I put my new ideas into upcoming projects. For instance, writing in Chinese and English requires two different methods. For instance, people cannot copy others’ work and add those to their work in English. Under this situation, reading excellent

essays and resources becomes the only way for me to ask questions. I ask myself: Why is this a good essay? How can I write like this? Being curious allows me to reflect on my content effectively and write in different writing styles that I have never tried before.

Conclusion

Even though the writing requirements are different in each country, the attitudes toward writing are the same. Writing with patience makes us feel calm and joyful; persisting in writing every day helps writers find the related materials when they need them; curiosity makes us explore more knowledge and writing styles. More importantly, I can be more effective when I follow those three writing habits. Throughout history, Chinese teachers have stuck to these three attitudes toward writing and learning. Although it is hard for me to hold all three writing attitudes, they push me to write better next time.

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My Rhetorical Situations and Discourse Communities

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Keywords: rhetorical situations, discourse communities, genre

Before reading a prompt for one of my papers in a Writing Studies course, I never imagined how rhetorical situations could shape and define a person's writing in many ways. Rhetorical situations presented by discourse communities prompt a writer to create pieces of writing in response to their established norms, needs and goals. My affiliation with two different discourse communities determined if I wrote like a mindless undergrad or a competent, know-it-all corporate trainer.

Usually, the rhetorical situation in my English literature classes revolved around writing research papers, literary reviews, or summaries of literary texts. The genres became the primary methods used by the English literature discourse community as textual tools aimed to evoke critical thinking and analytical skills with regard to certain texts as objects of study. These genres asked students to either observe a recurrent theme in a text – for example, issues about gender and sexual identity – or interact with the text as a whole. Generally, the topic of choice and the genre of writing were rather consistent with the goals of the English literary community. For instance, a topic presented in my Medieval English class asked us to disguise [and] analyze the function of disguise in *Fantomina* by formulating an argument about the significance of disguise to the gender politics of the text. The appropriacy of such topics and forms of writing function well within the community as the primary goal of the topic is to prompt an analytical inquiry into the text. Certain verbs like “analyse” and “criticize” are examples of the specified lexical terminology used primarily as discursal conventions. After my encounter with these terms over and over, I started to wonder what it means to critically analyze? Furthermore, is my writing critical enough? I felt that the term critical analysis is a fluid and abstract element in itself.

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As an English student, my writing revolved around solely analyzing a text; however, despite my conscious efforts, the final product always seemed rather superficial and incomplete. As a member of the English literature discourse community, I felt that my inability to communicate with the members stemmed from my lack of knowledge of the requirements of the discourse. I was missing the necessary skills related to writing in humanities as a discipline, and the rhetorical strategies on approaching and writing a text. I remember procrastinating and not finishing assignments until a few days before the deadline because I didn't feel motivated to write on a text because the idea of analyzing everything seemed rather high level and abstract. It felt as though I was asked to keep digging into the ground in hopes of finding the earth's core despite knowing that I was predestined to fail. Similarly, to keep dissecting a text in hopes of adequately providing an analysis seemed futile. It felt as though I was superimposing meaning (by critically analyzing it) in hopes of creating ideas that were superficial in nature. There was a sense of reluctance in doing the actual writing because the pedagogical aim of the discourse community prioritized the writing product instead of the writing process. I believe that the English literature community uses its "participatory mechanism primarily to [simply] provide information and feedback" about literature. It doesn't encourage the members to develop rhetorical skills and, in turn, use those skills to set up better means of intercommunication (Swales 472).

Furthermore, the English literature community doesn't disseminate knowledge about the art of writing or rhetoric. I feel that my lack of understanding of rhetoric led to my downfall and loss of a sense of confidence in writing. My focus remained largely on constructing an ornamented or pretentious argument in the name of literary criticism or analysis. Primary focusing on the linguistic features of the text prevented me from understanding the real portrayal of rhetoric as a "study and practice of shaping content" (Covino and Jolliffe 4). I think it's incredibly difficult to shape a piece of writing without appreciating the process of writing and understanding that it's for a purpose. English professors don't tend to discuss rhetoric, for instance, as a way to present ideas and yet we were magically supposed to know about it and use it in our writing as a way of shaping our content and ideas. The learning outcomes of tasks or assignments seemed baseless because the writing itself was void of the basic understanding of rhetoric. The idea of critically analyzing a text seemed rather vague as basic guidance and support about how to approach a text through a critical and analytical lens were not provided. Analyzing a text became a form of routine behaviour expected of students in the community, and those who failed to comply with the criteria unconsciously became marginalized members of the community.

My rhetorical situation as a corporate trainer was completely the opposite. My writing revolved around designing and implementing handouts and summaries, which were

like itinerary checklists or schedules, for training and orientation sessions. For instance, when onboarding newly hired employees, it is incredibly important to give a detailed set of guidelines of the goals of training sessions and the skills which they'll learn during the orientation. Although, there were employee handbooks to guide me in establishing a handout (which I gave to the trainees at the start of the session), the details containing, which skills they would learn and how much time would be spent on teaching them, differed in each training session. Therefore, in writing or planning my training sessions, I would consider these basic necessities as the basis of generating ideas about the training schedule and timeline for the day. Unlike writing for the English discourse community, the basic knowledge in conducting an orientation session is easily accessible. The genre of writing and designing an orientation handout also seemed rather automatic as the goals were real and not hypothetical or abstract. For instance, a cashier's responsibility can be pictured and imagined easily because it is based on the execution of real tasks, whereas the task of critically analyzing an 18th-century novel or text is rather hypothetical and somewhat imaginary.

In this sense, writing a training handout or planning out a schedule seemed easier because the skills outlined were automatic. It was also easier to write a handout for an orientation rather than an academic paper because there was no fear of authority or the supreme (in this case, my audience who was my professor). My audience had an ample amount of knowledge on the topic; therefore, it became an intimidating task to persuade my professor knowing that they were an expert in the field. Approaching an audience on a subject or topic about which their knowledge is greater than the rhetor's is an intensively fearsome task. Furthermore, even if I were able to generate good ideas, I didn't know how to convert my thoughts from simple words to a well-constructed, and highly performative piece of writing.

Throughout my academic years, I felt a sense of shame in presenting my writing because it felt incomplete, void of ideas, and lacking. The expectations of the discourse community that consistently ask the members for an analysis of a text prevented me from assimilating into the community. In this sense, I wonder if the discourse community of English literature was really successful in getting students, like me, to think about the text with a critical and analytical lens. I believe that members of the English literature community could benefit greatly from knowledge on rhetoric, as it would enable them to shape and reinforce their ideas and content. I believe that by creating an awareness of some concepts used in the Writing Studies discourse (for instance, rhetoric or the writing process), the English literature community could significantly help its members in producing work that aligns with their goals.

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The Value of Citations in Academic Disciplines

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Keywords: citation, academic writing, discourse community, writing in disciplines

Citation is a form of accrediting the author of a source. It acts as a unifying force in disciplines and illustrates an individual's knowledge in their field of study (Nesi, 2021). Citations are used in academic situations as a means of avoiding plagiarism because no words or ideas can be classified as innate. Due to this, writing can be classified as a social activity and in a sense, it brings people in disciplinary communities together (Roozen, 2015). Citation is an integral aspect of writing in academia, and it can be noted that citation varies from discipline to discipline (Hyland, 1999). This can show that awareness of citations informs both the rhetoric in one's discipline and the individual in an academic community.

