

Key Terms & Concepts for the ISU Writing Program

(NOTE: This is our version of an Urban Dictionary – we’re trying to give practical explanations of the some of terms we use commonly in the program)

Activity System: This term is actually part of a larger term we also use in our program, *Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)*, so you may want to read that definition also. The situation and contingencies under which a text is composed, reproduced and/or distributed. An activity system consists of all the people, texts, tools, and rules that work together to achieve a particular objective. When we think of a text as a component in an activity system, we can study how texts interact with individual readers, communities, and textual conventions in a more holistic manner and can take into consideration the complexity of texts. **Additional Definitions:** Angela Sheets, in her Grassroots Writing Research Journal article, “Angela Rides the Bus: A High Stakes Adventure Involving Riveting Research, Amazing Activity Systems, and a Stylish Metacognitive Thinking Cap,” (GWRJ, 5.1, p. 134) provides an nice definition of activity Systems with a graphic example that can help to visualize the different components of an activity system. Another great text to read if you want to understand the concept of Activity Systems better, would be David Russell’s article, “Big Picture People Rarely Become Historians,” which is available for free, online! (http://wac.colostate.edu/books/selves_societies/russell/).

Antecedent Knowledge: *Antecedent Knowledge* is a term we use to describe all the things a write already knows that can come into play when a writer takes up any kind of writing. For example, if you are asked to write a timed essay, and you’ve written them before, you’d certain use that antecedent knowledge to help you write the essay. That’s just common sense. But *Antecedent Knowledge* can also be tricky – because we’re not always fully aware (consciously) of all the knowledge we are using when we write, and sometimes we use knowledge and experience that are actually NOT useful in a situation. As another example, if you are asked to write a paper, and the instructor says, “I don’t want a 5-paragraph essay!” you might find yourself creating an essay that looks a lot like a 5-paragraph essay, even while you are trying NOT to write one. It’s weird, for sure, but it happens all the time! In our program, we refer to *Antecedent Knowledge* and *Antecedent Genres* (a 5-paragraph essay would be an antecedent genre for folks who have lots of experience writing them) because we think it’s really important for folks to be as aware as possible of the different kinds of knowledge they are using – both so that they can know when it’s helpful and so they can know when it would actually hurt their writing in a specific situation.

CHAT

Our take on Cultural-Historical Activity Theory is developed from the work of Paul Prior (see CHAT article in the Grassroots Writing Research Journal online archive for a more detailed description). In our program, we use CHAT to help us think about and study the complex genres that we encounter in the world. In traditional rhetorical models, one

might describe the author, the audience and perhaps some of the features of the genre. CHAT allows us to focus on any aspect of the myriad elements of textual production, so it's more robust than these other methods for investigating texts. The key terms in CHAT are:

- **Production:** Production deals with the means through which a text is produced. This includes both tools (say, using a computer to produce a text vs. using a cell phone to produce a text) and practices (for example, the physical practices for using a computer vs. using a cell phone have some similarities, but also many differences). Production also considers the genres and structures that can contribute to and even “pre-shape” our ability to produce text (think of filling out a job application form—the form directly controls the kind of information we can produce, and consequently, the kind of image of ourselves we can project to potential employers). If we got to make a video instead of filling out the paper form, we could create a very different self-representation.
- **Representation:** The term “representation” highlights issues related to the way that the people who produce a text conceptualize and plan it (how they think about it, how they talk about it), as well as all the activities and materials that help to shape how people do this.
- **Distribution:** Distribution involves the consideration of where texts go and who might take them up. It also considers the tools and methods that can be used to distribute text, and how distribution can sometimes move beyond the original purposes intended by the author(s).
- **Reception:** Reception deals with how a text is taken up and used by others. Reception is not just who will read a text, but takes into account the ways people might use or re-purpose a text (sometimes in ways the author may not have anticipated or intended).
- **Socialization:** Socialization describes the interactions of people and institutions as they produce, distribute and use texts. When people engage with texts, they are also (consciously and unconsciously) engaged in the practice of representing and transforming different kinds of social and cultural practices.
- **Activity:** Activity is a term that encompasses the actual practices that people engage in as they create text (writing, drawing, walking across the hall to ask someone else what they think, getting peer review, etc.).
- **Ecology:** Ecology points to what we usually think of as a mere backdrop for our purposeful activities in creating texts—the physical, biological forces that exist beyond the boundaries of any text we are producing. However, these environmental factors can become very active in some situations in shaping or interacting with our textual productions (think of putting on a play outdoors when it's raining, or think of the people of New Orleans using the internet to find family members after Hurricane Katrina).
- **A NOTE on other definitions of CHAT:** Angela Sheets, in her Grassroots Writing Research Journal article, “Angela Rides the Bus: A High Stakes Adventure Involving Riveting Research, Amazing Activity Systems, and a Stylish

Metacognitive Thinking Cap,” (GWRJ, 5.1, p. 134-5) provides two additional definitions of CHAT – one with pictures!

