GRASSROOTS WRITING RESEARCH JOURNAL

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From the Editors

Samantha Moe

With this issue, the *Grassroots Writing Research Journal* has wrapped up its twelfth year of publication. We include a variety of articles from undergraduates, graduates, and other writing-research instructors whose articles provide an important and intriguing look into pedagogical cultural historical activity theory (P-CHAT), multimodality, and more. The topics of these sixteen new articles range from genre and literate activity to the ways in which writing research exists in the world. In the Writing Program at Illinois State University, we use a version of CHAT that is specifically aimed towards pedagogy. This is because the *GWRJ* informs and is informed by the first-year composition courses that make up its discourse community. Our pedagogical version of CHAT includes seven terms that provide a framework around which students can interrogate texts and genres as they exist in the world while accounting for the nuanced and dynamic nature of such texts.

We feature sixteen new articles ranging from authors engaging with the ways in which P-CHAT is at work within the many activity systems we use, as well as the different modalities and tools we employ to produce texts. As we continue to expand the scope of the journal, these articles include nuanced conversations about our literate activities, from our different pandemic study habits and work spaces to the literacies we use in the workplace. These articles take a closer look at what literate activity means, as well as the different ways it shows up and transforms our lives. What we continue to find so important about these articles is their persistent focus on communities. As we continue to work and live in a global pandemic, these articles express the ways in which we use what genres we have, as well as how we learn about new genres we're unfamiliar with to form new connections, and to reconnect with ourselves and our learning practices through use of our pandemic literary spaces. These articles feature different ISU Writing Program Learning Outcomes through research into the literate activity of looking at note taking literacies, rickshaw painting as a genre, and podcasts as a form of socialization. With this latest issue, we also had the opportunity to work with editor in chief and *Grassroots* author Joyce R. Walker in a dual interview with a ghostwriter. Certainly, the work of the contributors to this issue continues to expand our collective understanding of the multifaceted nature of genres and the work of writing and researching in the world. We hope you enjoy this new issue as much as we do.

To start off issue 12.2, we are continuing with our newest *GWRJ* genre, Picturing (Pandemic) Literate Activity Spaces, or PLA for short. The call-for-papers was originally created by PhD student Demet Yigitbilek and Grassroots managing editor, Samantha Moe. Our newest PLA piece in issue 12.2 features **Anya Gregg**'s current workspace where she studies this semester. Next, **Danielle Eldredge** focuses on the different genres we utilize across literate activities, such as planners and whiteboards, as well as the ways in which these genres help to manage tasks and reminders. Danielle discusses how her color key and color coordinating methods utilize specific visual layouts (such as lists, calendars, and tabs) that help her to organize. Our second article, written by **Akbar Hosain**, takes up the idea of rickshaws as both important transportation and artistic genre. Through different image examples, as well as a brief history, Akbar explains the genre research he conducted, as well as the ways in which rickshaw art utilizes multiple modalities to convey meaning and storytelling.

The next three articles focus on the ways in which writing tools and different modalities influence our reading responses and projects. **Maryna Teplova** moves us into a pedagogical cultural-historical theory focus on reading responses as a genre, as well as how reading responses are related to our writing researcher identities. Maryna also shares important steps for recognizing and writing reading responses with the help of P-CHAT terms. Following, we feature a *Grassroots* interview between writing researchers **Emily Capan** and **Brittany Larsen**. Emily and Brittany discuss the different modalities and tools involved in our uptakes, focusing specifically on Emily's zine project. After asking students to write uptake submission notes for several semesters, Emily decided to create her own uptake, which takes the form of her zine. Continuing to focus on the genre of zines as multimodal uptake, our next article is also by **Emily Capan**, and features both her learning and writing processes and the zine she created. The zine features one of the seven P-CHAT terms, ecology, and Emily's article is also accompanied by a QR code that readers can use to learn more about how she created her zine.

Next, **Emily Reynoso-Romero** uses a genre analysis to shine a light on machismo in Hispanic but more specifically Mexican culture. Emily interviews different people about their antecedent knowledge and opinions about machismo, and uses P-CHAT to frame and analyze the ways machismo affects everyday life. Following, **Joey Dundovich** discusses the ways in which podcasts are used as a form of socialization as well as credible research sources that can benefit student composition. Our second PLA piece is by **Laurel Krapivkin**, who focuses on the ways in which the ecology of her workspace has changed and how her writing habits have transformed during the pandemic. Following, we feature a graphic article on face masks as both practical and impactful tools, written and designed by **Anya Gregg** and

Ellie Stamer. **Dorothy M. Stone** then leads us through a genre convention breakdown of Japanese manga. Dorothy explains the different terminology involved in the genre of manga, as well as uses P-CHAT and multimodal composing to delve into different adaptations of manga, such anime. **Justin So** investigates the history and creation of *Hamilton: An American Musical* through a P-CHAT lens. Justin also focuses on the trajectory of *Hamilton* and the many ways in which the musical has been taken up and distributed across media outlets and platforms.

Our third PLA narrative is by **Edcel Javier Cintron Gonzalez**, who focuses on the transition between campus and an apartment space, as well the different applications Edcel uses to complete work sessions and tasks. The next articles focus on different discourse communities and the tools, genres and literate activities we take part in. **Ali Schrock** takes us through a breakdown of golf scorecards while using P-CHAT to analyze the genre. Ali also examines the role of golf scorecards in the activity system of a round of golf. **Sammy Moe** then takes us into the literate activity systems present in the restaurant industry and the many tools and genres involved in restaurant activity systems. Through her antecedent knowledge of the restaurant industry, Sammy examines the ways in which she has used both high and low road transfer between the restaurants she worked at and her current position as a graduate student at ISU. Next, **Sydney Kotowski** braids together P-CHAT, antecedent knowledge, and trajectory in the process of baking. She uses her family's kolachy cookie recipe as an example of the ways in which texts are nonstatic and always changing over time.

Lastly, we feature a collaborative interview between two writing researchers, **Joyce R. Walker** and **the Ghost**. Joyce and the Ghost ask each other a series of questions about each other's writing-for-hire work, sharing the less-than perfect experiences they both endured, as well as how these experiences begin to form into a "retrospective knowledge transfer" that involves both writer researchers reflecting on what they learned when they were first starting out in the gig economy.

The 12.2 issue concludes with a reprinting of "Publishing with the *Grassroots Writing Research Journal*," which seeks to encourage prospective writers to submit their rigorous investigations of how people, tools, and situations affect writing in complex ways. As we complete our twelfth year of publication, we continue to receive record numbers of submissions from writing researchers interested in publishing their studies in the journal. In the coming year, we hope to receive even more submissions that reflect a diversity of perspectives, explore a variety of distinctive genres, and provide a richer understanding of the culturally and historically bound spaces in which these genres are embedded.

Notes

The *Grassroots Writing Research Journal* Presents: Picturing Literate Activity

Covid Comfortably

Anya Gregg

PLA Narrative: I prefer to work on everything in my bed. My family has plenty of desks and tables but I enjoy my bed because it's very comfortable and I focus best there. Usually, I would prefer a desk in a workspace or library. My bed also allows me plenty of room to spread my projects out and a nice backdrop for Zoom calls. Everyone I know is baffled by it, but it happens to be where I work best.

Figure 1: The messy, unmade bed Anya works on. It's filled with pillows, plushies, and warm blankets.

Pandemic Bio: Anya is an eighteen-year-old intern at the *Grassroots Writing Research Journal,* but because of the pandemic has to work at home.

The Colors of Literacy: How Color Coordinates Text

Danielle Eldredge

Everywhere we go we are constantly engaging with texts via literacy activities. For me, my most common literacy activity is to write in my planner and on my whiteboard. These two mediums work together to serve a common purpose of helping me manage my many tasks and reminders. However, what makes this literacy activity unique to me is how I synchronize them with a specific color code.

Introduction

Every day we are faced with obligations, meetings, classes, work, reminders, lists, notes, dates, and many more things that we have to keep track of. Thinking about every task as one conglomerate mass can definitely become overwhelming (especially without a way to organize everything). Plus, without a fairly simple means to remember and prioritize our commitments, items will be forgotten or not completed. I definitely learned the importance of lists when I was in high school, particularly in junior year. I learned that I couldn't coast by relying solely on my memory to remember and make time for my many obligations; thus, a better alternative turned out to be keeping track of all of my tasks by writing them down in a planner. Detailed planning, for me, first started when I bought my own planner the summer before junior year. It was about a medium-sized planner that was decorated with succulents and had a variety of colors, as well as a gold "2018" printed on the cover. In the years before, I would write a note or put some reminders in my phone here and there, but I wouldn't make a habit of it and often left out some important tasks. Therefore, this purchase of a legitimate and

organized planner was a huge step forward for me. After purchasing this planner, I started recording events, due dates for homework, club meetings and times, health appointments, miscellaneous reminders, and many more. In this analysis, I will discuss the literacy within scheduling and planning. However, it is not just the inscriptions that are significant to the literacy activity but rather my use of colors to coordinate the different tasks in my life and to synchronize my two main means of scheduling: a planner and a whiteboard.

The Role of Color

When it comes to organizing my life events, color is the most crucial aspect to me. In my mind's eye, I tend to picture or imagine objects, moods, songs, or obligations as colors. As a result, this makes it easier for me to categorize everything into colors. The text in my planner is split up into nine color-coded activities, as seen in Figure 1. These colors include red, orange, green, light blue, darker blue, purple, pink, brown, and black. Most of the colors are decided based upon my personal judgement or attitude towards the activity. Others are just simply associated together for no particular reason. To illustrate this more concretely, allow me to explain what each color means to me by discussing the color-coding method that I write down in my planner (see Figure 1.)

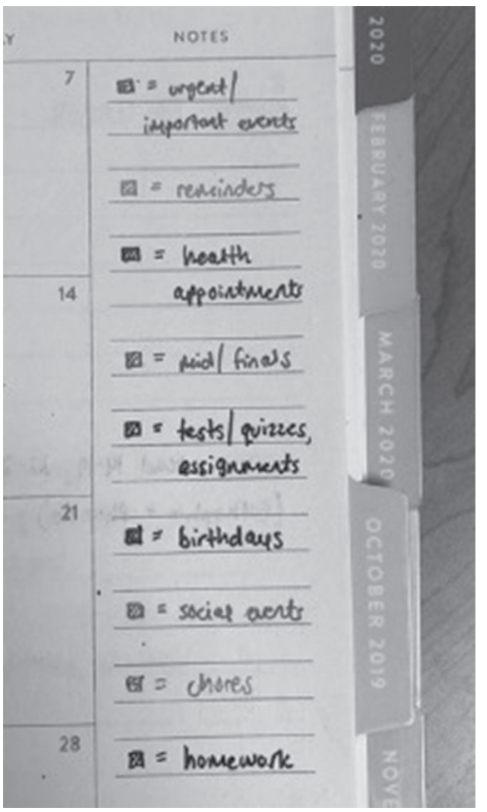

Figure 1: Color-coded activities in the notes tab of a personal planner.