Before enrolling in Writing Studies 101, I was unaware of the importance of source-based writing and the role of citation. In fact, I found activities pertaining to citation tedious and boring. I was troubled by the idea that I needed to tag a citation to every statement, even those that I may classify as preliminary or common knowledge. However, after the completion of the first assignment that prompted me to investigate the rhetorical situation of research articles within my discipline of neuroscience, I became aware of the reasons why citation is not only necessary but beneficial both as a means of building rhetoric and showing commitment to an individual's discipline.

The Use of Citation in Rhetoric

To obtain an audience's accordance, an author must utilize successful rhetoric (Ting, 2018). A dominant strategy utilized in all levels of academia is Aristotle's three persuasive appeals: ethos, pathos, and logos, which appeal to ethics, emotions, and logic respectively (Ting, 2018). Citations that fall into the appeal to ethos demonstrate the author's credibility,

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knowledge, and dedication to research on their topic of study (Nesi, 2021). Thus, citations directly contribute to the persuasive appeal of an author's argument. Information that an author provides may seem appealing, and accordingly, may align with a reader's pre-existing opinions, but it is also a reader's responsibility to be skeptical and wary of the origin and accuracy of information (Snap Language, 2016). Without citations, a reader is unable to verify whether the information provided is correct and, ultimately, whether the rhetoric of an otherwise sound argument is lost or not. As stated, prior to commencing this Writing Studies class, I had little respect for the practice of using and citing sources. Through course readings and materials, I have developed an appreciation for the integration of sources in all forms of writing. I found that while reading course material, I had a greater appreciation and sense of trust in articles that actively utilized citations after each claim. The integration of sources demonstrated that the author's claims are supported by published literature, which allowed me to recognize the credibility of the author.

Understanding your topic of study is fundamental in effective academic writing (Irvin, 2010), and citations ensure an individual's audience of their commitment to understanding. In university-level writing courses, a professor is more likely to ask for sources and citations, which in turn would exemplify that the student can synthesize information, develop opinions and establish a connection between their topic and the sources utilized (Nesi, 2021). This also allows the student to develop necessary skills that will ultimately be used in professional writing. In my discipline of neuroscience, I am immersed into the realm of research which calls on me to utilize different forms of sources and citations such as background sources to establish definitions and the context of the study (Bizup, 2008). In my biology class, I remember feeling frustrated because I was asked to find and cite a scholarly source for the definition of virulence, a term my peers and I are familiar with. This query was difficult to understand at the time, but through reflection, knowledge obtained from this course, and by delving into my own research on citations, I became aware that citations are needed for background sources as they define the jargon that I may be familiar with, but a reader outside of my discipline, may not be. It is my job as an individual in academia to inform my audience of the information and to reassure them that the information which I am providing is correct and verifiable. This ultimately builds and adds to the overall credibility and persuasiveness of my claim, thesis, or findings.

The Use of Citations to Immerse an Individual into an Academic Community

Bizup claims there are four distinct types of sources used and observed through different academic disciplines: background, exhibition, argument and method sources, each of which has its own purpose (Bizup, 2008). Background sources are presented as factual, baseline, or in doubt. Exhibition sources are interpreted and investigated by the author

presenting the source. Argument sources are integrated to support or contradict an author's claim and ultimately build a persuasive argument. Lastly, method sources are those that present preexisting methodology or research procedures (Nesi, 2021). Through this discovery, it became easy to understand how the type of sources used in certain disciplines are characteristic and reflective of the nature of that discipline. Through reading three research articles within my discipline of neuroscience, I noticed a high degree of background sources, argument sources, and method sources in this respective order. This intuitive use and flow of sources build to the general genre of research articles in neuroscience; thus, allowing for such a distinctive yet similar layout of each article.

Moreover, both the citation style and frequency of citations differ across disciplines, as shown in a study carried out by Hilary Nesi (2021). Nesi (2021) found that the frequency of 'name (date) verb' integral citations per million words increased drastically through progressive years of undergraduate studies in four academic disciplines. Moreover, the frequency of integral citations was the highest in life sciences (245.01 - 717.23), followed by social sciences (166.73 - 526.46) and arts and humanities (75.13 - 287.15). These results show the characteristic high frequency of integral citations within the discipline of science and the relatively low frequency of integral citations in arts and humanities and physical sciences (Nesi, 2021). This study shows that the frequency of citations is consistent in distinctive disciplines and plays a part in defining the discipline. Indeed, through reading articles within my discipline of neuroscience, I observed a significantly high frequency of integral citations. At first glance, I felt overwhelmed by the influx of citations, but I persevered, and within a short period of time, this characteristic high frequency became something I not only came to appreciate but also respect.

Considering the observed flow of specific sources and the high frequency of integral citations within neuroscience research articles, I can conclude that there are characteristic methods used in neuroscience that agree with the scientific approach and the nature of inquiry of the discipline. I am passionate about neuroscience, and therefore, I believe it to be important for me to immerse myself in the community of neuroscience by adapting to the citation styles and applications used to demonstrate my commitment to the academic discipline.

Conclusion

Ultimately, citations are infinitely important to ensure the integrity, credibility, and persuasive characteristics of articles in all academic disciplines. Conforming to the citation styles and standards utilized in a discipline is essential in immersing an individual into their discipline. This Writing Studies course has pushed me to recognize the value that citations

bring to my writing, and I am confident the skills I have acquired will be utilized to their full potential in future endeavours.

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Importance of Scaffolding

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Introduction

WRS 101 was the first writing course I had ever taken, so I didn't know what to expect. When I saw the first assignment about genre analysis, I felt a sudden sense of panic. I had no idea what genre meant in an academic setting. Yet, as the class progressed, I quickly realized I wasn't expected to be an expert, as there is a zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is the distance between what I can do and the next learning that I could achieve with competent assistance (Raymond 176). Through scaffolds provided by the professor, I overcame the ZPD and finally applied unfamiliar concepts.

Vygotsky defined scaffolding instructions as the “role of teachers in supporting the learner’s development and providing structures to get to the next level” (Raymond 176). An important feature of scaffolding is its temporary nature, the support of the teacher is gradually withdrawn, and the learner becomes increasingly able to complete tasks alone (Hammond et al.). Thus, scaffolding allows for growth through the usage of both co-dependent and independent learning, ultimately leading to a better comprehension of the topic.

Interdependent Learning: A Social Activity

Scaffolding enhances the presence of the teacher. The teacher takes over parts of the task that the student cannot perform by setting parameters (Kim & Hannafin) and simplifying the task (Van Der Stuyf 3). This allows for direct maintenance of learning, as it causes learners to be more focused on achieving each step (Kim & Hannafin). When completing the first assignment, I found the assignment outline and rubric essential to my

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learning process. Having each task outlined helped reduce my anxiety, as I was able to see that I was gradually going to reach the goal. Therefore, I only had to concentrate on the task I was currently completing, not on the product. As I was doing each task, I was also able to clarify my understanding of topics I was unsure of, like properly making citations. The rubric also acted as a learning tool, as I felt like it helped me understand the expectations more clearly. I would always reference the rubric when writing as I could figure out what needed to be improved in my writing to complete the step.