Citation (appropriate forms of): Many of us learn about the term **Citation** in high school. From this Antecedent Knowledge, we tend to think of citation as “oh yeah, that MLA thing my high school English teacher made me learn.” But in fact the term **Citation** (or sometime Attribution is used as an alternate term) can actually be used to describe anything a writer does to document the validity, truthfulness, or usefulness of their communications. In our program, we do study different kinds of Academic Citation (which can include MLA, APA, Chicago Manual of Style, and others), which are very specific techniques for using information in written texts (including both when the information is used in the text, and the “works cited” or bibliography” that cites all the sources used in a text). However, we also look at all kinds of writing to discover how *Citation* or *Attribution* works in that genre.

Civic Engagement: This is a term that you may hear in your COM 110 class as well as in other classes at ISU. Many teachers in both COM and ENG use this term as a way to describe conversations about how we, as individuals and groups of writers/communicators, engage with the culture and with our society (in terms of social interactions/politics, etc.). This concept is addressed within the CHAT concept of “ecologies”, but teachers use this term sometimes when they want to particularly focus on the social/political ramification of our writing activities. In COMMUNICATIONS, civic engagement refers to using communication for the common good within a community.

Content Research: *Content Research* is any kind of research a person (or group) might do to gain knowledge they plan to use in some kind of production. If I’m making a flyer my band’s upcoming gig, then the *Content Research* I need to complete is all the information that needs to go on the flyer (the time, the place, opening or headliner band(s), age requirements, etc.). Just to keep our terms in conversation, *Genre/CHAT Research* for this production might include things like the graphic you want to use, the software you’d need to know in order to make the flyer look cool, the best places to post the flyer in order to bring folks to the show, the cheapest place to get flyers printed, etc.

Cultural Influences and Implications: This is more a “concept’ that a specific term. It’s closely connected to the term *Cultural Studies*, so you might want to check out that definition also. It describes the way our Writing Program works to focus our study on more than just experiencing and writing in a range of different written genres. We also ask writers to consider the larger implications of how a particular genre works (how it is produced and used). Some projects (or parts of projects) in ENG 101 or 145 courses can focus very specifically on this kind of genre analysis – rather than on analysis that is focused on how to produce a certain kind of text. However, often these two types of analysis are blended.

Cultural Studies: [Writing Program Definition of this term coming soon!]

Design Elements: In Writing Program courses, we often work with multimodal or multimedia genres. Therefore, the concept of "design" is important for us, because it helps us to address issues such as space, layout, visual organization, etc. However, design elements actually can be used to refer to any aspect of the any text (whether it's image based, alphabetical or some combination of modalities) that contributes to or shapes content in physical/material ways.

Discourse Community: A discourse community is group of people who share a set of discourses, understood as basic values and assumptions, and ways of communicating about those goals. Within this group, there is an unwritten set of rules about what can and cannot be said or done. This group is generally unified by a common focus. Discourse communities can include people who work for the same firm, or people who belong to the same discipline, profession or community organization.

Editing: Editing (generally) is a process of revising and changing a text one is producing in an effort to improve it. There are many different activities associated with "editing," including the following:

- **Copyediting** usually involves working with a text to prepare it for publication (or for review by other readers). The activities of copyediting often include looking closely at sentence-level issues of grammar, punctuation and style, but can also address other issues of readability, including design.
- **Developmental Editing** is an activity in which an editor reviews a text and makes suggestions on general content so that an author can effectively revise.
- **Draft Editing** is the kind of editing that authors engage in as they write, when they create some text and then re-read and edit it while still in the process of drafting.
- **Peer Editing** occurs when a group of writers work together to comment on critique a text. This kind of editing is often part of ENGLISH classes, and is often accompanied by Revision.