First, red is commonly used to portray flashy warnings, so I use it to distinguish something I absolutely need to remember or draw particular attention to. Examples include payment deadlines, application deadlines, the first day of classes, etc. Orange is the next best color that draws my attention because it is bright like red, but it is not quite as "urgent" as red, which is what makes it ideal for reminders that are important. Green is the color associated with nature, so I think of health and most things natural. Hence, the color green is used for appointments.

The light blue is a recent addition to my color coding. Despite the fact that I see this color as calm and relaxing, its purpose is to distinguish itself from the darker blue. Personally, brighter colors stand out to me more than neutral or basic colors, and since exams are important, it is crucial that they stand out from other inscriptions. The darker blue is the color of an ordinary blue pen. To me, this shade of blue is associated with businesses—situations that are professional with moderate significance. In other words, this shade is what I use for quizzes and due dates; they are not at the same degree as an emergency, yet also not as [mundane] as a daily homework assignment. As for purple, there really isn't a legitimate reason as to why it's associated with birthdays, aside from the fact that it's the color I mentally imagine when I think of birthdays. Pink correlates to social events because pink is my favorite color. It is a color associated with happy and positive vibes; therefore, I utilize it to represent events or plans that are significant to my social life. Examples include plans made with friends, birthday parties, or club events that I wish to take part in. Next, I use brown pens to write down chores. Lastly, I use black to write down homework assignments because it is a neutral color. To me, writing assignments in this color sends a mental note to my brain that it is just another thing to check off the to-do list and has no particular priority or secret message behind it – it is just blunt and concise.

Two Mediums of Planning

In the past, I've experimented with a few planning mediums, including planners and bullet journals. However, this year, I decided to try something different. Instead of having just one medium to organize myself with, I decided to try having two: a planner and a whiteboard calendar. Contrary to how hectic and confusing this sounds, having two different mediums is more practical than you may think. Planners are great to have on hand because they are portable and practical to write in. In spite of that, they are also prone to being left inside backpacks and forgotten about. Nevertheless, this is where the whiteboard becomes useful. The large, obnoxious nature of the whiteboard makes it impossible to ignore. This eliminates the problem of not checking my planner. Likewise, it removes the problem of forgetting my planner because it is stationary in my dorm room. Plus, my favorite part is how the palimpsest nature of the whiteboard allows me to continuously erase old tasks and write new ones without it looking too messy.

Genre

In the ISU Writing Program, **genre** means a kind of production that it is possible to identify by understanding the conventions or features that make that production recognizable. Here, Eldredge uses the genre of planners and bullet journals as a way to organize her activities, events, assignments, and more.

Furthermore, the nature of the mediums, as well as the texts within each one, are different too. First of all, the planner is already made. As seen in Figure 2, there are designated spaces for dates, reminders, goals and bullet point to-do lists. Plus, there is a calendar view for each month, a weekly view (viewable in Figure 4), and tabs to locate each month more efficiently by month and year (Figure 2). This premade planner comes in handy when I need to organize miscellaneous thoughts or reminders, and it allows me to easily add text to my planner. Because there is so much space available, I can write more detailed notes to myself. For instance, instead of writing "roommate agreement" as I would on the calendar, I would write "roommate agreement @9pm in the common room" in my planner. Here, we can see how the same idea behind a text is written differently, solely based on the medium being used. Additionally, the extra space in my planner enables me to write the mundane tasks that I wouldn't have been able to fit on the whiteboard. As a result, I typically write more entries in my planner as opposed to the whiteboard. By the same token, the premade nature of the planner takes away a certain personal aspect of organizing, since I did not make it myself.

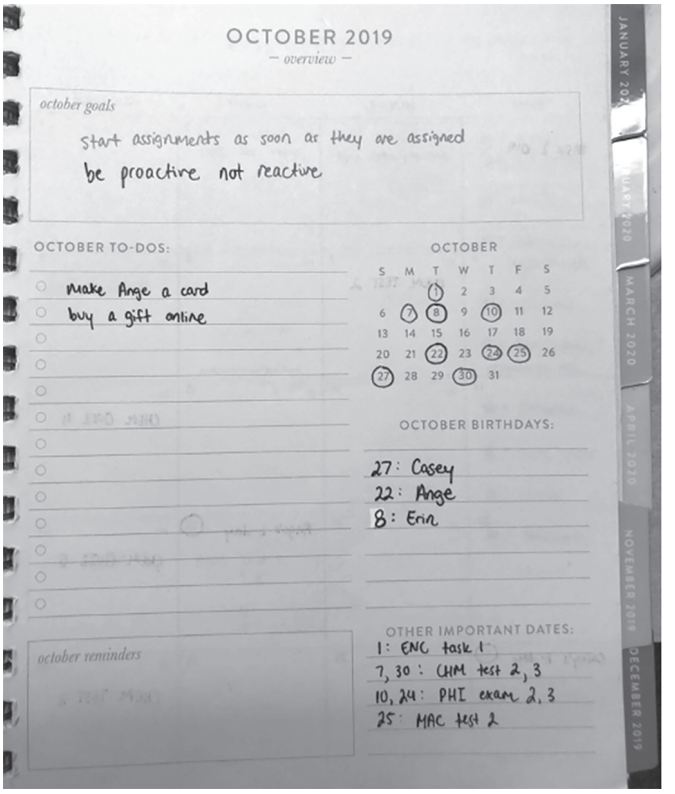

Figure 2: Different spaces for different tasks.

The calendar (Figure 3), on the other hand, is completely handmade by me. I have to physically draw out the calendar every month and make space for other texts I want to include. As implied earlier, because of the lack of space on the whiteboard calendar, texts are brief and succinct; they are usually of important value, too. In other words, because of the limited space, only important reminders or tasks with priority are written down on the calendar. Because of this, I decided to have two additional sections to write down the daily to-dos: "Schoolwork" and "Misc. Reminders," as seen in Figure 3. These sections are used to remind myself of what needs to get done by the end of the day, and tasks are erased as soon as they have been completed.

United by Color

It is clear how these two mediums are different, but what makes them the same? The answer to that is simply the colors used by both of them. What I mean by this is that both mediums are synchronized through the same color-coding tactic that was previously discussed. Simply put, reminders in my planner are also reminders on my whiteboard, and quizzes/tests in my planner are also quizzes/tests on my whiteboard.

Take for example Figure 3. This whiteboard has all of my tasks written down and color coded according to the color key from Figure 1. Now examine Figure 4. All of these notes and tasks are color-coded according to the key, just like the whiteboard. In both mediums, dark blue represents

Figure 3: Whiteboard calendar.

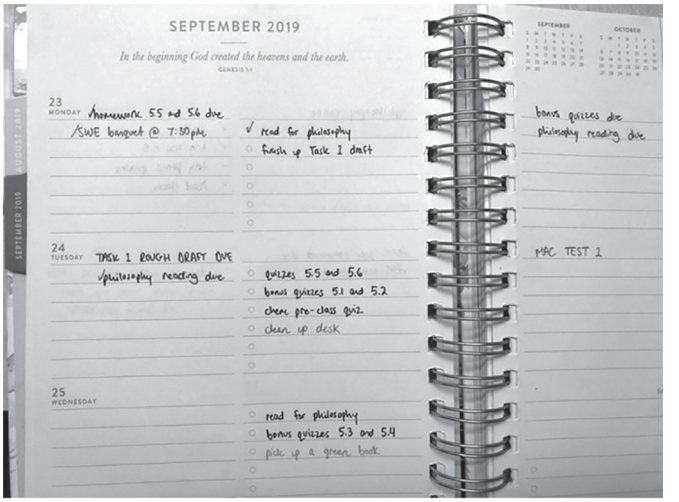

Figure 4: Planner

small-scale due dates or quizzes, light blue is for exams, pink is for social events, black is for homework, and orange is for reminders. What this shows is how two different mediums of text can work together to organize my life through the strategic use of color.

Conclusion

First and foremost, it is important to acknowledge that my literacy activity of scheduling and planning is a literacy activity to begin with. Elizabeth Angeli makes a point in "Three Types of Memory in Emergency Medical Services Communication" about the writing done by EMTs, in which, "Notes then became external representations of individual memory" (3). Similarly, the notes and phrases I would write down in my planner or whiteboard were also outward forms of my memory. For instance, as soon as an assignment was given, I would immediately write it down so I wouldn't forget it. The same goes for the tests that my professors put in their syllabus. Since I don't actively read all of my syllabi on a weekly basis, I just jot down the important dates so that I won't forget them later. Essentially, what the EMS responders and I are doing are writing down brief notes to serve as long-term memory. Granted, our activities have different contexts, but the point is, a literacy activity doesn't have to be an entire essay. Notes can be just as efficient to use, if not more.

Literacy Activity

Any activity in which one engages with a text, typically via reading or writing. This can be anything from writing formal letters or books to simple inscriptions in a planner or sticky note.

All in all, it's clear to see that color has a strong influence over how I conduct my literacy activity of scheduling and planning. Komysha Hassan states in her article, "More Than a Marker for the Passage of Time," that "understanding literacy as both a created and creative force is important to deciphering the power and diversity of writing activity" (4). I find this personally relatable due to my use of creativity in color coding. Through color, I can portray a whole message using sparse phrases or relay a secret message that only I will understand. Either way, taking advantage of color makes this common literacy activity more unique and personal to me. Hassan is also implying the importance of the duality of created literacy and creative literacy. This duality is particularly important to my literacy activity because the *created* aspect of it comes into play when I write texts in either planning medium, while the *creative* aspect comes into play when I use color to code and categorize different texts, as well as unite my two planning mediums. Nevertheless, these two components of literacy are not separate entities but rather work in conjunction with each other to add diversity and meaning to my literacy activity of scheduling and planning.

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Let's CHAT with the Rickshaw Art of Bangladesh!

Akbar Hosain

This article has taken up the rickshaw, which is a simple, mundane, and cheap transport in Bangladesh. More specifically, it presents rickshaw art in Bangladesh, which is a vital component of this cheap yet popular transport. The artistic genre is informed by interactions with the mode of transport, which has influenced its initiation, history and later development. In discussing this pop art form, this article focuses on a number of literate activity concepts: genre research, genre conventions and the artist's antecedent knowledge, their audience and tools etc.

The Rickshaw! What Is It?

The rickshaw (also sometimes called "cycle rickshaw") is a three-wheeled vehicle that is very common to find in both rural and urban areas in Bangladesh. There's no engine in it; so the rickshaw-puller, or simply called the "driver" manually draws it and the pulling requires a lot of physical energy.