The teacher provides models, prompts, hints, partial solutions, and direct instruction (Hartman). The professor provided many sample papers with annotated notes, which provided direct instructions and hints about the requirements for the assignment. Since I was doing rhetorical analysis, I was grateful that the professor had provided us with four different sample papers. Before writing, I read through all the samples and compared the similarities and differences among them. The similarities provided clues on what I needed to incorporate in my writing. After completing my assignment, I would compare it to the samples, which helped me improve my writing. Not only were outlines and PowerPoints provided but also other multimodal resources like videos and websites. These provided additional support with cognitive structuring (Kim & Hannafin), which provides meaning and organization to experiences and guides the processing and retrieval of new information (“Cognitive Structure”). When I learned a new concept, it was hard for me to understand how to implement them, especially the concept of argument organization. The professor had put extra videos, and I quickly found them on eClass. The video provided was beneficial, as it gave actual examples and a step-by-step method to identify a strong argument versus a weak one. After having a better grasp of the concept, I was able to create a detailed schema quickly. This further shows the importance of resources and the presence of the teacher.

It’s evident that scaffolding is an interdependent activity; therefore, group learning is another essential aspect. Collaborative learning allows students to work together to solve problems or complete tasks (Laal and Ghodsi 487). These discussions can result in higher productivity and critical thinking. Group discussions allowed me to build on the topics taught and were key aspects of this course. Each group-writing assignment provided me with an opportunity to learn from my peers and clarify my understanding. This was remarkably helpful when we were “marking” a sample paper. While “marking,” I would always put everything as “satisfactory,” but my group member pointed out crucial details about paragraphs that would make it “good.” Though I was a bit adamant about my position, she convinced me after a conversation and taught me the difference between the grades. This discussion helped me create strategies to become a better peer-reviewer and self-reviewer.

Independent Learning

As the ability of the learner increases, the scaffolding is progressively withdrawn (Chang, Sung, & Chen 7). Therefore, independent learning is facilitated through scaffolding. Metacognitive coaching is an important result of scaffolding as it allows learners to identify and modify their learning to create problem-solving techniques (Kim & Hannafin). Scaffolding breaks down tasks into achievable steps, making identifying problems easier. For example, when writing my module 1 assignment, I was worried about implanting the techniques used to identify rhetorical strategies. At first, I tried finding the logos, pathos, and ethos for one sample simultaneously, but it ended up being confusing. I decided to come back after completing everything else. When I went back, I realized that I had to compare the methods used in each sample. I decided to identify one technique (logos, ethos, or pathos) in the samples at a time, compare them, and then move on to the next technique.

Scaffolding each step reduces uncertainty, surprise, and disappointment so learning can be maximized (McKenzie). This is exactly how I felt throughout the writing process, as I knew what to expect at each step. I wasn't surprised to see the assignment's requirements since we had worked on mini assignments with the concepts in class. These low-risk assignments allowed me to practice new skills without being shocked during the essay. It felt gratifying as I finished each step, as I knew I was one step closer to completing the assignment. Efficiency is delivered as the work is structured and focused, and glitches are reduced or eliminated. The time the task requires is decreased as momentum is created. Students spend less time searching and more time learning and applying concepts, which results in quicker learning (McKenzie). Since I already knew about each topic like pathos, I spent more time implementing rather than explaining learned concepts, as I could assume that everyone in the class knew them, which helped reduce frustration. Though we only had about two weeks to complete the assignment, after we learned about each concept, I could still complete a decent draft in time as I had the drive to finish the task.

Overall, scaffolding motivates independent interest related to the task (Van Der Stuyf 11). By providing structure, the scaffolded lesson provides pathways for the learners. The student can decide which path to choose or what to explore along the path, but they cannot wander off the path, which is the designated task (McKenzie). Due to the scaffolds provided, I had a clear pathway that led to the completion of the assignment. Though I didn't have much choice about what I wanted to complete, as it was either rhetorical or linguistic analysis, it was okay since this was my first writing course. I was nervous about the writing, but I could still explore many new concepts that I had never heard of before, like genre analysis. I also couldn't "wander off the path" as each section was essential for the assignment, but I was exposed to so many new concepts that it didn't matter if I could

deviate off the path too much. I am now confident in applying techniques like paraphrasing and citing to other courses and assignments.

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The Court Case of Cow v. Plant

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BAILIFF

All rise. Department One of the Court is now in session. Judge Lait presiding. Please be seated.

JUDGE LAIT

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Calling the case of Cow v. Plant. Are both sides ready?

MR. MLEKO AND I

Ready, your Honour.

JUDGE LAIT

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury: we are here to decide whether plant-based milk or cow's milk is better in terms of nutrition, environmental impact, and digestibility for those with food intolerances. First, we shall be deciding which milk is more nutritious since many people drink milk for its vitamins and nutrients. Second, we will be evaluating which milk has a lower environmental impact because as global temperatures rise, we need to lessen our greenhouse emissions and environmental footprint. Finally, we will decide which milk is more digestible for those with milk allergies and lactose intolerance; this is due to the fact that more than 7 million Canadians are unable to digest milk (Canadian Digestive Health Foundation). The better milk will be coming home with me today.

MR. MLEKO

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury: before we start, I think you should all be reminded of something very important. From the time of birth to our early childhood years, humans – like all mammals – rely on milk. Milk is a nutrient-dense food that is

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packed with protein, vitamin B, vitamin D, calcium, riboflavin, phosphorus, macronutrients and micronutrients (Rizzoli 1256). Due to this, none of us can deny that milk and dairy products are an essential part of our diet during infancy. But after all, with the nutrients cow's milk provides us, it seems a bit unfair to be vilifying cow's milk, doesn't it?

I [THE AUTHOR]

Mr. Mleko, although you are correct in that cow's milk is very nutritious, the same can be said about plant-based milks. I've brought in two experts: Dr. Sethi and Mr. Ferreria, who specializes in plant-based food research to educate us a bit more on the nutritional value of plant-based milks.

JUDGE LAIT

Will Dr. Sethi and Mr. Ferreira please come to the stand?

MR. FERREIRA

"Dairy-alternative milks tend to have fewer calories, less fat, more water content [and] less protein" (n.p.).

DR. SETHI

"In order to use plant-based milk as a substitute to cow's milk, fortification with protein, essential vitamins, and minerals is generally performed" (3419).

I [THE AUTHOR]

So overall, enriched plant-based milks are nutritionally similar to cow's milk. If one is deciding between plant-based and cow's milk, the amount of calcium and vitamins in either shouldn't be the deciding factor, since these fortified milks have comparable amounts of calcium and vitamins. However, cow's milk is higher in calories and in excess of fats, which can lead to weight gain. Skim milk may have comparable calories to plant-based milks, but according to nutritionist Michael Joseph, skim milk loses vitamin D and A during the manufacturing process (n.p.). So, if you are watching your figure, I suggest taking home plant-based milk.

JUDGE LAIT

Thank you, Dr. Sethi and Mr. Ferreria, you may step down.

MR. MLEKO

Although plant-based milks may be better for one's waistline, we can't say the same about their water usage. It takes 371L of water to produce 1L of almond milk (Marinova and Bogueva). This may be less than what is needed to produce a litre of cow's milk, but it is the production location of this milk that is problematic. Unlike cow's milk, most almond milk is produced in California. This is ironic, because California is facing a water shortage, and there is not enough fresh water to meet the demand. Cow's milk, on the other hand, is not produced in areas of water scarcity.

Unlike plant-based milks, Canada does not export or import a lot of dairy products, which minimizes greenhouse gasses emitted from transport.

I [THE AUTHOR]

Mr. Mleko, since we are discussing the environmental impact of milk, I think it would be appropriate to allow food-sustainability experts Dr. Marinova and Dr. Bogueva to come to the stand.