Ethics: Ethics is not a concept that is unique to Writing Program courses. Ethics refers to a system of moral principles that are held in common within a particular culture. Often thought of as what constitutes "right" and "wrong" actions to influence the outcome of a particular situation. Ethics is a term that is tied (in many ways) to the term "civic engagement" because it introduces the idea that acting ethically as producers of texts is valuable to our participation as citizens in civic activities. However, the concept of "ethical production" can also be used for discussion of specific areas of textual production, like considering design elements or thinking about citation.

Ethical Communication: Ethical communication is characterized by honesty, clarity, accuracy, open-mindedness and a willingness to listen to others.

Explicit/Tacit Learning: Explicit Learning refers to a way of understanding information or ideas – where the teaching is usually pretty direct, and the learning is very conscious. When a 6-year-old learns to tie her shoes by her older brother explicitly teaching her a specific technique, that's *Explicit Learning*. But *Tacit Learning* is more subtle, like if the same 6-year-old just figures out how to tie shoes by watching the older people around her tie their shoes. It's also important to remember that things that we learn *Explicitly* can become *Tacit* (and in fact need to become tacit, or we wouldn't have room in our brains for everything we do every day!). So, once we've been doing something for a while (coding HTML or playing World of Warcraft) we don't always consciously remember how we learned to do it. In writing, as in every other kind of activity, this can be both a blessing and curse. *Tacit Knowledge* is what we use every day to get things done. We don't think, "this is how I dial a number on my cell phone," – we just do it! But if we are using a different type of phone, where numbers are dialed very differently, our *Tacit Antecedent Knowledge* can actually make it harder to learn the new way of doing things. So when we're engaging in a new kind of writing, we don't even stop to think how we know how to do it. Which is fine, as long as what we already know works in the new situation. But when writers encounter situations where what they know DOESN'T work, they can find it really frustrating, and they're way more likely to fail at the new kind of writing, especially if they are unconsciously clinging to and using tacit knowledge from past writing experiences.

First Year Composition: Commonly abbreviated to FYC. Introductory college writing courses meant to teach incoming undergraduates the practices of writing and researching.

Five Paragraph Essay: A common form of composing texts in middle school and high school. A written form in which a text is made up of an introduction, three main points, and a conclusion. Seen as an antecedent genre or a transition to bridge from K-12 to college writing.

Genre: As you'll see as you study in ENG 101 or ENG 145, we use the term **Genre** a LOT! At its most basic, in our program, *Genre* means a kind of production that it's possible to identify by understanding the convention or features that make that production recognizable. It's important to understand that in our program we don't use the word *Genre* (mostly) to refer to categories of things, like how it's used in music or literature (Rock, Pop, R&B, Rap – or Fiction, Non-fiction, Poetry). Instead, when we use *Genre* we're usually referring to kinds of texts that can be produced. A blog is a genre of text, but not all blogs are the same, so when a writer is trying to figure out how to write a blog, he/she needs to not only consider the broad parameters of what makes something a "blog" (it's online, it's usually written in dated entries that are 500 words or less, etc.), but the specific features of the kind of blog he/she wants to create (A science blog might use some of the same features as a blog about food, but they may actually have more difference than similarities, and it is these differences that can greatly impact the success of the writing). Some terms that people regularly use to describe a category

(like, say, “Fiction”) are so broad that you can’t really get much use (as a writer) out of defining the features. You need to break the genre down much more specifically. You’ll find different genre terms sprinkled throughout this terms list, and they are all important, and useful for understanding the work of becoming a *Writing Researcher*.

Genres, Active & Inscribed: At the most basic level, the difference between active and inscribed genres is simply that active genres are “in progress” while inscribed genres have been produced as an artifact (literally, “inscribed” as in marked/carved/printed). However, different scholars use these terms differently -- some use active/inscribed to describe the difference between genres that are spoken and performed (greetings would be an example of this kind of genre or asking someone on a date, perhaps) and genres that are somehow written down or captured. This can be useful when considered in combination with CHAT theory, which notes how “texts” can move fluidly between these two states. Other scholars tend to use the terms active/inscribed to describe genres that are in flux and genres that are “set or stable-for-now,” but this is a metaphorical rather than literal use of these terms.

Genre Analysis: *Genre Analysis* is another critical skill, closely akin to *Genre/CHAT Research*. When we use this terms, we’re specifically referring to the activities involved in looking very closely at a particular genre (multiple samples and variations) and investigating all the different features that might be present (or features that are absent). *Genre Analysis* also involves looking underneath the surface features of visual design, sentence-level qualities, and style and tone to uncover how genres can subject to (and can enforce) cultural, social, commercial, and political agendas.