Rickshaws are a very popular mode of transport in Bangladesh. I think there are several reasons behind this. First, in comparison with other vehicles (such as cars, buses or microbuses), it is a very cheap transport. How cheap? Cumilla, the city I am currently living in, has thousands of rickshaws. Perhaps, it is the cheapest as well as most popular mode of transportation. I can travel three-to-four kilometers by a fare of twenty Bangladeshi Taka (or around 0.25 USD). In Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, one can travel to any destination by rickshaws. Another reason for its popularity is its availability on the street. No matter where you are, even if there are a limited number of transportation options, a rickshaw is always waiting for you, beside a road or the corner of a busy street or parked on one side of a

Figure 1: A rickshaw-puller with his rickshaw on the street. The bright paintings are visible.

circle. So, in a megacity like Dhaka or Chattogram, city dwellers most often prefer a rickshaw to save time by avoiding traffic jams (because of its smaller size it can maneuver through traffic faster).

A Brief History

The history of rickshaw is not very old: "As a mode of transport, rickshaw was first introduced in Japan in the early twentieth century" (Banglapedia). But unfortunately, by the 1950s it had disappeared from Japan. In the early forties rickshaws were commonly seen on the streets of Indonesia, Singapore and other Southeast Asian countries. The first rickshaw came to Bangladesh (in Chattogram) from Myanmar in 1919 (Banglapedia).

The first arrival of this vehicle dates back to the 1930s in the capital city of Dhaka from Kolkata, India (Wikipedia). How many rickshaws did Dhaka see in the beginning of 1940s? Can you imagine? Just thirty-seven (Banglapedia). Now Dhaka, Bangladesh's capital, which is one of the densely populated cities in the world is home to "an estimated one million cycle rickshaws" (Msallem). Yes, one million rickshaws! From thirty-seven to one million. This skyrocketing occurred in just four decades. So, when Dhaka is

nicknamed as the *rickshaw capital of the world*, I think it is an accolade to this otherwise humble vehicle and its popularity.

Rickshaw Art: Beauty on the Mundane Vehicle

Let us read a short excerpt from a paper by a Nepalese writer, Jupiter Pradhan researching Bangladeshi rickshaw art:

> Early rickshaws were invariably painted in simple dark blue and red, or any such combination of primary colors. The seats were made of black leather, wider and more comfortable; hoods were made of khaki waterproof canvas, and the iron frame of pipe painted in green or black.

Pradhan's research illustrates that rickshaws did not always include the vibrant forms of art that are characteristic of modern rickshaws. Rickshaw pullers were (and still are) impoverished people. They take up this vocation of extreme manual labor for earning a living to support their families. So, any thought of incorporating beauty and art was really inconceivable. A human being is pulling/carrying another human being by physical labor. At first sight, to a person who is foreign to rickshaws, simply the idea of it might seem a form of labor exploitation, but that is what you will encounter on the streets of Bangladesh. Over time, however, with the aim of attracting its passengers, owners of the rickshaws initiated the genre of rickshaw art. In fact, the idea itself is "an urban phenomenon" and has become hugely popular in the big cities and urban areas, which is how a humble, mundane transport came to embody beauty. We humans are worshippers of beauty and admirers of art. This marks the incorporation of beauty with daily usability.

As mentioned before, you can also find rickshaws in other parts of Asia, Japan, China and India but nowhere are the vehicles so artistically decorated as in Bangladesh. Most remarkably, on the back of Bangladeshi rickshaws you can see some pretty paintings in simple but colorful styles combined with/without one/two lines of caption/s. Political issues, images of great leaders, religious themes, cinema posters, natural landscapes, images of birds and beasts etc. are usually featured in this art form. A rickshaw is not a very expensive vehicle; usually lower middle-class and poor people use rickshaws as a means of their transport. And rickshaw painters/artists usually come from a very impoverished or marginalized class of society. They are regarded as low-status people in Bangladeshi culture as their average monthly income is only BDT 13,382 (around $156.29) according to Bangladesh Institute of Labor Studies, "A city rickshaw puller earns Tk 13,382 a month."

With the gradual urbanization and rapid development in the megacities, governments have pushed to eliminate this aesthetic transport from the street (reasoning that the vehicle is one of the major causes of traffic jam and accidents). Dhaka Metropolitan Police Department has already started evicting rickshaws from the heavily congested city streets.

My Personal Story about Rickshaw Art

I chose rickshaw art as a topic for my *GWRJ* article because I wanted to represent my Bangladeshi culture along with its traditions and customs. My assumption is that, much of my audience will be hearing about rickshaws for the first time in their lives and might draw sufficient attention and interest from my readers. A flashback! Back in 2009 I translated an MPhil thesis based on rickshaw art from Bangla to English. The work was by Subrata Das, a Fine Arts professor at the University of Chittagong, Bangladesh. Up until then, I had never thought that even simple rickshaw art could be a subject of research in academia! In my childhood, people around me pulled and used rickshaws as a means of transport. When I was a child, my father's close uncle used to drive a rickshaw, (which, by the way, may or may not have been decorated with art, I now cannot remember). In addition, I remember

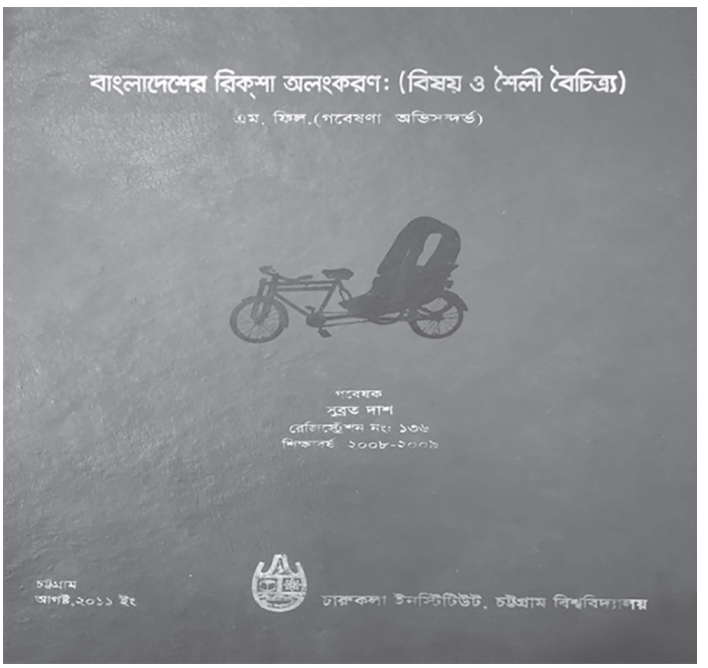

Figure 2: The cover page of Prof. Das's MPhil. thesis entitled "Bangladesh's Rickshaw Ornamentation: Diversity in Themes and Styles."

reading a newspaper interview with a professor of literature, who said that even rickshaw painting is *a form of art*. He said that in a postmodern culture there was not so much of a separation between "high art" and "low art." It was all just art. Most importantly, I learned in my work with the ISU Writing Program that **literate activity** is not confined to simply *writing a text*; in fact, its ranges are wider than that. So, rickshaw art *can be* art, and a rickshaw with art on it can be a text. The calculation is super easy.

Rickshaw painting/art is a day-in day-out text, which is writing-in-the-world and a text that is very useful in daily life. In the next section, I will discuss and analyze rickshaw art with the help of some of the Writing Program's P-CHAT concepts.

Rickshaw Art as a Genre

The term **genre** is certainly a buzzword in the discussion of literate activities in ISU's Writing Program. So my fundamental questions are: what is this genre? And why so much fuss about it? Well. At this point, you may be thinking of **genre** as any *category* or *kind* of text that exists in an area or discipline. For example, in Western music pop, band, rock, blues, and jazz are all different genres. In literature: poetry, fiction, prose, drama—these are genres.

However, a rhetorical genre studies definition of "genre" is quite different from the one you may already know about. The ISU writing program offers the following definition of "genre": A genre can mean any kind of production that it is possible to identify by understanding the conventions or features that make that production recognizable.

As you can probably see, this latter definition is much broader than the former one. Any "production" or text can have the potential to be regarded as a "genre" but the condition is: it should have some general conventions which make it different or unique from other things. Applying this flexible and inclusive definition, I can argue that rickshaw art is a good example of a genre because it has some noticeable conventions with its own distinctive place among numerous other genres in the world. For example, rickshaw art is different from other genres such as truck art, pot/vase painting, wall painting, calendar art, book cover art or more mainstream genres, such as painting or artworks (so-called "high art" pieces, which have their exhibitions in art galleries). But in order to understand this genre better, I want to look more closely at the features that make it distinct from other types of visual genres.

My Genre Research on Rickshaw Art

My genre research comprised a number of activities and procedures. First, to gather preliminary ideas about rickshaw art I contacted Prof. Subrata Das. He was very enthusiastic to hear about my project. What I got from our conversation is that his work investigated the aesthetic, social, political, cultural aspects of rickshaw art and how this otherwise simple style of people's art represents Bangladeshi values and ideologies. Immediately, I understood that his was an example of **content research** which the ISU writing program defines as "expert knowledge about a topic," as opposed to my intended approach, **genre research**, which involves "learning how to create a specific kind of text for a specific kind of situation." However, in spite of our differing approaches, talking with him was, to a great extent, illuminating, as he provided me workable information on how to locate rickshaw artists in my area (Cumilla) to interview. Moreover, he also provided me with some important materials, his thesis and a sample of paintings which he had collected in 2009 for his MPhil thesis.

Bearing the intention of doing **genre research**, I then collected a substantial number of artworks (around twenty-five to thirty); some I got from the abovementioned professor, some I captured with my cell phone from the rickshaws plying on the street, others I have found on the Internet. At the same time, I also watched a number of YouTube videos, read newspaper articles, and saw TV news that featured rickshaw art. Lastly, I also conducted two one-on-one interviews on my topic: one with a rickshaw artist and another with Prof. Das in Bangladesh to better understand this art, its process and production and the other engaging issues that might be of use.

By analyzing the collected works/images of rickshaw art I have attempted to find out its **genre conventions** or **features**, meaning the explicitly recognizable common features and/or deviations (if any) from these. The subject of rickshaw art is numerous, varied and sometimes quite intriguing. Most common of these might include, but is not limited to: cinema posters, landscape, natural sceneries, common rural scene, animal (especially tigers and deer), birds (doves, parrots and pigeons are found very common), religious issues, political leaders and so on. However, human figures take the center stage. The next convention, among others, is the use of extremely bright colors (red is the predominant color). Then the size of paintings is usually bigger to draw the attention of the passengers and commuters on the street. My simple logic is that on the street, passengers are always in a rush and so to catch their attention it's better if the size is bigger and the color is dazzlingly bright. Plus, almost all the pictures bear the name of the artist and

the owner of the rickshaw, often followed by their (often the latter's) phone numbers. For example, artists' names appear like this (in Bangla):

- 'রফকি আর্ট'; 'কালাম আর্ট'; 'আর্ট বাই জামাল' ইত্যাদি (translated: "Rafiq art", "Kalam art" or "Art by Jamal" etc.)
- Owner's names appear like this (in Bangla): রোখসানা ট্রডোর্স; খলিল মস্ত্রি ইত্যাদি (translated: "Rokhsana Traders"; "Khalil Mistri" etc).