JUDGE LAIT

Will Dr. Marinova and Dr. Bogueva please come to the stand!

DR. MARINOVA AND DR. BOGUEVA

“Any plant-based milk, be it made from beans, nuts, or seeds, has a lighter impact, in comparison to dairy milk; this is particularly true when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions and the use of water and land. In the case of cow’s milk, its [CO₂ emissions] vary between 1.14 in Australia and New Zealand, to 2.50 in Africa. Compare this to the [CO₂ emissions] of plant-based milks, which are 0.42 for almond and coconut milk, and 0.75 for soy milk....Water use is similarly higher for cow’s milk: 628 litres of water for every litre of dairy, compared to 371 for almond.”

I [THE AUTHOR]

Although the production of almond milk requires a lot of water, it emits fewer greenhouse gasses than the production of cow’s milk. Furthermore, Mr. Mleko, not all plant-based milks require as much water as almond milk. In fact, soy and oat milk production requires even less water, energy, and land. This means all plant-based milks have a lower environmental impact and emit fewer emissions than cow’s milk. Greenhouse emissions are significant because they increase global temperatures, which can lead to rising sea levels, more severe weather, and depletion of the ozone layer.

JUDGE LAIT

Thank you, Dr. Marinova and Dr. Bogueva. You may step down. Are the attorneys ready with their final arguments?

MR. MLEKO AND I

Yes, your Honour.

MR. MLEKO

Despite experiencing increased popularity these recent years, “plant-based alternatives still struggle to produce cheese, because they lack casein and whey protein, the key ingredients that give dairy its taste and structure” (Kurzgesagt 8:21 - 8:27). Although plant-based dairy substitutes have done a good job at becoming a viable milk alternative, they still have a long way to go when it comes to the production of other dairy products. However, those who are lactose intolerant can continue to enjoy dairy products such as cow’s milk, through lactose-free milk.

Unlike plant-based alternatives, which struggle to produce cheese, lactose-free milk can be used to produce this much-loved product. Furthermore, people may struggle with switching over to plant-based milk because they may find it less palatable than cow's milk.

I [THE AUTHOR]

Your Honour, in no way am I an expert in the food industry. But, please allow me to contribute to this discussion by allowing me to share a personal anecdote from my childhood. Back when I was young, like all children, milk was the basis of my diet. Many things had changed throughout my childhood, but my love for milk was not one of them. I drank at least two glasses of milk every day: one after breakfast, and one before bedtime; however, on my 13th birthday, I woke up to find that I lost something very close and dear to me. What had I lost, you ask? My ability to digest lactose. Every glass of milk that I consumed caused my stomach to ache, and I was sent hurtling to the washroom every five minutes. I found that I was no longer able to consume my beloved beverage. I thought that I would never be able to taste another drop of white, creamy heavenly goodness until the day I died. Fortunately, I stumbled upon my salvation in the refrigerated section at the grocery store. Your Honour, what I had stumbled upon was almond milk. I can now enjoy my creamy and nutritious beverage once again, without having to fear stomach aches and a burning bottom. Sadly, I am not the only one with a story like this. Every year, millions of people suffer from our tragic inability to digest lactose. In fact, worldwide, 65-70% of the adult population is lactose intolerant (Bayless et al. 21). In a society where cheese-topped foods and fancy coffee shops are the norm, the inability to digest lactose is a digestive barrier that contributes to feelings of social exclusion. Unable to enjoy the same foods that our peers can, many lactose-intolerant people – such as myself – are forced to choose between feeling left out or feeling ill. But with the introduction of plant-based milks, that is no longer the case. Those who suffer from lactose intolerance can now enjoy the same foods and social environment as freely as their peers. We can finally go to a coffee shop and order a latte that does not send us running to the washroom half an hour later.

JUDGE LAIT

Will the clerk please stand? Has the jury reached a unanimous verdict?

CLERK

The jury finds that the judge will take home soy milk, which is plant-based milk. The decision was made in consideration of soy milk's lower water usage, lower land usage, and lower greenhouse emissions. The jury also chooses soy milk because fortified soy milk is nutritionally similar to cow's milk. In addition, given the fact that

the judge's husband is lactose intolerant, bringing home soy milk will allow them to enjoy milk and cookies before bedtime.

JUDGE LAIT

The jury is thanked and excused. Court is adjourned!

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From Innocent Inquiry to Suggested Industry Changes: The Story of How #Buttergate Went Viral

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Over the last several years, Canadian consumers' desire to reach a higher level of food literacy – knowledge about food – has increased. Rightfully so, consumers are curious and are beginning to examine the origins of their food and the production methods behind it, which can uncover a wealth of underlying information. Consumers are leaning, more than ever, on social media as a platform for their voices to be heard. On February 5, 2021, Julie Van Rosendaal, a Calgarian cookbook author and food writer, brought attention to the changed consistency of room temperature butter and committed to finding out the root cause of such a change using Twitter as a medium to keep her foodie followers up to date. Her inquiring tweet quickly sparked a global digital movement now referred to as “#buttergate” (@FoodProfessor). Have Canadians been left in the dark by an industry they have long trusted? When #buttergate stepped into the spotlight, Canadian dairy consumers looked to the government-regulated industry for answers as to why their butter had changed consistency. Consumers' concerns were heard, eventually forcing the industry to nimbly pivot and respond by implementing swift changes to otherwise acceptable, longstanding production practices. #Buttergate has proven the power consumerism holds to promote consumers' voices and to produce changes in the food industry, which would not have been possible without the useful presence and far-reaching influence of social media.

Van Rosendaal first tweeted that “something is up with our butter supply, and I'm going to get to the bottom of it. Have you noticed it's no longer soft at room temperature? Watery? Rubbery?,” bringing attention to the consistency of her room temperature butter (@dinnerwithjulie). Van Rosendaal theorized that changes in dairy farming practices to modify the fatty acid profile of milk in an attempt to boost yield may be one of the culprits

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(@dinnerwithjulie). Surprisingly, within days her inbox was flooded with messages from fellow Canadian dairy consumers sharing they, too, had noticed a change in the consistency of their butter at room temperature. Even a former employee of the livestock feed industry reached out to Van Rosendaal to offer insight into the firmer texture and suggested that recent supply-chain disruptions could be the culprit (Van Rosendaal). Many consumers have said, *so what if our butter is firmer? Besides, consumers have preferences when it comes to the consistency of their butter.* Some may not all want soft butter – it depends on the end-user of the product. For example, bakeries look to a firmer butter which produces a flakier product, whereas home bakers look to a softer, more spreadable butter (Mosley et al. 987). However, social media chatter is no longer just about consumer preference as it relates to the consistency of butter. With the spotlight now turned to the possibility that domestic livestock may have received diets supplemented with palmitic acid, consumers may wonder if the use of palmitic supplements in dairy feed is safe: for the animal and for humans.

