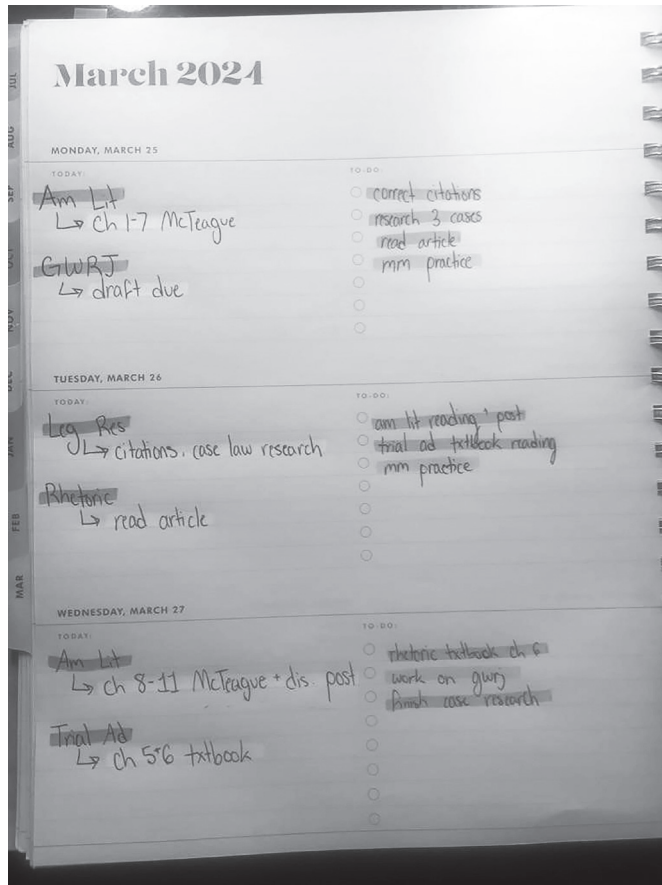


## Picturing Literate Activity: Communicating With Your Future Self Through Planners

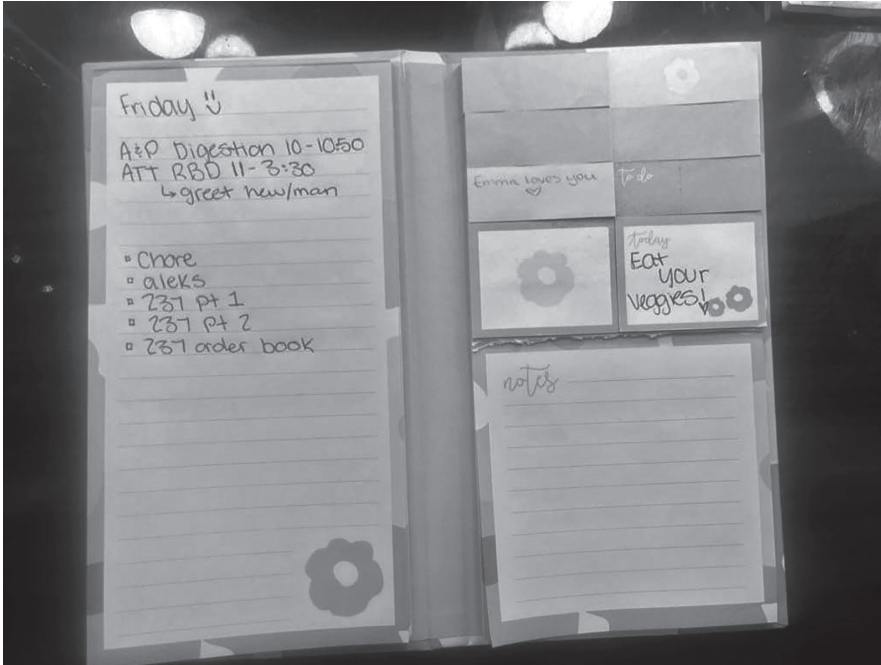
Grace Betts

Using two images, Grace Betts illustrates how individuals take part in literate activity every day through the personal languages of planners in this Picturing Literate Activity piece.

Many people think that they do not engage in literate activity on a daily basis, as they do not write essays or read novels every day. But what might surprise those same people is that literate activity can be any social practice or tool that helps us to communicate and accomplish goals. An example of literate activity that I, and many others, engage with on the daily is writing in a planner. This tool helps me to plan out what writing, reading, or other work I need to get done for the week. While this may seem mundane, when writing in a planner you are essentially communicating with your future self (Figures 1 and 2). Oftentimes, you are also making up your own secret language—whether that be through unusual abbreviations or a color-coding system—that only you will understand.



**Figure 1:** Pictured here is my weekly planner that tells future me what past me expected to accomplish on each day of the week. I create these plans on Sunday nights, which helps me prepare myself for the week ahead. There are highlight patterns in purple, yellow, pink, and blue, and only I understand what those colors mean. There are strange abbreviations and messages that would be confusing to any other reader. But to me, all the content in this planner makes perfect sense.



**Figure 2:** This is an image of my friend Meg’s planner. As I try to decode the secret messages that past Meg is sending to future Meg, I am completely stumped. But to Meg, the abbreviations, arrows, and smiley faces all mean something. As a nursing major, Meg thinks she does not often engage in literate activity. But as she writes in this planner every day, Meg is actually participating in literate activity all the time!

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# Notes



*Drawing by Joyce Walker*