However, I have seen a lot of art work in which an artist's name is missing, but the owners' or company's name is regular or always present. With regards to space allocation, the rickshaw owner predictably exerts more status and importance than the artist. The name of the artist is inscribed in small size in the margin or into the corner of the plate. Moreover, as a chief convention, one- or two-line captions are given to the art. For example, if it's a painting of two praying people, the caption goes like, "Allah Hafeez" or "Allah is Almighty." If it is a cinema poster, the title of the film appears, though there are many cinema posters which lack this feature. One major convention of rickshaw art as a genre is that the contents are semirealistic and easily correspond to real life as opposed to *expressionistic mode*, which tends to blur the everyday reality. Conversely, some other art form might be inappropriate for use on rickshaws because on the busy city street passengers have no extra time to spare on discovering its inner significance or meaning.

Figure 3: The rickshaw artist Sohag on his canvas creating a cinema poster in his own workshop. Photo credit: Abdullah Al Musayeb, a student of mine in Bangladesh taken by his android mobile.

Use of **multimodality** is another significant convention I have observed. So what does this term mean, really? "**Multimodality** refers to the interplay between different representational modes, for instance, between images and written/spoken word"(Korhonen). Literal scenes, symbolic landscapes, and alphabetic writing—all of these are visible in the art. Much rickshaw art uses visual pictures which are very eye-catching. The captions (in alphabetic writing) are not always present in the genre of this art. Many of the cinema posters have a caption (usually the name of films) while some lack it. Md. Sohag, the rickshaw artist I interviewed, pointed to some works hanging in his workplace, explaining that they were also cinema posters. I looked more closely: a man and a woman; I could not recognize any particular Bangla cinema hero or heroine. Afterwards, he elucidated: this two-figure art has been drawn so many times, so many ways and by so many artists that now it's quite impossible to know who the "original" hero and heroine were.

Who defines or controls what shall be the subject of the rickshaw art? My interviews and other YouTube sources reveal that this authority is distributed between the two parties: the artist and the transport owner/s. Sometimes the owner/s just bring a banner/poster/calendar to imitate it. Or they just give a casual order saying, "Make me some art; it should be beautiful" without ever giving any exact direction. It gives both freedom and responsibility. In such a case, Sohag said, "we usually do not take such orders, because what if I work my way, and you do not like it? There remains the possibility of a hassle with regards to the quality of work. Still, if you insist, possibly I will take the order and then draw something as I like." Some customers just say, "Two-faces." Sohag's **uptake** of this would be that he was required to draw two human faces, probably the hero and heroine of cinema posters. Other drivers might say, "Make me a pair of doves or pigeons." This illustrates how the **production** of the art on the rickshaw can include a power dynamic that is distributed between the owners and artists, and the owners mostly define what will be the content of a particular art. However, this is not always a *straightforward, stable or one-way dialogue*. With regards to the use of **tools**, say, aluminum sheet (used as canvas) brush, color, space, the artist has the upper hand despite his constrained freedom of choice. He manipulates the power of fixing color combinations and the allocation of space and brightness and lightness.

As a subject, cinema posters are very common and popular in this art form. In fact, in the 1970s and 1980s the cinema poster genre was at the peak of popularity and its social acceptance was monumental. This is, I assume, due to the golden era of Bangla cinema. Blockbuster films were made at the time and images of heroines were accepted into wider social

space, including poor, lower middle- and middle-class Bangladeshis. People usually frequented cinema halls to watch such films with family and friends. With the advent of modern technology, first CD/DVD player and later computers, Internet, YouTube, and of course social media, people gradually stopped going out to halls and got the entertainment within their home place. In addition, with the final blow of digital culture, you got exposed to movies from across the world: Hindi, English, and Chinese etc. As a result, cinema as an entertainment receded because other contesting modes and ways evolved. With that, it had an influence on rickshaw art (cinema posters). Once, artists gathered cinema posters from the nearby halls to work on. And owners often also brought posters to them for imitation. So as a topic, cinema posters are rarely drawn in art now, Sohag confirmed to me. Here we have the occasion to see how one media affected another one. As the commercial films failed to draw an audience, and the cinema halls have been turned into other establishments such as shopping centers and office buildings, this has had a negative impact on rickshaw art with the gradual dwindling of it.

The Artist and His Antecedent Knowledge, and His Audience

When a rickshaw owner just says, *Make a beautiful art for me*, the artist already knows what he is required to do: the work will be very bright, colorful and very eye-catching. When inquired as to what color makes an art "beautiful," Sohag told me, "Red." He added that red is the color that is dominant in rickshaw art. Yet, keeping red in the center, they also use other bright colors, such as green, yellow, orange etc. While choosing/fixing the color combinations, the artist always remains careful that the art looks "gorgeous" and "bright." That is to say, the rickshaw owner (as **audience**) is ever present in his mind. When I asked, 'why do you give importance to bright colors?' He replied with a smile, 'Because all artists do so; and the clients as well as rickshaw pullers love it." So Sohag's **antecedent knowledge** (I mean, the information or ideas that one brings into an actual work at the time of performing it) which mainly derived from other peers in his vocation (i.e. rickshaw painting) helped him steer into his artwork. At the same time, he also has to give importance to the demands of his customers as his income depends on the vocation of painting.

Rickshaw Art is also a Transcultural Text? Cool. Why Not?

It is true that rickshaw artists from Bangladesh mainly create work on subjects rooted in Bangladeshi culture, but culture is always changing and in a flux.

Chronotope

A term employed by the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) to refer to the coordinates of time and space invoked by a given narrative; in other words to the 'setting', considered as a spatio-temporal whole. (Oxford Reference).

The imagination of a stable, fixed culture is just a myth. Therefore, we see that other cultural phenomena also figure in rickshaw paintings. In my research, I've found a work which featured Barack Obama and his family members. It's modeled on cinema posters, Obama-Michele (hero-heroine) and other characters (see figure 4). It's a great example of the artist mediating and experimenting with rickshaw art (cinema poster). It's also transcultural literacy. The artist's signature is given on the top right-hand corner with the year (2014) when the US president just started the year of his second term. The work makes sense quite well if we can make use of the notion of "**chronotopes**" offered by Mikhail Bakhtin. Should we give a pause to see what this peculiar term is?

Any literate practice is bound to time and place. Because more than any other president Mr. Barack Obama caused a tremendous stir of hope, aspirations and dreams not only for African Americans and other marginalized groups in the US, but also for people in other countries, including Bangladesh. So when a rickshaw artist (usually poor, marginalized and illiterate/semiliterate) draws Obama under a different context (Bangladesh), it's highly significant as it crosses cultural boundaries and embodies a feeling of solidarity mostly engendered by the press, media and other cultures. I'm also thinking of a big body of print, electronic and other contents manifesting a sympathetic mode to Obama during his first election in 2009.

Figure 4: Caption (in Bangla): "Barack Obama's Family."

Figure 5: A cinema poster titled "Nosto Chatro" in Bangla or "A Spoiled Student" in English.

A Bleak Future?

The onslaught of digital painting has had a tremendous toll on the traditional rickshaw painters in Bangladesh. A news report entitled "Rickshaw Painting in Bangladesh" echoes such concerns with evidence and reason. Rajkumar Das, who started his career in this art in the 1950s recalls that rickshaw paintings were very popular, and the demands for artwork were really high. Now it's a declining story. His two sons share this vocation, but his grandchildren are not coming to it. He says, in a sorrowful tone: "It will not last."

New Hope!

While the rickshaw artist Rajkumar Das was right in his assertion that rickshaw art is passing its stage of crisis, a dwindling period being under the attack from digital printing, new hopes are also imminent and becoming visible. We have artists whose work has travelled into countries like USA, France, and other parts of Europe, and they mainly depend on foreign clients who have a good taste for this medium of art ("BBC News). Now apart from Mr. Rajkumar, we can hear an alternative story of Dulal Khan who became unemployed in 2018, until he got a call from a new decoration company One Culture. Now he does rickshaw painting on all kinds of home objects from cups to plates to mugs—almost all home commodities. Super interesting, indeed! The director of the company explained that these products are exported to many foreign nations. ("Rickshaw Painting in Home Commodities," YouTube). This new direction of the rickshaw painting as a genre gives us scope to reflect on time and adaptation with it. With time, the canvas has been replaced; now you get rickshaw art not on a rickshaw but on

Figure 6: Rickshaw art on the school wall, not the back of a rickshaw. Collected from Mr. Sohag.

a plate, mug or vase etc. Still, these new remediated arts are called "rickshaw art!"

Concluding Remarks

Rickshaw art is a genre that negotiates with our understanding of P-CHAT concepts. I have focused on its conventions by conducting genre/P-CHAT research. However, my point is not that those conventions are always stable and fixed. Among others, the last example of adaptation with changed time is a good illustration of how a human's creativity and power usher him/her into new hopeful directions. Understanding this art form as including multimodal and transcultural texts allows us to think beyond what is normally thought of as a work of art.

Final Note

Expressionism is an artistic style in which the artist seeks to depict not objective reality but rather the subjective emotions and responses that objects and events arouse within a person. The artist accomplishes this aim through distortion, exaggeration, primitivism, and fantasy and through the vivid, jarring, violent, or dynamic application of formal elements.

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Reading Responses as a CHAT-ty Genre

Maryna Teplova

The article deals with the genre of Reading Responses that students have to produce in almost any subject they study at university.

Writing about reading is worthwhile, but it is only likely to lead to learning when students are actively engaged in the reading and writing tasks—recognizing the value of the activities and meeting their challenges with determination and self-awareness *(Best Practices in Writing Instruction*, 2013).

Introduction

Imagine coming home (well . . . your 'new' home in Bloomington-Normal since your 'real' home is still across the Atlantic Ocean in Ukraine). Almost every day at about 9 p.m., after teaching in the morning through afternoon and taking your own grad courses in the evening . . . then comes the long-awaited weekend (Homecoming week at ISU, BTW!!), and . . . oops . . . you realize that you have to create Reading Responses in all three courses you are taking as a student! OMG!

Now, why don't we try a quick multiple-choice test? This article will focus on:

1. The pleasures of doing homework during the Homecoming weekend;
2. The challenges of being an international grad student at ISU;
3. A day in the life of a Ukrainian teacher at ISU who also happens to be a graduate student;
4. Reading Responses as a genre and their role in developing our writing research identity.

Well, dear readers, you guessed right—you can pinpoint the correct answer immediately—#4, and you can probably relate to this story from your own studenting experiences. The key focus of the article is "Reading Responses as a genre and their role in developing our writing research identity," which means that you DO know some reading strategies, which you used to quickly extract key concepts from the first few paragraphs in any text.