Consumers know that butter should not be destroying their bread, and most of them are under the impression that consuming certain levels of saturated fat is unhealthy; therefore, consumers are raising questions about the safety of adding palm fat supplements to livestock feed (Leyland). Saturated fats are what add *form* to butter, and they are solid at room temperature (“Types of Fats”). Therefore, the more saturated a fat is, the longer it takes for it to become soft at room temperature. Over the years, consumers have been advised to avoid overconsuming saturated fats as they can cause cholesterol build-up in arteries, raising *bad* cholesterol, and further increasing the risk for heart disease. In addition, the World Health Organization has reported that a higher intake of palmitic acid is also associated with the risk of coronary heart disease (Van Rosendaal). Does the addition of highly-saturated palm fats to cattle diets influence human health? According to Mosley et al., adding supplemental fats to dairy cattle feed has been typically used to bolster the cow’s diet and subsequently increase milk yield (987). There has also been research into milk fat with higher concentrations of saturated fatty acids and the possible benefits to the cow that may exist – that “adding high levels of palmitic acid can be an effective method to increase energy intake without the negative effects on ... milk fat” (Mosley et al. 987, 993). Further, when dairy cows’ diets are supplemented with palm fats, it is “known to alter the saturated fatty acid profile of the resulting milk fat – a shift that could show up in butter that’s firmer at room temperature” (Van Rosendaal). However, according to Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, professor and director of the Agri-Food Analytics lab at Dalhousie University, “little research has been conducted on how feeding palmitic acids to dairy cows could compromise the health of both animals and humans” (Charlebois). Considering the lack of scientific research linking cattle diets with possible health effects on consumers, a strong argument can then be made for the industry to support research on this growing concern (Charlebois). Now that consumers are aware that domestic dairy cows may have been supplemented with palmitic

acid, there is a great possibility that some may choose to stop buying butter in its current state. In the past, consumers would have relied on the government to ask the questions of the industry that Van Rosendaal is asking. Social media quickly offered a space for consumers to directly ask industry their questions; whereas, without the social platform, they likely would not have been privy to much of this information. Now, in the spirit of consumerism, consumers can produce change only by refusing to buy butter and forcing the dairy industry to address the concerns about the level of fats in the butter.

The sky-high standards and strict policies that govern Canada's dairy sector are largely influenced by The Dairy Farmers of Canada, a powerful industry lobby group. This group claims to lobby on behalf of Canadian dairy producers to ensure transparency and accountability within the dairy sector. However, because the lobby group is funded and run by farmers and primarily protects industry farmers, the consideration of consumers' best interests can easily take a back seat. How can a group look out for the consumer and producer, especially when actions (or inactions) affect their bottom line? In an effort to be transparent, the lobby group released three consecutive statements in response to consumer concerns. First, on February 11, 2021, it acknowledged awareness of the concerns with firmer-than-usual butter, and due to a lack of data to show for the change in the consistency, it would strike a working group of industry experts to further investigate the consumer claims (Dairy Farmers of Canada 11 Feb. 2021). In its second statement that followed shortly thereafter on February 19, 2021, the group reassured consumers that "the use of palm fat in dairy feed is not new and is a safe ingredient, approved for use by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency" (Dairy Farmers of Canada 19 Feb. 2021). Contrarily, less than one week later, they released a final statement on February 25, 2021, asking dairy farmers to consider using alternatives to palm supplements (Dairy Farmers of Canada 25 Feb. 2021). Given the extent of contradictory and convoluted information, consumers were left scratching their heads. Without the presence of social media, these seemingly transparent statements would not have reached consumers as widely as they did and would not have pushed consumers to hold the industry accountable for its actions – further underlining the importance of transparency. Social media holds significant power – it can reach a large audience in a short amount of time, and it has the ability to maintain the speeds of dynamic digital movements.

The country took notice of the #buttergate hashtag when Charlebois coined the term "buttergate" in a tweet on February 12, 2021, in which he writes "#Buttergate in the making..." (@FoodProfessor). Charlebois recalls his igniting tweet and emphasized that the catalyst for social change is having a concise message: "if you want social change, you need a brand. If your message is too complicated, people just won't get it" (Friedman 00:03:10–00:03:44). With the emergence of the #buttergate hashtag and its implication of a

cover-up, consumers began questioning what information was being withheld. Over the last year, Canada has seen a surprising 26 percent increase in the demand for its butter, and Charlebois suspects that in order to keep up with the spike in demand, farmers have leaned on the dietary supplemental use of palmitic acid – a by-product of palm oil as a cost-effective way to increase energy and boost the yield from their dairy-producing cattle (Friedman 00:09:09–00:10:20). Furthermore, some believe that dairy farmers have *increased* the levels of palm supplements in cattle feed to keep up with “pandemic-fueled [baking demands]” (Bresge “Directive”). Charlebois’ theory has the potential to be proved since the industry has not yet provided any evidence to the contrary. Daniel Scothorn, leader of a Canadian-based nutritional consulting company that is responsible for importing palmitic acid for use in livestock feed supplements, says, “[f]armers were asked by the processors to increase production, but to get more replacement cows [it] would take a while... it makes more sense to feed them a higher-calorie diet to meet immediate demands” (qtd. in Van Rosendaal). Some consumers may be left to wonder if the change in the consistency could be attributed to an adjustment of the supplement levels administered to cattle in their feed. The industry has failed to address the levels at which they are *now* supplementing their cattle’s feed with palmitic acid, which the industry could view as unimportant information to the average consumer. Therefore, one may argue that the dairy industry felt it unnecessary to be transparent due to the pressure to meet the demands that the pandemic was placing on the supply of butter. However, even with the sheer quantity of raw information available on social media, consumers are left with a lack of structured and straightforward guidance; thus, they might feel inclined to *trust the system* – the system that has consumers’ and animals’ best interests in mind, ostensibly the transparent dairy industry. Social media can often be seen in a negative light; however, #buttergate proves that without the helping hand of a simple social media hashtag, Van Rosendaal’s innocuous and insightful inquiry would not have taken viral flight.

In the absence of social media, #buttergate would not have revealed conflicting information, which further encouraged consumers and researchers to strive to uncover additional truths. Due to the contrary industry statements, some might feel as though the protected and privileged dairy industry has breached its moral contract with its domestic consumers – highlighting the gaps that exist within the large industry. Industry policy and regulations largely exist to protect the consumer. The 14.8-billion-dollar dairy industry is tightly controlled by a closed supply-management system, which controls its prices, production, and imposes strict import quotas (Bedford). Under this system, all dairy producers have a production quota guarding against overproduction, allowing producers to earn a stable living (Friedman 00:05:56–00:06:07). “Dairy farmers are paid based on the components of their milk – butterfat, protein, and lactose and other solids – rather than overall volume... butterfat has a higher value than protein and other solids,” and in Canada,

butter must contain no less than 80-per-cent milk fat (Van Rosendaal). Therefore, an argument can be made that there is adequate motivation for producers to use palmitic feed supplements to boost or maintain optimal milk fat levels in the dairy they produce, especially to keep up with a spike in demand. In his over 25 years of observing the industry, Charlebois can't recall another time when consumers had the ear of this large industry as they do now (Friedman 00:06:38-00:07:26). The trust-local message and the signal of high quality that is behind the blue cow logo of Canadian-produced dairy are now threatened because of a lack of transparency that exists between the industry and its local consumers. Charlebois passionately expressed, "transparency is a choice... [the dairy industry] chose not to [be transparent] ...Canadians were caught off guard... shocked when they learned that palmitic supplements were used as an energy supplement on dairy farms" (Friedman 00:04:44-00:05:06). Charlebois voices "when you run a closed system, how can you possibly know what is ethically and morally acceptable anymore?" (Friedman 00:16:12-00:16:21). Canadian consumers should aspire to reach high-quality dairy products, where, unfortunately, room for improvement of quality exists (Friedman 00:16:44-00:17:25). For an industry that upholds high-quality standards, consumers have every right to demand more from their dairy. The opacity of butter and the opacity of the dairy industry is not a similarity that Canadians deserve, and a *buttergate* is not what the industry needs. Consumers deserve to be in full possession of all of the facts as they relate to supplementing livestock feed, even if they need to turn to social media to find what they are looking for.