Genre Conventions (Features): We use the term *Genre Conventions or Genre Features* to describe all the things a writer could discover (and discuss) about a particular genre that makes us recognize it as, well, what it is. For example, a Wikipedia article is recognizable to most English-language writers, even if it’s written in French or another language. Why is this? Well, there are certain visual feature that are specific to Wikipedia articles for one thing, and there are certain features that are common to Wikipedia articles that are also common to other kinds of encyclopedia articles. A *Genre Analysis* (using *Genre Research*) could help you to figure out what the specific conventions for a Wikipedia article are, which in turn could help you to write such an article more successfully, should you ever be inclined (or required) to do so.

Genre Juxtaposition: *Genre Juxtaposition* is an activity in which an author deliberately “mashes-up” or moves between two distinct genres. The purpose of this kind of activity is to highlight the ways that genre features work to define what we understand a genre to be. For example, if we take a grocery list and make a poem out of it, this challenges our tacit understanding of these two genres and can illustrate the importance of understanding fully the parameters of genres.

Genre/CHAT Research vs. Content Research: We have a lot of definitions for words

related to genre (see the “genre” entry). But when we talk about the difference between *genre/CHAT* and *content* research in our program (as we do in our Learning Outcome #3), we’re really talking about the difference between research that focuses on how to go about creating a specific kind of text for a specific kind of situation (*genre/CHAT research*), and research that is seeking expert knowledge about a topic (*content research*). Learning to engage in *Genre/CHAT* Research is a key skill for Writing Program courses, because it’s not a skill that’s generally taught in lower-level writing classes and because it involves activities that can be critical for writing when they encounter new writing situations. However, *Content Research* is a critical skill, not only for your Writing Program classes (and all the classes you’ll take at ISU), but for living life in the age of information. So we focus on both skills in ENG 101 and 145 classes.

Genre Reversion: This term describes the cognitive process through which an author makes use of genres that are familiar when producing a text in a new genre. This use of prior knowledge can be helpful, but it can also cause problems for writers. For example, it might be inappropriate to use a “thesis statement” from a traditional school essay when writing a brochure. “Reversion” is particularly useful for describing these kinds of behaviors when they are done unconsciously and when they then inhibit the writer’s uptake of the new genre, and it’s often used in discussions of the “antecedent genres” that authors bring into a writing situation.

Genre Samples or Target Genres: This term describes a collection of similar genres that an author might use for various kinds of genre analysis, and as a way to study “how things are done” when trying to learn a new kind of writing.

Globalization: Globalization is the process of international integration that stems from the interchange of worldviews, products, ideas and other aspects of culture. Globalization is most commonly thought of as pertaining to the ways in which individuals and corporations conduct business in an international setting.

Information Fluency

Information fluency is the ability to critically think while engaging with, creating and utilizing information and technology regardless of format or platform.

Information Seeking Behaviors: This is a great term, which started out being used by librarians to describe all the things that people do when they are trying to find out about stuff they want to know. In particular, in a university setting, Information Seeking Behaviors can be both general (like a competitive cyclist asking other cyclists for information about the best bike frame to purchase, or someone looking up a work on Wikipedia) and very specific (like a researcher looking through a special collection at the library or creating and “literature review” of all the research on a particular topic). All humans (even humans that don’t use print literacy) use information seeking behaviors (because information-seeking could include just talking to other people, or just observing the world around you). But in our program we’re very interested in

introducing you to specific kinds of Information Seeking Behaviors that will help you effectively engage in both *Genre Research* and *Content Research*.

- **Finding Information:** Using a wide range of resources, including different Milner library tools and tools for general web searching, to find information you need. Learning to organize that information so as to keep track of it and quickly evaluate what you might use and what you can't use.
- **Evaluating Information:** This is a deeper process of looking at different kind of materials you collect when you are researching and determining if the source can be used.
- **Documenting and Citing Resources:** Learning about the different ways that different genres cite research and evidence. Academic citation, journalistic citation, linking citation, etc. are all ways that people use document the validity, truthfulness, or usefulness of what they know.