In a nutshell, the goal of the article is explicitly stated in the title: I really want to understand for myself and share with you how we can make our Reading Responses better or more aligned with P-CHAT elements. Yes, I did intend to create a pun with the word "chatty" (Reading Responses are a conversation, right?) but I also want to make you think of the possible deciphering of how P-CHAT or pedagogical cultural-historical activity theory might be applied to the genre of Reading Responses. I hope by the end of reading this article, you will easily come up with several variants!

You might ask, what are Reading Responses and how are they are related to my writing research identity? Well, the point of the article is simple: Reading Responses are a type of writing that most university students have to deal with on a daily basis, because many teachers use this genre in teaching a variety of courses. Even in classes that don't require a lot of writing, teachers might use a "response" genre to try to engage students in the readings or to check their learning. Like all seemingly simple things, creating Reading Responses as a regular, required assignment in a course might cause a gamut of negative reactions: boredom, misunderstanding, confusion, and even frustration, thus blocking our creativity. How can we make this ~~monster~~ genre easier to tackle for students?

As for the connection between Reading Responses and our **writing research identity**, let's look at how the latter is defined on the ISU Writing Program website: "A successful writer needs to use their knowledge flexibly in different situations, and must also be able to determine when new skills

and knowledge are required." Indeed, we will look at how and why writing Reading Responses can make us more flexible and creative as writers.

With these questions in mind, the article is going to deal with Reading Responses as a **genre** or "a kind of production that it is possible to identify by understanding the conventions or features that make that production recognizable," according to the definition on the ISU Writing Program website. In other words, we will look at it through the lens of **pedagogical cultural-historical activity theory** (**P-CHAT**), the basic framework consisting of seven elements that we use in our Writing Program "to think about and study the complex genres that we encounter in the world," with the following objectives in mind:

- To unpack and explore Reading Responses as a genre with the help of ISU's P-CHAT tools, as a way to make this genre easier and perhaps a bit more enjoyable.
- To consider, a little bit, the bigger picture of why we find this genre so often in educational settings. What's it for, and how can it be used effectively?

At the theoretical "heart" of this article lies Carolyn Miller's definition of **genre** as a "social action"; or the idea that genres aren't just static artifacts that always look and act in the same ways. Instead, they're social– they are made up of the decisions and actions of people over time, and they are endlessly evolving (Miller). So, for example, when two teachers say "reading response," they aren't necessarily talking about the same thing. And when two students (even two students in the same class), hear "write a reading response," they don't necessarily imagine (or produce) the same kind of text. In order to get a better understanding of the range of ways people understand and produce this genre, I decided that I needed to explore both how different teachers understand Reading Responses and how they incorporate them in their writing pedagogy, and how different students view and cope with this genre. My research involves interviews with both teachers and students at Illinois State University. I asked them all to answer 5 questions about Reading Responses. Of course, this small set of questions (and answers) can't tell us everything there is to know about this genre, but thinking about my respondents' answers can be a way to get at some of the differences in the way the genre is understood and performed.

But before we look at the results of my interviews, let's take a moment to first look at the genre of Reading Responses through the magnifying glass of P-CHAT. Hopefully, it will help us understand all the WHYs about this genre: as we say in a well-known Ukrainian idiom, "*shcho tse take i z chym yogo yidiat*" (literal translation: "what it is and what they eat it with").

CHATting about Reading Responses (WHAT, WHO, and HOW)

If we try to come up with some definition of Reading Response (WHAT it is), it becomes obvious that dictionaries are of no use as they do not provide any explanations to the meaning of this term. However, it turns out that many Internet resources deal with Reading Responses and give detailed tips to students on how to craft them, for instance:

- "A reader response assignment asks you to explain and defend your personal reaction to an assigned text" ("How to Write a Reader Response");
- "A paper recording your response or reaction to the material. In these reports—often referred to as response or reaction papers—your instructor will most likely expect you to do two things: summarize the material and detail your reaction to it." ("The Writing Process").

Using some of these resources, I've come up with my own definition of Reading Response as a **genre**: *Reading Response is an academic genre in which students have to produce a piece of writing as a response to the reading assigned by the teacher, providing the summary of and their reaction to the ideas in the reading material.*

Looking at all of these definitions, it becomes obvious that if we want to understand the essence of Reading Responses, we should know what we need *to do* to produce them. This is exactly where P-CHAT comes into play, for its **activity** element deals with "the actual practices and actions that accompany the creation of the text" (Walker). It looks as if Reading Responses exist mostly in the realm of college assignments, so the **production** element of P-CHAT for this genre (WHO), or "people, places, and technologies that shape the production of this genre" include students, college instructors, and professors. Another important aspect of Reading Responses is **representation** (HOW), or "how people think about and plan this text or what frameworks influence how people represent material in the text" (Walker).

So, in order to get to the core of these three aspects of Reading Responses (**activity**, **production**, and **representation**), I felt that I needed to ask those involved in the production of this genre, that is, the people who write responses as students, and also those who create the "frameworks" for students to follow, or the teachers. I decided to conduct a series of interviews with ISU professors, instructors, and students, the results of which are presented below. Most participants responded to my questions via the Internet. Because of space constraints, I will summarize the responses of participants in each category.

Participants' Responses in the Light of CHAT

Student Participants' Responses

In this section, I will present the ideas expressed by three graduate students in the Department of English, ISU, who helped me conduct this research: Rebecca Olson, Hunter Sheaffer, and Matt Medrala.

1) What is your general attitude to Reading Responses as a type of assignment?

Most of the people I interviewed had mixed attitudes to Reading Responses: for some, the attitude is neutral, their goals were primarily to find out what the professor specifically wanted for the assignment; most believe that the assignment can be an obligation, but if the subject matter intrigues them, it can be motivating. One person mentioned that Reading Responses are essential to his own personal learning and thinking process as he produces a "write up" whenever he reads a book or watches a movie.

These answers tell us a lot about the **representation** aspect ("the way that the people who produce a text conceptualize it") of creating Reading Responses (Walker). This genre can be viewed both as an obligation and a motivation. It's an obligation in that they produce responses because they are assigned, not because they necessarily want to. But for some people, creating written responses to the texts they encounter can be motivating, in that they help the reader understand their own thinking and ideas. Besides, we also see that **socialization** ("the interactions of people and institutions as they produce, distribute and use texts") plays an important role ("Key Terms"). Because Reading Responses are social (a kind of communication between teachers and students), a successful reading response will always be a local kind of text—a negotiation between what the teacher is expecting and what the student produces. I also want to mention that the person who responded that "write ups" were important to him illustrates the role that Reading Responses can have in helping us develop our **writing research identity**, enhancing our learning and thinking, as well as helping us become more flexible with our writing skills (Walker).

2) How do you approach production in this genre?

Most of my respondents said that they go over the guidelines given by the teacher, trying to connect their response to other relevant topics within the genre, and asking questions for class discussion. They also suggest that asking the professor about their requirements and about what they believe makes the best Reading Response is a good idea. One participant said he produces responses intuitively, in one sitting, without giving regard to

grammar because he has "to feel the freedom to write whatever he wants whenever he wants and not feel judged to any external standard".

These answers point to some of the aspects of **production** related to Reading Responses ("the means through which a text is produced, including both tools and practices") involves producing the text based on the reading material and according to the guidelines provided by the teacher (Walker). We can also see an important **activity** element here ("the actual practices that people engage in as they create text"): while some people might focus first on trying to understand exactly what the instructor is looking for, others might try to respond directly to the readings, writing freely in order to explore their ideas. Perhaps the most interesting thing we can learn from these answers is that while Reading Responses are definitely a teacher-constructed genre, the people actually writing the responses can have very different ways of approaching this work, and might build different kinds of writing identities from doing it.

The answers to my next question deal with both **representation** ("how people understand the text and its production") and **activity** ("what they do as part of the production process") (Walker).

3) What strategies help you cope with the genre of Reading Response?

Here participants mentioned "getting some tea" and having the text available in case they need it for quotations to support their response, which includes their thoughts and analysis. One participant suggests asking questions to understand what exactly the professor expects. Another participant mentioned that it is crucial for him to feel truly liberated and to release any expectations for himself as a writer.

On the one hand, here participants reveal another **representation** aspect: including some quotes from the reading material to support their Reading Response. Interestingly, answers to this question also shed some light on **ecology** ("the physical, biological forces that exist beyond the boundaries of any text we are producing"), which for this genre means getting some tea and having the text for analysis at hand (Walker).

My next question deals with aspects of **reception**—how people take up and use a text. In the case of the Reading Response, we might think of reception as involving the instructor (or the person who reads the reading response). But in fact, Reading Responses are often designed, at least in part, to be useful primarily to the person writing them. This question asked participants to tell me what value they thought producing Reading Responses might (or might not) have.

4) What do you think are the potential upsides and limitations of Reading Response as a genre?

On the upside, most participants believe that Reading Responses are flexible and useful, letting them express their thoughts in a more informal manner than a full paper would. Also, one participant said that this genre helps him develop his own personal voice as a writer, making him "a more thoughtful and empathetic person." Among downsides, participants mention frustration because of lack of time for the assignment, vague genre conventions, as well as "the student's own antecedent knowledge of the genre" that they have brought from previous schooling, which is more "a tell of participation, instead of a show."

These responses can help us to see the **reception** aspects of the Reading Responses ("how a text is taken up and used by others") (Walker). This genre can cause negative reactions in people who have to produce it because they are obliged to do it. Yet, we see that Reading Responses can help develop our voice as a writer, developing our writing research identity. Here we also see some ecology aspects of this genre, like the lack of time. Surprisingly, the participants point out the downside of antecedent knowledge ("all the things a writer already knows that can come into play when a writer takes up any kind of writing") (Walker). Their prior knowledge of what should go into response might be limiting and different from the genre that a particular teacher, in a particular situation, is asking them to produce.

The fifth question I asked focused on how Reading Responses, as a genre, might be more useful, or more interesting, for the people who have to produce them.

5) What do you think could make Reading Responses as a genre more exciting for students?

In this category, student participants mentioned that they need to be encouraged to produce responses that aren't entirely text, but also images, memes, music, etc. Besides, explicit expectations and purposes, as well as combining Reading Responses with a Post-Discussion Response after class can inspire students to "re-read the texts and truly explore the concepts." One participant mentioned that teachers could provide their own creative response to the readings as a model for students.

These answers tell us a lot about the production aspect of the Reading Responses, which can include not only verbal information, but also images, memes, and music, thus becoming a **multimodal** genre that uses alphabetic, visual, and aural signs.

Teacher Participants' Perspective

As I mentioned above, I also asked questions of teachers to try to find out how they understand Reading Responses, why they might value them, and what they expect from students writing them. The four teachers who participated include Joyce Walker, Elise Hurley, Katy Lewis and Li Min Chen (pseudonym).