The controversy behind #buttergate managed to proliferate across a local, national, and global digital platform. Within three weeks, Van Rosendaal's curiosity around the changes of consistency in room temperature butter quickly garnered international attention not only from industry experts but also from celebrities. For example, the Tonight Show host, Jimmy Fallon, joked about Canada's butter woes, and world-renowned chef Nigella Lawson thanked Van Rosendaal for her "sterling work on behalf of butter" on Twitter (Cukier). Some in the industry believe the industry's hands were tied, that they had to respond in this way, and that the media hype had no factual basis and subsequently caused too much of a threat to the industry for them to stand idly by (Bresge "Directive"). It can also be argued that Van Rosendaal did not "specifically and deliberately strategize with inventive considerations conscious of third-party recomposing" when she initially conversed with her Twitter followers on February 5, 2021 (Ridolfo and DeVoss 2009). Regardless of her intentions, Van Rosendaal's original tweet gained its speedy momentum and its significant flight into rhetorical velocity, eventually landing in a global digital discourse – likely not her initially intended audience (her Twitter followers). Acquiring the attention of transparency-seeking dairy consumers south of the border, Van Rosendaal shared an enjoyable moment on Twitter – @AlfordAlice writes, "what I, as an outsider, find most shocking is that the dairy council caved when called out. Americans, can you imagine just

saying to a giant, powerful industry, “Hey, we know you’re doing something we told you not to do. Knock it the fuck off” and then having that industry actually knock it the fuck off? It’s like they have some sort of functioning society just positively glazed with good-ass butter up there” (qtd. in @dinnerwithjulie). #Buttergate continues to spread through being reported by news outlets across the globe – notably holding a spot as a top story on *BBC News* for a period of 24 hours. In less than three short weeks, Van Rosendaal’s harmless tweet went from a conversation among her followers to an international media sensation, eventually steering meaningful changes in a tightly government-controlled industry, where consumers typically hold little to no power (Bresge “Directive”).


Looking at what began as an innocent inquiry and how it quickly morphed into a digital movement – bordering on food activism – represents the power of consumers’ voice when coupled with social media. When given a digital platform, voices can loudly echo across the world and have the potential to force meaningful change. #Buttergate is centred on a widely-loved, widely-used, simple everyday product, but it has also shown us that when consumers push back, they can greatly impact a large industry’s choice to be transparent. The ripple effect of changes felt across the dairy industry also has the potential to be felt across the food industry at large – thanks to the far-reaching and powerful influence of social media on consumerism. The important message at the heart of #buttergate is that consumers deserve transparency. Not all may agree that the anecdotal claims hold scientific merit; however, Van Rosendaal deserves a *pat* on the back for her unconsciously innocent food activism – even if *spreading* the word wasn’t her original intent (Bresge, “Buttergate”). In general, butter consists of, at most, two ingredients: cream and salt. Imagine if we questioned our food with more than two ingredients in this way: what meaningful change in our food’s ecosystem could be on the horizon.

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The Cultural Significance of “WAP”

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Keywords: research paper, digital controversy, hip hop, contemporary music

On August 7, 2020, Atlantic Records released Cardi B's lead single “WAP,” featuring hip-hop star Megan Thee Stallion (Cardi B). The song stands as an acronym for “Wet Ass Pussy,” which the artists rap recurrently throughout the song. This single is comprised of uncensored, sex-positive lyrics sung by women in an effort to desensitize the stigma surrounding women and traditional views on sexuality. The explicit and overt references to the nature of female sexuality can be viewed as a means to dismantle long-standing misogynistic views propagated by the patriarchal hip-hop industry. The song also alludes to many sexual innuendos in an attempt to advocate an unapologetic message of uninhibited self-expression and sexuality. Together, Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion adopt the vulgarity that men within the hip-hop genre have perpetuated for years, using it positively as a means to empower all women. They challenge the double standard of men being praised for rapping graphically about sex while women are looked down upon for attempting to do the same. The lyrics in “WAP” have been glorified by many but have also drawn negative attention from more conservative individuals (Holmes). The polarizing nature of the lyrics and overall controversy surrounding the song serves to increase its cultural significance, pushing boundaries and branding “WAP” as a powerful female anthem and social rally.

The success of “WAP” can be greatly attributed to its composition. The lyrics included can be described as risqué and attention-grabbing with memorable lines such as Megan Thee Stallion’s “Gobble me, swallow me, drip down inside of me / Quick jump out ‘fore you let it get inside of me” (Cardi B). Cardi B incorporates an assortment of sexual metaphors and allusions to convey to the listener that she is not afraid to fully embrace her sexuality, as women should be free to do without fear of judgement both within the hip-hop community and the rest of society. An example of an allusion made within “WAP” is, “Macaroni in a pot / That’s some wet ass pussy” (Cardi B). The line “macaroni in a pot”

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(Cardi B) alludes to a 2014 viral *Vine* (Hofmann) video by 16-year-old Mohamad Zoror, who suggests in the video that the sound of macaroni and cheese being stirred is comparable to the sound of "good pussy" (Zoror). Cardi B uses this allusion to add another creative layer to the song, further establishing herself as sexually confident. Additionally, Megan Thee Stallion composed her lyrics to deliver a similar effect, rapping, "Your honour, I'm a freak bitch" (Cardi B), indicating that she is open and accepting of her sexuality, flaunting her sexual desires without fear of judgment. By addressing "Your honour" (Cardi B), Megan Thee Stallion admits to a court judge that she is a "freak" (Cardi B) and takes pride in it. She also raps, "never lost a fight, but I'm looking for a beating" (Cardi B), acknowledging that she is seeking out taboo sexual experiences entirely out of her submission. The artists' repeated acceptance of taboo sexual desires in the lyrics are demonstrative of their firm belief that their sexuality is not one to be scrutinized but rather one to be accepted and cherished.

In addition to the lyrics, musical characteristics and features play a large role in the success of "WAP." For example, the songwriters and producers employ a deep bass throughout the entirety of the song. This deep bass is catchy for the listener but does not overpower the rappers themselves. There is also a heavily repeated sample of "Whores in this House" (Ski), an older Baltimore Club Single by Frank Ski. The inclusion of the sample further exaggerates the sexual nature of the song and empowers Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion by allowing them to reclaim the word "whore." This word is often used derogatorily towards women who enjoy sexual intercourse, dress in a provocative way, or frequently engage in sexual acts. These social roles of a "whore" are "common images in [Western] culture which are often either glamorized or denigrated" (Pheterson 45-46). They also have "notions of dishonour" (Pheterson 46) but could also be categorized as "good whores and bad whores" (Pheterson 46), depending on the integrity of their work. However, the word "whore" does not necessarily reflect a woman's physical appearance or actions. Instead, it can be used to objectify and demean a woman. Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion reclaim this controversial term by demonstrating that a whore can be defined as a person with "values, tastes and satisfactions" (Pheterson 47); they establish that these are the true determinants of self-respect. By pushing the lyrics of the song to the forefront while including repeating musical features, the songwriters and producers have employed an effective technique to highlight the sex-positive message of "WAP."