Multimedia Composing: *Multimedia Composition* refers to all the different media that writers can use when they are composing. A lot of people think of multimedia in terms of “digital” (that’s sometimes how the word Multimedia is used, for sure). But in reality a “media” can be any method or tool for making a production (a text) that communicates. If you check out the definition for *Multimodal Composing*, you’ll see that there are a wide range of modes for composing, and practicing *Multimedia Composing* means thinking the tools and spaces where these different modes of communication take place. So yeah, multimedia could mean a website or a movie, but it could also mean a piece of lined, notebook paper, or computer printed sheet, or a piece of fabric (like a t-shirt or flag), or a rock (like a tombstone), or an audio file (like for a podcast), or a canvas (like a painting), or....well, you get the idea. Thinking about *Multimedia Composing* means being awake to all the ways that humans use tools to make meaning in the world.

Multimodal Composing: *Multimodal Composing* specifically refers to ALL of the modes that humans can use to communicate – that would include Alphabetic (stuff we write using the alphabet), Visual (pictures), Aural (sound), Oral (spoken) and Symbolic (using symbols that aren’t alphabetic – like emoticons or emojis). Practicing *Multimodal Composing* means being aware a lot of our work as writers includes much more than just a single mode. So just learning to write print-based essays isn’t always the best way to understand how writing works in the world.

Mutt Genre: A school genre that is not used outside of school settings. A well-known example of a mutt genre is the five-paragraph essay.

Pedagogical Approach: A specific teaching method, i.e. a particular way of achieving transfer of learning. Can be either implicit or explicit or a mixture of the two.

Peer Assessment: (See Self-Assessment). Peer Assessment is also a term from our

program learning outcomes (see outcome #2). The first thing that's important about understanding this term is that it's **not** like doing traditional peer review ("what do you like about this text?" "what do you think could be improved?"). The practice of peer assessment means using very intense observational skills to analyze what a text is doing. It means taking note of what's there (and what's not there), comparing the text to other texts (target genre examples) carefully, making clear statements about the gaps between intention and execution, as well as directed choices an author might be intentionally making in order to bend or break genre conventions. Peer Assessment is never (or is never only) making a statement about one's personal likes and dislikes. It's trying to see what the text is doing and how it's doing it, and then trying to help the author (or peer) to understand why you are seeing what you are seeing (using specific examples from the text).

Rhetorical Strategies

In ENGLISH, we discuss a range of rhetorical strategies (like narration, description, etc.) to analyze how specific rhetorical techniques can often dominate in a particular genre or text. For example, a fiction novel would almost always contain narration, but it might also include other elements (description, dialogue); on the other hand, instructions on how to put together a cabinet would be unlikely to include narrative as a primary strategy. One key thing to remember is that we don't conflate these terms with genres. "Narration" is not a genre – it's a rhetorical strategy that can be used in different ways in particular genres.

Self-Assessment (of writing): This is another term that is part of our program learning outcomes (see Outcome #2). We're not talking here about that moment when, at 7:59 am you finish the writing due for an 8:00 am class, after having been up all night, and think to yourself, "brilliant! Looks good!" But we're also not talking about that moment when you've rewritten a sentence or paragraph a bazillion times and no matter what you do, it's just not right (...in fact, it might be getting worse...). What we're talking about is a pretty weird cognitive thing – when your brain "steps back" from some kind of text you've produced and tries to see it clearly and objectively. In our program, we actually focus on specific tools that can help people do this – because it's really not easy. Self-assessment is not just about proof-reading and revising, and it's not just about coming up with an evaluation of a text. It's about **observing** a text: noticing what's there (and what's not there), comparing it to other texts (target genre examples) carefully, making clear statements about the gaps between intention and execution. There's no doubt – this stuff is hard work. The value of Self-assessment practices is that they can help writers to become more confident in the moves they make as writers. Eventually, when a writer gets comfortable with a particular genre, this kind of self-assessment isn't so necessary. But in almost any kind of "new writing" situation (especially when you need it to be "good" for some reason), skills for self-assessing writing can be both practical and useful.

Semiotic Remediation (Mash up): Important to social-cultural activity. A process in which a text is altered for a new purpose, allowing it a new trajectory or situating it within a different activity system.

Social Identity: Individual subjectivity in relationship to other individuals and affinity groups. Produced through the combination of numerous staged activities, increasingly in virtual spaces.

Trajectory: The term Trajectory is really part of our use of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory to understand what texts do and how they move around in the world. This means both how a text might move through a process of production, but even more importantly how texts move through institutions and spaces and in relationships among different people. We often look at *Trajectory* in terms of the shifts and changes that occur in a genre as it gets used over time, and we also look at trajectories of specific texts as they are produced and distributed.