1) What are your main requirements for Reading Responses as a type of assignment in your course?

Most teachers-participants mentioned that their requirements depend on the course they are teaching. For instance, for a graduate course, they might use a "questions and quotes" framework, where they ask students to pick two questions and two quotes that struck them as particularly interesting, giving "an opportunity for students every week to submit two questions that they want to talk about in class"; for undergraduate courses, teachers might use a ReggieNet forum, where students post their responses to readings and/or in-class prompts. While one teacher (Lewis) assigns Reading Responses to be completed before class so that students could better engage with the material and contribute to class discussion, another (Walker) uses an unconventional approach: she has students write responses AFTER the discussion. In this way, she says, they will "know better what they want to discuss once their ideas have been *primed* a little by participating in (or at least hearing) a discussion." As for the length of the response, these educators have different requirements as well: while some of them assign word limit of at least 250 words (Chen), or 400–500 words for graduate students (Hurley), one instructor (Walker) is very casual about length requirements because, as she says, they might vary quite a bit from class to class.

Here we see representation element of the Reading Responses further explained: the Reading Responses might have a specific required length (from 250 up to 500 words), but it might not; responses might be done either before or after a class discussion of the readings; authors might be required to include quotes from the reading, but they might not. These teachers' answers also give us an idea about the **distribution** for the genre of the Reading Response ("where texts go and who might take them up, as well as the tools and methods that can be used to distribute text") (Walker). Different teachers used different methods of distribution: responses might be written in a ReggieNet forum, a Google Doc, or submitted to the instructor.

2) What are your expectations from students' productions in this genre?

One instructor (Walker) notes that, for her, the main function of a reading response is "to observe the evolution of [readers'] learning and thinking rather than evaluating the ability to write" or the "ability to make an argument." In fact, this instructor doesn't use Reading Responses as a way to prove that students did the readings; other teachers (Lewis) "ask them open-ended questions (attached in the assignment sheet), and they can choose what they focus on in their writing responses." In her introductory writing course, another instructor (Chen) expects students to write a reading response for all readings assigned for the class, following directions in the guidelines.

These answers reveal the deep connection that instructors often make between the genre of Reading Response and the evolution of students' learning and thinking, which ultimately enriches their **writing research identity**. As we saw in the author's responses (above), that doesn't always match the way that students might see Reading Responses primarily as an obligation—something they do because it's assigned. Awareness of these differences in **representation** mean it can be important for teachers and students to understand each other. Students need to understand what value the instructor sees in the work, so that they can create representations that go beyond "because I have to." It can also be important to have discussions about other aspects of **representation** for this genre, such as how long it should be, or whether it should include quotes, or whether the instructor expects the author to explore their personal responses, or to make arguments about text, or other purposes.

3) What structure of Reading Response do you consider the best? What assessment criteria do you use in this genre?

In response to this question, the teachers again offered a range of ideas. One instructor (Walker) often asks students "to incorporate the text of readings into response," picking a quote and responding to it. Another (Lewis) stressed that she doesn't "want this assignment to be a reflection or about their feelings"; instead, she wants students "to critically engage with the readings in an academic way and explicitly connect this back to what they've been talking about in class." Still another (Hurley) explains that she believes that a good response should make connections to the readings or to the larger conversations; it will provide citations and summation of the main points. In her guidelines for this assignment, one instructor (Chen) offers students an outline for the structure of the response, where they first reflect on the content, bringing in their antecedent knowledge; then students

analyze the article and finally write questions for the author or points they disagree with.

From these answers, we can see that representations of this genre really vary from teacher to teacher, which tells us that teachers might have different expectations for what makes a "good" response (use of quotes, analysis of the key points, connecting them to the larger conversations, etc.), as well as **reception** in Reading Responses that we have mentioned above when analyzing student participants' responses.

4) What do you think are the potential upsides and limitations of Reading Response as a genre?

It looks like the learning potential of the Reading Response as an assignment genre depends on the approach the teacher takes. One teacher (Walker) believes that using Reading Responses as a "gatekeeping tool," as a way to "make them" read is not an effective strategy, because some students can be really good at producing an acceptable response without "investing in the ideas." She says that Reading Responses work best for her when she gets to see "a little bit *inside* someone's thinking about a topic, to see how their minds work."

For other teachers, the value in Reading Responses as an assignment that "requires students to be responsible for their own learning," taking the pressure off of the instructor to know everything and helping build a community of people who are willing to talk (Lewis). Also, Reading Responses help students to connect readings to their personal experiences and "reflect on their uptake by stating any questions they have about the reading" (Chen).

On the other hand, among the limitations of this genre, the educators participating in the survey noted that this genre is too broad to offer a set of guidelines for all the kinds of Reading Responses they might assign, or that students might be asked to do across different classes. One teacher explained that if a teacher looks only for "argumentative" or "analytical" responses, they might overlook the most interesting insights of students' learning (Walker). In first year writing classes, one teacher notes that sometimes students prefer to "talk about their feelings, at least in the first few weeks of the semester" (Lewis). She has to work to overcome the difference in representation, to help students to understand that "this is a response, not a reflection" (Lewis). Another teacher uses explicit structures for Reading Responses she thinks that if the guidelines are not clear enough, students might misunderstand the purpose of the assignment and "just summarize the reading (which would not be useful)" (Chen).

The answers to my next question reveal an important perspective of the genre of Reading Response as a form of student **uptake** from the readings ("the process we go through to take up a new idea and think about it until it makes sense").

5) What advice would you give to students to make their Reading Responses more effective?

All of the teachers who participated said that it can be crucial to figure out what a particular kind of response assignment is actually asking for, and they offered a variety of ideas about how students might do this. The following list offers my summary of their ideas and suggestions:

- Sometimes the syllabus or assignment instructions can be helpful in figuring out what the instructor is looking for, but sometimes asking the instructor what they "like to see" in responses can be a good way to start.

- It can also be important to step back (mentally) and think what you are producing and how it matches up with the stated goals for the response that might be in the syllabus or assignment sheet. In other words, it can be important ***not*** to rely on your antecedent knowledge of writing responses in other situations. Instead, try to see responses for different classes as related but sometimes very different genres.

- It might also help to look at other people's responses, not to compare your work to theirs, but to see "the elements that different responses are including" for in this way, you "might be learning to identify what is actually there (visible) in your responses" (Walker). Further, participant teachers mentioned it is important to write about what you are really interested in, trying "to figure out what you value in your class" (Lewis). Chen said that students could "practice forming questions that could address any difficulties they have in understanding the reading," even though it might be challenging.

The answers to this question highlight the **socialization** aspect of the genre of Reading Response that proves once again its social nature: in the end, Reading Responses aren't just a single text that a single author (a student) produces for a reader (the teacher): they are part of a complex activity system. They involve not only all of the students in a particular class but teachers and students across classes in many different kinds of educational settings. But they are also very "local" documents, written in response to particular kinds of readings, and different kinds of learning goals. In order to make creating Reading Responses a valuable part of a writer's evolving writing

identity, it can be important to spend some time thinking (with an instructor, as a class) about what Reading Responses mean (in a particular setting) what they can do to aid reading and understanding.

Final Thoughts

Well, it seems we are finally getting to the end of our exploration! Here, similar to a good Reading Response, I am supposed to finish the article by giving you the succinct and meaningful conclusion to all the complexity of ideas that we were discussing in the text! Not an easy task, indeed! But . . . we set the goal of exploring the genre of Reading Response using the framework of P-CHAT and examining this genre as contributing to our writing research identity. The analysis of the participants' responses to the questions in the interview pointed out many interrelated aspects in the way students and teachers view the specific elements of Reading Responses. Even though at the beginning of the research my goal was to look at three P-CHAT elements (activity, production, and representation) that I thought of as the most significant for this genre, this closer look at the ideas revealed during the interviews showed that if we want to succeed in making Reading Responses better, we should take into consideration all seven elements of P-CHAT analysis (that is, we should also think of ecology, distribution, socialization, and reception). So, here's my creative uptake (Figure 1) on each of the seven elements in the genre of Reading Response, viewed through the lens of P-CHAT map and based on the research we have done so far. I hope that this diagram (Figure 1) that I created taking into consideration all the various aspects of Reading Responses mentioned by the participants of the research will serve as a useful and effective tool, helping students make their productions in this genre more effective!

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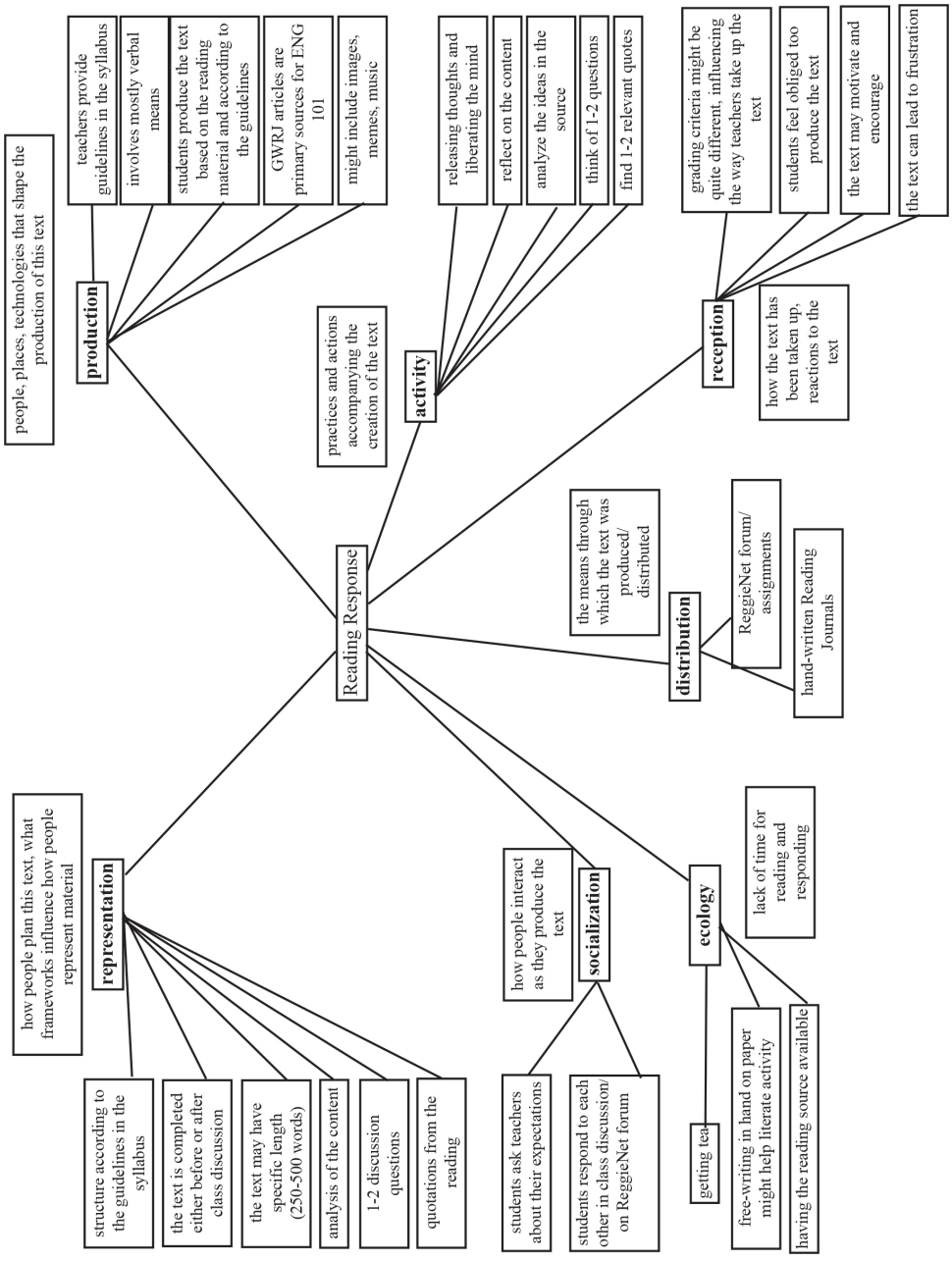

Figure 1: P-CHAT Map of the reading response. This map shows seven elements of pedagogical cultural-historical activity theory analysis applied to the genre of reading responses.