The song "WAP" has found great social significance in its release, especially among Generation Z. A popular video sharing platform, *TikTok* (Ying), has featured over a million videos and dances inspired by the song. One trend, inspired by Megan Thee Stallion's lyrics, "If he fuck me and ask 'whose is it' / When I ride the dick, I'ma spell my name" (Cardi B), led *TikTok* users to dance along to the verse while spelling out their name with their hips (#SpellMyNameChallenge). The #SpellMyNameChallenge trend sparked discourse on how Westernized societies have overly objectified women so that any exploration of sexuality is

perceived for the gratification of men rather than for women to exhibit self-confidence. However, trends like the #SpellMyNameChallenge served as a major catalyst that also ignited a cultural reset in our generation, allowing westernized societies to see a new perspective on femininity that has been previously restricted. The #SpellMyNameChallenge acts as an example of how people in westernized societies can unite to challenge the status quo and embrace women’s empowerment.

Another trend that arose from *TikTok* is Brian Esperon’s “WAP” choreography (Esperon). Esperon’s video, incorporating quirky and unique dance moves, spread like wildfire. His moves appealed to the interests of Generation Z, and many participated in this trend. Many praised Esperon for his courage in traversing gender barriers as it is rare to see a cisgender man dancing to a song about female sexuality, especially in a society with defined gender stereotypes. Contrarily, many of the more conservative *TikTok* users have taken offence to both the lyrics and the dances accompanying “WAP” trends. Some may argue that Esperon’s dance reinforces gender barriers because men are portrayed as dominant figures who hold and reclaim power and status in society. Similarly, Esperon’s viral choreography can be interpreted as an appropriation of the message and the significance of “WAP.” As a cisgender man gaining popularity for dancing to a female anthem, it is as if he is drawing attention away from the profound issues of feminine sexuality. The message delivered by Esperon through this dance educated Generation Z about the stigma surrounding feminine sexuality. This is a large contributor to the controversy of “WAP” and why its cultural impact is so significant.

Politically, “WAP” itself does not make as bold of a statement with its lyrics as it does socially and culturally. However, the song is still politically relevant as it has boosted Cardi B’s and Megan Thee Stallion’s platforms and political influence. As celebrities, the two could potentially make an impact on their audience’s knowledge and action in politics. For example, with 2020 being an election year, Cardi B conducted a virtual interview via Elle (Gordon-Lazareff and Lazareff) with Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden (Cardi B and Joe Biden’s CANDID Conversation About Racial Equality, Free College and Healthcare). During Cardi B’s interview, she was able to communicate her political ideals, such as racial equality, free post-secondary education, and free healthcare, in detail to Biden and her fanbase. Cardi B declares that she wants “black people to stop getting killed” (Cardi B and Joe Biden’s CANDID Conversation About Racial Equality, Free College and Healthcare) and that “[they are] not asking for sympathy, [they] are just asking for equality” (Cardi B and Joe Biden’s CANDID Conversation About Racial Equality, Free College and Healthcare). She speaks up for all of America, saying “nobody wants animosity” (Cardi B and Joe Biden’s CANDID Conversation About Racial Equality, Free College and Healthcare). Cardi also reveals her view on free health care and believes it is important because of “what is happening right now” (Cardi B and Joe Biden’s CANDID Conversation About Racial Equality, Free College and Healthcare)—the Covid-19 pandemic. Biden also expressed an interest in Cardi B’s fans’

concerns and what political changes they would like to see, claiming he will "address all [of their] concerns to his administration" (Cardi B and Joe Biden's CANDID Conversation About Racial Equality, Free College and Healthcare) if he elected. As a celebrity, Cardi B uses her platform to advocate for political issues on a global scale; she encourages her fans to stand up for what they believe in to make a change that could benefit future generations. On the contrary, those with more traditional and conservative values who look down upon or disapprove of premarital sexual acts may feel as though songs like "WAP" will push youth, especially Generation Z, to act out of alignment with traditional values. James P. Bradley, a Republican congressional candidate from California, writes, "Cardi B & Megan Thee Stallion are [examples of]... children... raised without God and... a strong father figure" (Holmes), and he "feel[s] sorry for future girls" (Holmes) if they are their role models. They fear these types of music "threaten the very future of women everywhere" (Holmes). All in all, a song like "WAP," which promotes an artist's platform, can also create connections and debates across westernized societies.

Despite the importance of the social, political, and cultural contexts of the song "WAP," the cultural impact and context are certainly the largest. To begin, a quick Google search for "hip-hop artists" (*Google search*) yields 51 results, with only 6 of whom identify as women. This is only a small testament to the lack of representation women have seen in hip-hop despite their past contributions. Increasing female representation in traditionally patriarchal genres is an important step to tackling widespread misogyny. For example, rapper Kanye West has featured lines such as "Fuck you and your Hampton house / I'll fuck your Hampton spouse / Came on her Hampton blouse / And in her Hampton mouth" (West). Kanye West's lines appear to be more of a loosely veiled and jarring threat than a reclamation of sexuality. Kanye implies that because he is upset, he will have sexual intercourse with someone's wife out of spite. This is a bold statement that essentially dehumanizes women, reducing them to sex objects to empower Kanye West and establish his superiority. However, when female artists Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion rap about their bodies and sexualities in "WAP," they are rapping about consensual actions that they enjoy participating in. Contrastingly, "WAP" is empowering for women and does not aim to degrade men to spread the message of feminine sexuality.

Overall, "WAP" and its associated controversy have quickly generated numerous forms of content and conversations regarding the over-sexualization of women and their small numbers in hip-hop in comparison to men. Pop culture is typically used for entertainment purposes; however, "WAP" by Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion serves as the bridge between pop culture and the deeper issue of sexism in westernized society, specifically the repression of feminine sexuality. Through the platform *TikTok* alone, "WAP" has reached and influenced individuals in various countries. This will progress as Cardi B, Megan Thee Stallion, and other female rappers continue to release music that features women speaking openly about feminine sexuality. "WAP" has had a positive influence on the


cultural view of women rapping about their bodies and women within the hip-hop industry. Widespread exposure to this song was necessary to further challenge those who do not believe female artists should speak as freely as male artists can. Hopefully, over time, listeners will begin to normalize the ideas presented from lyrics such as those from "WAP."

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Memes of Our Writing

Writing in the time of COVID-19

Hailiang Hu & Yikun (Eric) Wei¹

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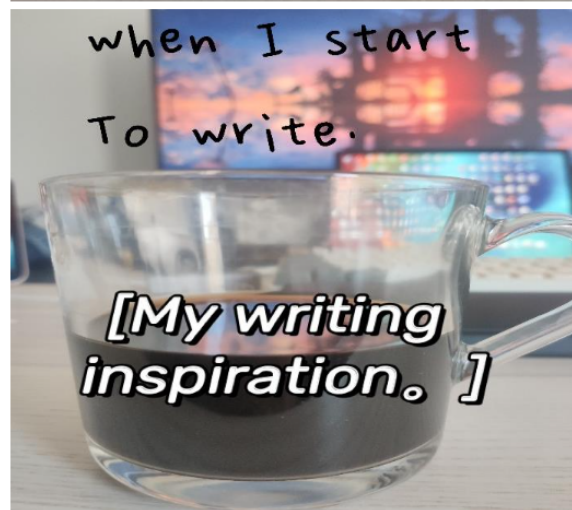
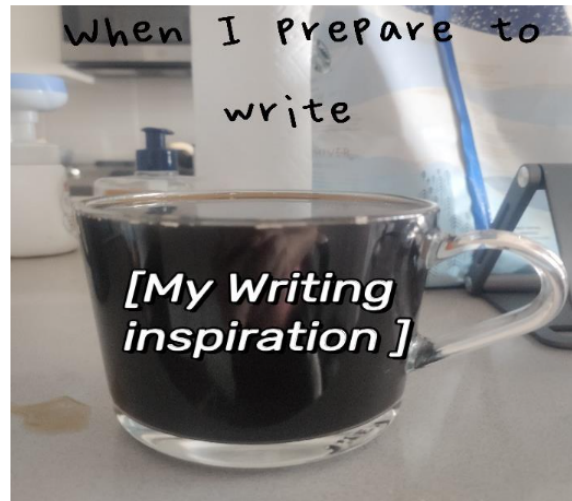
Keywords: writing process, inspiration, perfectionism, memes