Transcultural Writing: This is an important term for our writing program (see our Learning Outcome #8). It connects closely to *Translingual Writing*, so you might want to check out that definition also. Transcultural Writing is a great term for writers to think about, because it points out that nearly all humans are communicating across cultural boundaries and that our communications (Remember that we're talking about *Multimodal* and *Multimedia Composing*, not just printed writing on paper) constantly blend different linguistic and cultural traditions and specific, socially-constructed ways of thinking. It's important to remember that Transcultural Writing doesn't just refer to people communicating across language or national (geographic) barriers. In fact, each human being speaks/writes/composes from a complex micro-cultural perspective, which is not exactly like any other. Within larger systems (bigger cultural and linguistic groups), different language practices can be privileged (made more important). Different language practices can both inhibit communications between humans and groups, and can lead to productive, new and interesting combinations.

Transfer of Learning: A critical component of learning. A process by which students engage in a learning activity and then utilize that learning in new situations or applications. Transfer is difficult to isolate, but nonetheless important to gauging the success of various pedagogical approaches.

Translingual Writing: This is an important term for our writing program (see our Learning Outcome #8). It connects closely to *Transcultural Writing*, so you might want to check out that definition also. *Translingual Writing* doesn't just refer to the idea that there are many different languages that humans compose in. Instead, the "trans" in "translingual" refers to the idea that people compose across different language systems.

Uptake: Uptake is the process we go through to “take up” a new idea and think about it until it makes sense (if we get that far with it -- sometimes we don’t!). Our uptakes are highly individual because we all have different past experiences that impact the way we see the world. Say your instructor comes in and says, “There will be an ice cream social for our class on Friday afternoon.” One student thinks, ‘I bet there will be waffle cones!’ Another thinks, “Awesome! Class must be cancelled.” Still another laments, “Ugh, forced socialization!” Notice that the instructor didn’t say any of those things but because of each students’ past experiences or beliefs about ice cream socials, they take up the news to mean very different things. **Note:** This definition was provided by Angela Sheets in her Grassroots Writing Research Journal Article, “Angela Rides the Bus: A High Stakes Adventure Involving Riveting Research, Amazing Activity Systems, and a Stylish Metacognitive Thinking Cap,” (GWRJ, 5.1, p. 121-37).

Uptake Genres: **Uptake Genres** are very connected to the idea of **Uptake**, so you’ll want to read that definition also! If uptake involved any of the activities we go through when we’re “taking up” a new concept or idea or skill, then *Uptake Genres* are any kind of production (texts) that explicitly ask us to articulate these activities. We use a huge range of different *Uptake Genres* in Writing Program classes (and you’ll actually find these kinds of texts in other classes as well, although they probably won’t be called Uptake Genres). A lot of times, when you are asked to write a “reflection,” that text is a kind of uptake genre. But so are “exit slips” (when an instructor asks you to jot down ideas or questions at the end of class). Self-and-Peer Assessment documents are definitely a kind of Uptake Genre as well. The goal behind these *Uptake Genres*, whether they are assigned as part of a class or you do them yourself in order to make sense of concepts you’re learning out in the world, is to really try to clearly articulate HOW you know what you are coming to know, and how you learned it. You’ll find often that understanding *Antecedent Knowledge* is key to producing a successful *Uptake Genre*, so you’ll probably want to take a look at our definition for that term as well.

Writing Process: The manner in which particular texts are produced. Requires knowledge of the text’s particular activity system. Knowledge of the antecedent genres of the text can help composition, but incorrectly applied antecedent genre knowledge can impede the process.

Writing Setting or Situation: The who, what, when, where, why, and how that impact your writing.

Writing Technology: An artifact meant to aid in the process of producing, storing, or disseminating knowledge. Can be simple (ex.: stick and mud) or complex (ex.: laptop and internet).

Writing Research Identity: The idea of having a “writing research identity” is part of our program learning outcomes (see Outcome #1). It’s a bit of a strange term in a writing class, because, really – aren’t we just learning about commas and stuff? But actually,

Being a successful writer in different settings requires more than just learning specific skills, like where to put a comma or how to write a thesis statement. A successful writer also needs to use their knowledge flexibly in different situations, and must also be able to determine when new skills and knowledge are required. Building a “writing research identity” means you are able to think beyond just acquiring skills and begin to understand how all of your skills (and the skills you haven’t yet acquired) change what you can and can’t do as a writer.