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Notes

Tracing Multimodal Uptake: A Conversation with Emily Capan and Brittany Larsen

In this *Grassroots Interview*, writing researchers Emily Capan and Brittany Larsen discuss the different modalities and tools involved in uptake, focusing on both Emily's zine project as well as uptake accompanying student projects.

Brittany: Hi everyone and welcome to our instructor uptake podcast. My name is Brittany Larsen, and I'm a second year PhD student in rhetoric and composition, as well as the data and research coordinator for the writing program. With me today is Emily Capan, and I will let her introduce herself.

Emily: Hi! My name is Emily Capan. I am a third year PhD student in rhetoric and composition and I teach primarily. English 145, but I've also taught English 101 and English 101.10.

Brittany: So this project is for us to get a chance to just talk about what instructors are doing for uptake in the classroom and also getting a chance to do a little uptake ourselves and talk about that process. To start, Emily, can you describe the project that you decided to do and just a little bit more about what your goals were for the project?

Emily: Yeah, so, for the project that I'm working on for the *Grassroots Journal* I decided to make a zine, which is a genre that I had worked with before in the past in Barbi Smyser-Fauble's visual rhetoric class, so I had a little practice doing it. I wanted to make another zine that kind of described one

P-CHAT: Our take on pedagogical cultural-historical activity theory is developed from the work of Paul Prior. In our program, we use P-CHAT to help us think about and study the complex genres that we encounter in the world.

aspect of P-CHAT, **ecology**, because I find that when I'm teaching, that that's one of the seven terms of P-CHAT that students don't always get a good grasp on right away, so I wanted to give a short, sweet introduction to that term that might help students in some way. And then, along with that, I also did an uptake document, which I call in my own classes an "Uptake Submission Note." So that's like a 1,000–1,500 word document that describes the hows and whys behind the decisions that were made in the project, and also gives that behind-the-scenes look at how the project came into being. But the uptake also discusses the **antecedent knowledge** about writing and composition that the students have going into the project, as well as their uptake from the project and the unit itself: what they learn during that unit that they applied to their project, or, what they learn about writing or communicating within that project. And then we focus on **transfer**; how students see themselves transferring the writing and communication skills they practiced during that project or during that unit to either the next unit in the class, another class, or to their future academic discipline or professional career. Anything like that.

Brittany: Yeah, so it sounds like it covers kind of a wide swath of what learning is in their projects, so that's really neat. To go along with that, what do you really value when you're reading your student's uptakes? You talked a little bit about the concepts, but once they've done what you've asked them to do, what do you look at and say, "Oh, this is really interesting or a valuable way of doing uptake in the project." What catches your eye?

Emily: Something that I write even in the prompt to my students about the uptake submission notes *is yes, it's great if you're able to make a really cool Instagram post, but do you understand the work that went behind it as far as the* ***multimodal composing*** *of that Instagram post? Do you understand how the visuals and the alphabetic text are coming together to promote a cohesive message, that more in depth look at that genre?* I also really value when students are able to give examples of things that they've learned, not just saying, "I learned about multimodality." Like, that's great, I love that you learned about multimodality, but how? Was it a certain reading or a certain discussion, or a certain activity that we did during the class that helped you understand this Writing Program term a little better for you? So that's something I really look

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).

for. And then I guess just going in depth with things and doing more of a showing versus telling approach. Not just telling me that you learned a lot during this project, but how did you learn those things, why does it matter, how will it help you in your own writing identity and the projects you might work on in the future, and things like that.

Brittany: Yeah, and with multimodality, zines definitely fulfill that. I know you said you had some experience with making zines, but did you have any previous experience with writing the kind of uptake document you asking students to create?

Emily: No, and that was probably the most interesting part of doing this project because I've assigned uptake submission notes for a couple semesters now, and have read them from students, but I've never done that myself. And sitting down to do that was definitely a different experience for me because it is difficult to articulate what you learn from doing this project. I had to really think back for my antecedent knowledge section of my uptake notes I was like, "Alright, I knew about zines from this class", and it's like, "Alright then, well what exactly from that class do I remember from this class that I used then to make this," and so I had to think really deeply about that. I went back and I looked at what readings we did for that project in Barbi's class and I was like "Oh, that helps me a little bit." And then I was thinking, "Oh, how do I explain my learning process? That is hard to do." I'm always telling my students "Oh, be more in depth about things," and it is a difficult task, especially when you aren't used to articulating your learning process. And so, that was a very different experience for me just thinking about how I would articulate that for someone that isn't in my brain. I always say to students, "I'm not part of your learning process, I'm not a part of your writing process throughout these weeks, so you have to really clue me in to what happened and not just tell me step by step, *I did this, and then I did that and then I did that*." And so I had to do the same thing where I really needed to show in my uptake notes and not just tell people, "Oh, this is how I did it, easy-peasy!" But I had to really explain that, so that was definitely different.

Brittany: Yeah, I agree, I think a lot of us assign these uptake genres and are just like, "Oh, just tell me everything, I want to know!" But I like when you said, "I'm not in your brain," because we're learning that we might not be in our own brains the same way, or at least the brain that made the project has progressed, and maybe that recall might not be as instantaneous as we expect it to be for students.

Emily: Yes, and with that I feel like while I was creating my zine there were a lot of subconscious things that were happening during project creation that I didn't really think about. Like when I was thinking about what color

pens to use for each page or things like that, when I was doing it I just moved on we'll say *intuition*. But then I went back and thought about it and I'm like, "Oh, well I used these colors, and every time I talked about ecology I used green because I wanted it to be a thematic link throughout the whole thing" and I was like "Oh, that's interesting; I didn't even think about that when I was doing it." But going back and actually studying what I'd done and bringing those subconscious activities to light—and being able to articulate them—I thought was really important, and interesting as well. Or even just the incubation process. I had the last panel of my zine and thought, "Oh, I don't know how to end this, like I don't know how to wrap this up." So I walked away, I did something else for a while and came back to it and was like "Oh, got it!" and I was able to finish the panel. But then talking about my incubation process and talking about how I was able to let those things sit in my head while I did other tasks, and then I was able to come back to it—taking that time is part of the writing process and we don't always think about it. The times that we're not actually working on a project and we're doing something else is part of the writing process, or at least it can be.

Brittany: Yeah, and you bring up in your answer a couple things that I've been thinking about wanting to ask students to get at more, which is the down time between actively working on the project, and also, the idea of tools. So we're thinking about pen color and why you're choosing those, or other tasks we don't always actively ask about, and a multimodal project like this is a good way of thinking about the project and making connections we might not instantly think of. This is especially true if we're used to working in more text-based modes. I think that's really interesting.

Emily: That's something else I was thinking about that I briefly touched on in my uptake notes, that the tools I used were the tools I already had around me, so I didn't necessarily go out and get something new. I had a lot of glitter gel pens, just from liking glitter gel pens and using them in my planner, and so that's what I decided to use for this zine. The tools and materials were things that I already had access to, which might be different from someone else who is making a zine who doesn't have glitter gel pens sitting next to them, so they might use different tools just based off of what they have around them at the time, so I thought that was interesting as well.

Brittany: Yes, that's extremely interesting. So, what were some of the things that were easy about doing the uptake memo, and what were some of the things that were more challenging about doing the uptake memo?

Emily: I think the easiest part was just talking about some of the hows and whys behind decisions that I made. Like "Oh, well I decided to use

the glitter pens because they were next to me and that's why I decided to use that tool," that was kind of an easy thing to do. But the hardest part for me, actually, was transfer. I always ask students, "How are you going to transfer these writing and communication skills to some other setting?" That was probably the hardest part because I was thinking maybe it's different if you're a younger student who's just getting into writing, but since I do a lot of writing day-to-day in my work and in my studenting, I was like "How am I going to use these multimodal skills somewhere else?" and so I really had to think about that. I always tell my students they can state how they'll use these skills in another class or even in their personal life. During this time I was thinking, "Would I ever make a zine again, and where would I make a zine?" Or if it was just about the multimodal aspects of thinking about panels, could I transfer the same skills about zines into a comic if I was going to write a comic about something? So that was the part where I really had to sit back and think, "How will I transfer these writing and communication skills somewhere else?" Because you don't always think about that while you're making one text, "What's the next thing you're going to do with this skill or this knowledge?"

Brittany: As someone else who asks students a lot about transfer and uptake and just expects them to do it without thinking through that, I think that's especially relevant for multimodal projects. Because I think all of us in academic spaces, and this goes for students as well, know "I will write another academic paper in my life," or rather that's something expected. But for multimodal projects, they might be thinking, "When will I make another zine?" or "When will I make another YouTube video?"—and they might not. And so, it's a different kind of abstract situation that I think we need to take into account when talking about multimodal uptake, especially.

Emily: Yeah, I agree. Because even if I don't ever make a zine again, I might put together panels or spatial rhetorics and visual rhetorics, and the visuals and the pictures and the alphabetic text work together to create a message. It might not be in the same genre, but I might use that same multimodal skill again.

Brittany: So when those ideas were harder to access, what kinds of questions did you ask yourself, or what kinds of things helped you make it easier to articulate or capture your uptake? What did you turn to in those moments when it was challenging?