Introduction

For this assignment, students were asked to create a meme about their writing process. Hailiang Hu created a meme about the challenges of relying on inspiration when writing. Yikun (Eric) Wei designed a meme about the differences between our visions for our writing and our feelings about the actual process.

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Writing inspiration by Hailiang Hu



Perfect writing by Yikun (Eric) Wei

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Writing Processes

Christina Grant¹

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Keywords: writing process, revision, procrastination, drafts

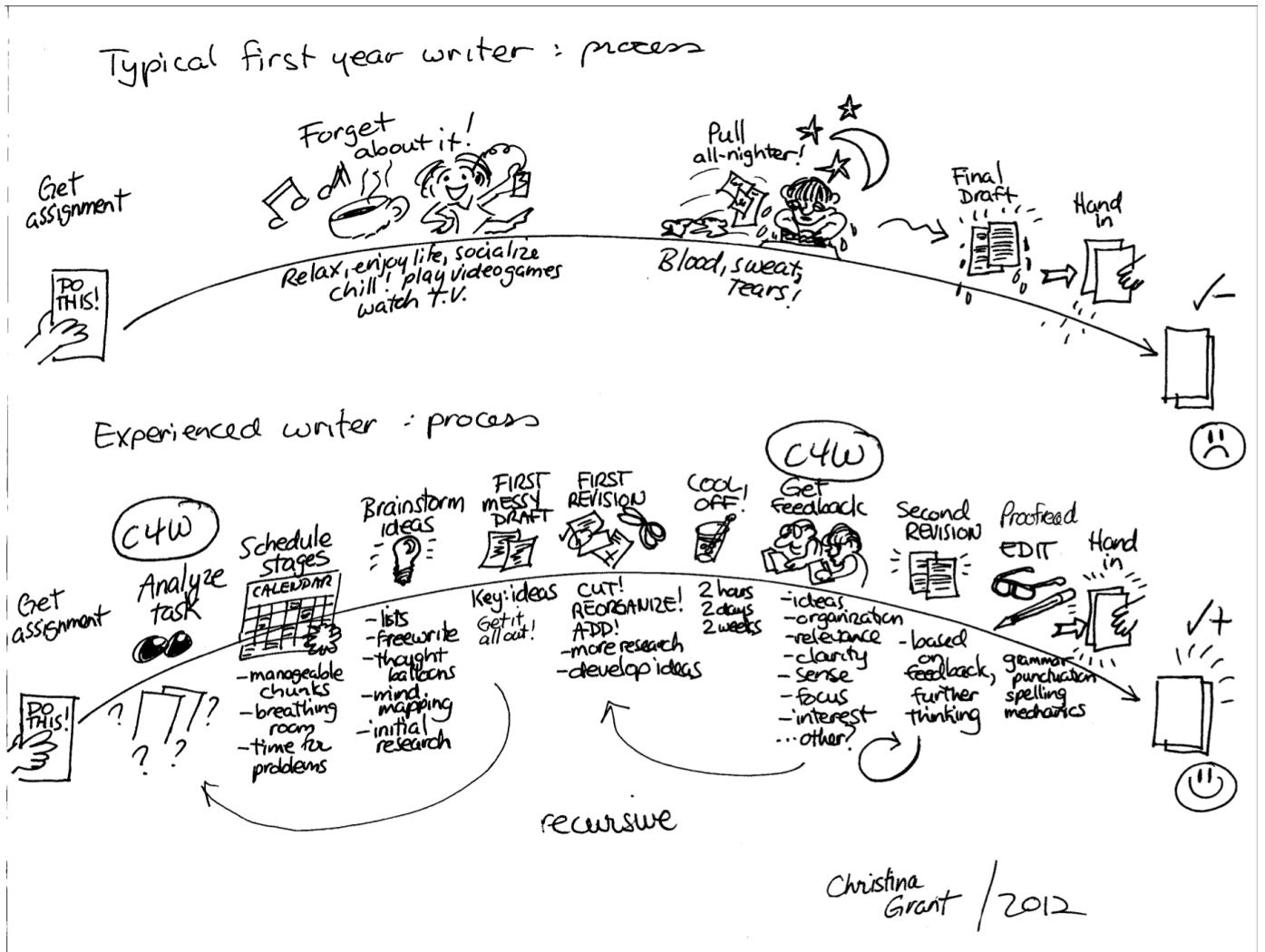
Introduction

Several years ago, I asked my Writing Studies colleague Christina Grant to give a guest lecture on the writing process to a class that I was teaching in professional communication. On the fly, Christina produced the following cartoon, which depicts the difference between a typical undergraduate writing process and an expert's writing process. This cartoon has been shared by instructors in many of our Writing Studies courses but has never been formally published. We are thrilled to publish this work in *Writing across the University of Alberta* and to share it with the rest of the world.

Nancy Bray

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² *Writing across the University of Alberta* (WAUA) publishes undergraduate student writing from writing studies courses at the University of Alberta. You can find WAUA online at writingacrossuofa.ca.



Writing Processes by Christina Grant

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News from Writing Studies

We would like to take this opportunity to let you know what's been happening in Writing Studies over the last few years.

- Assistant Lecturer **Dr. Shahin Moghaddasi Sarabi** successfully defended her dissertation, which examined the genre of research articles in mathematics. Congratulations Dr. Sarabi!
- We said goodbye to **Dr. Lucie Moussu**, the former Director of the Centre for Writers. Dr. Moussu is now an Associate Professor and the Director of the Writing Centre at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario.
- **Yan (Belinda) Wang**, a Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Literature in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies, has been appointed Acting Academic Director of the Centre for Writers.
- **Rigvi Kumar**, one of our senior Bridging Program tutors, has started her studies in the Master's of Education in Teaching English as a Second Language program at the University of Alberta.
- In Fall 2021, Writing Studies offered three online sections of WRS 101 (Exploring Writing) to the 2021 cohort in the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program for the first time. **Dr. Nancy Bray** and **Garrett Faulkner** taught these sections.
- **Garrett Faulkner** joined Writing Studies as an Assistant Lecturer in the Fall of 2020. Garrett holds a Master's in Fine Arts from the University of Arizona. In 2020, he was awarded the Cécile E. Mactaggart Travel Award for Narrative Writing at the University of Alberta.
- **Dr. Anna Chilewska**, Full Lecturer and Writing Studies Coordinator, was awarded the Faculty of Arts Contract Instructor Teaching Award in 2020.

If you have any news that you would like us to share in the next edition of WAUA, please let us know at wauajournal@gmail.com.