Emily: Well, we'll stick with the idea of transfer. I was thinking, "OK, well what are some of the things I do in my everyday life that involve some kind of communication, whether that's in my teaching, in my studenting, or in my personal life?" Therefore, what kinds of genres am I creating; what kinds of

audiences am I talking to? So I tried to think about it in that way, "How can I apply this to different aspects of my life?" And then as far as the uptake, like what did I learn from doing this project, I tried to think about—it's harder to articulate this in speaking than in writing—the hows and whys of my decisions. I tried to think, "Did I learn anything from making these certain decisions?" Like, when I realized I used the green pen as a thematic tool, did I learn anything from recognizing that? And maybe in my next project I'll ask, "What kinds of thematic tools can I use to make my reader think about what I'm talking about?"

Brittany: I think that makes sense. I like the point you brought up about articulating in writing versus speaking, because I think that's another thing we're thinking about with uptake: how can we give students different options to articulate their uptake, and how does their uptake change using those different modes? So we're not only doing uptake on multimodal projects, but also, I think what we're trying to demonstrate through the podcast is, "What is it like to do uptake—multimodally?" So, I like that you brought that up.

Emily: Because it is very different, and I always give students the option with their uptake notes to do an audio version or a video version, and I always thought, "Oh, it's going to be the same thing." Even just from doing this right now, I'm like "Oh, it's definitely not the same thing," that's definitely a different kind of experience to talk about your uptake versus to write about your uptake, so even now I'm learning through this podcast.

Brittany: So, tied, to that, thinking about students and what you ask them to do, now that you've both done it yourself and even further, are talking about your uptake of your uptake, how do you think what you've done aligns with what you ask students to do? And if you were teaching yourself, how do you think you'd look at your uptake for this project?

Emily: My big takeaway from doing all of this is that in my prompt when I give students the "Here's what you should be doing" or "Here's what I'm looking for in the uptake submission notes," I think I need to be clearer about what I am looking for and that it is difficult. Also, maybe even some tips to start thinking through, not just, "And how would you transfer these skills to some other venue or situation?" but here's how to do that. Here's how to sit and think about how you would transfer these skills, and give, maybe not examples, but more elaboration about how you could even do that thing in the uptake submission notes.

Brittany: Yeah, that idea of how to frame things, prime students to do what we're asking them to do in uptake. Maybe sometimes we need to do it ourselves to even be able to articulate what we're looking for. I think that's

another thing we're thinking about; how do we even begin to explicitly say what we value and what we want for students because uptake can be this really nebulous thing.

Emily: And not acting like it's this easy thing to write, either, and acknowledging that if you've never articulated *how* and *why* you've learned things before, this is probably going to be difficult for you. We can be saying "Here are some things I learned from this experience" and I think that would be valuable in a prompt as well. Just to say, "Hey, I did this too, and here's what I learned from it," and I think that would be an interesting thing to add to the instructions and the prompt.

Brittany: Yeah, because what I'm thinking about with my own uptake assignments dovetails a lot with what you're doing in terms of thinking I was taking pressure off students by saying, "Oh, just write whatever you're doing, I'm not looking for a right answer." But you're right, that that can take time away from the writing, and students might not know where to start or even what that starting looks like, so some additional grounding could be important. To end things, we already talked a little bit about your takeaways in general about uptake and what questions you're asking. Do you have any specific takeaways for what this means for how to approach uptake specifically for multimodal projects, or do you notice a difference?

Emily: A difference between what?

Brittany: A difference between the kind of uptake you are expecting from more text-based projects and what you're asking for in multimodal projects. Or, were there any specific things you think instructors should look out for if they are assigning uptake for multimodal projects that they might not think of if they're assigning largely text-based projects?

Emily: So I think within any sort of a multimodal genre, understanding all of the different modes that are going into the text is important, as well as how the modes are all working together. Because sometimes you might be able to explain how you created a zine or an Instagram post, or a podcast or something like that, but when you're creating that Instagram post, are you able to articulate how the modes are different and how they've all come together? Rather than just seeing the post as one multimodal genre. What is the visual part of this project doing? What is the alphabetic text doing? How are the modes coming together to promote a certain kind of a message? So, I think that's a little different. If you're just creating something text-based, then you are just looking at one mode, such as looking at the alphabetic text and what you learned from doing that—and that's great. But thinking about multimodality, you're thinking about all the multiple modes and how they're

all coming together and working separately to create some sort of a message or purpose.

Brittany: Yeah, that sounds great! Well, thank you for being here today and talking to us about multimodal uptake. I think this is a really good start to a hopefully ongoing conversation about how we do the kinds of things we're asking students and teachers to do in our Writing Program, so thank you for all of your contributions and your time.

Emily: Yeah, and thank you for having me today!

Brittany: Of course! Have a great day everybody, and thanks for listening!

Emily Capan is a PhD student studying rhetoric and composition. Her research interests include multimodality, writing program administration and pedagogy, and risk and crisis communication. She loves all things pop cultural and fantastical, from *Star Wars* and *Lord of the Rings* to witchcraft and astrology. You can usually find her hanging out with her dog, Clover, reading a book, and listening to dance music or Machine Gun Kelly.

Brittany Larsen is a PhD student studying rhetoric and composition. Her focus is on digital rhetoric, civic literacy, and writing program administration. When not working on academic things, she enjoys watching *Schitt's Creek*, *The Witcher*, and *Shadow and Bone***.** She also enjoys listening to an inadvisable amount of Taylor Swift, hanging out with her cat, Oliver and playing Mario Kart.

Notes

Uptake Submission Notes for Ecology Zine

Emily Capan

In this short piece, Emily Capan describes the uptake (learning) and writing processes that she engaged in while creating a zine about one of the P-CHAT terms, Ecology, which was also the topic of the interview in the previous pages.

This project all started because I wanted to create a piece that would either be a part of the *Grassroots Writing Research Journal* (*GWRJ*) or the Writing Program website. As someone who teaches in the Writing Program here at Illinois State University, I desired to both give back to the program and create something that would help my students better understand writing research. My primary goal for this project was to create an artifact that would help make the topic of P-CHAT (pedagogical cultural-historical activity theory) approachable for writing students who were starting to familiarize themselves with the theory. My next step was thinking about what different kinds of genres I could work with to help accomplish this goal. I wanted to work with a genre that I was already familiar with, that way I could be more confident in making sure that I was adhering to that genre's conventions. I have previously written a traditional article as well as co-authored an interview article for the *GWRJ*. For this project, I wanted to do something completely different. I thought about the various genres that I had worked with in all of the different classes that I had taken over my many years as a student. I decided to choose a genre that students might not be familiar with, but one that would be visually engaging and fun to read: zines!

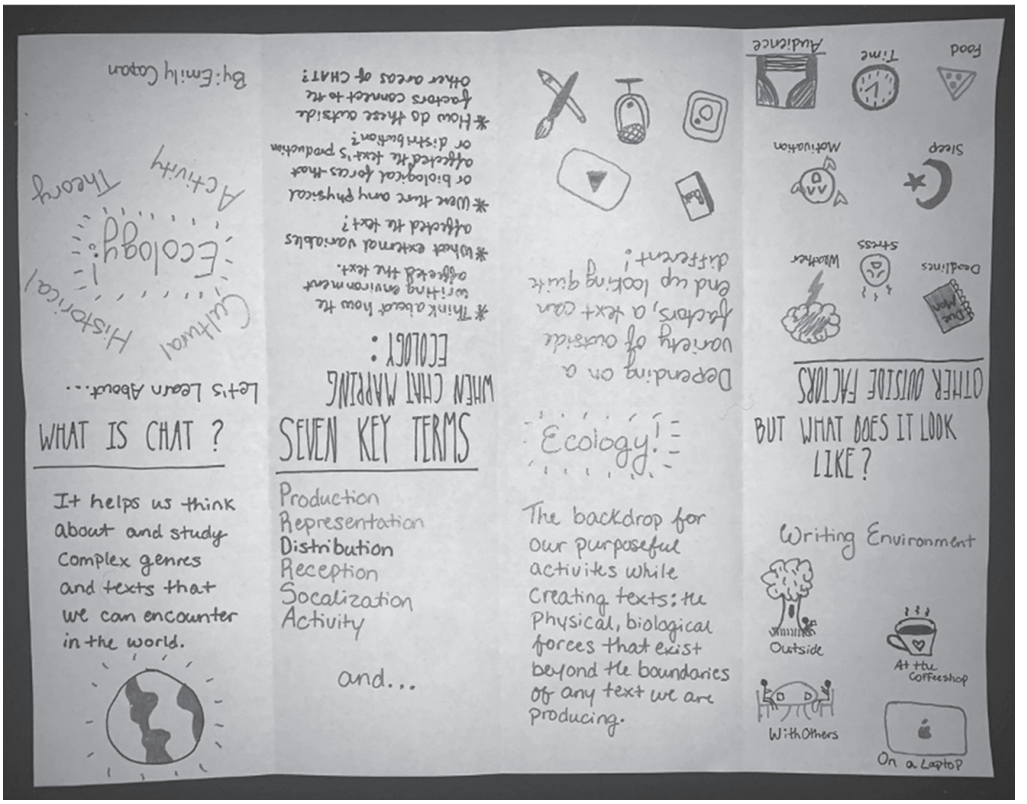

Figure 1: Emily's Zine project. Emily also made a video about her process creating the zine, which is available via the QR code in this article!

In a visual rhetoric class, I learned all about zines. A "zine" is a self-published small booklet that is intended to inform about a particular subject. We talked about their genre conventions and history before we made a zine of our own on any subject that we desired. I enjoyed working with this genre quite a bit because it is a highly multimodal genre. **Multimodal** refers to the use of multiple modes, or ways of communicating information, such as visual, aural, oral, tactile, spatial, alphabetic text, and so forth. Zines employ visuals, alphabetic text, and spatial rhetorics to get their message across about a specific subject. Traditionally, zines are only eight pages, including the front and back cover, and are made out of a single sheet of paper. Because of the zine's limiting genre conventions of page number, there was no way that I was going to be able to cover all of P-CHAT. Therefore, I decided to home in on one of the seven aspects of P-CHAT: ecology. I chose this particular aspect because of my antecedent knowledge of teaching this theory to my own students. Ecology is one of the most difficult aspects, both to explain as the instructor and to comprehend as the student, due to its more abstract nature.

Figure 2: QR code for Emily's video explaining her zine project.

The next step in my writing process was to choose my materials. I mainly used what I already owned and had easy access to: a couple of sheets of white printing paper, colorful glitter gel pens, a pencil, and a black pen. I divided up my piece of paper into the eight panels that would eventually become the eight total pages of the zine. My first draft was all done in pencil. My intention with the first draft was to map out all of the information that I wanted to be in the zine, as well as what order I wanted to present that information. I decided that it was important to address briefly what P-CHAT was first, that way the reader had a bit of context moving forward. Then, I thought that it would be important to move a step further to give "ecology" a definition next. For both of these terms, I pulled from the resources on the Writing Program website. The next topic that I wanted to cover in my zine was what ecology "looks like" out in the real world, with real people writing real texts. When I talk about P-CHAT with my students, this is usually where I start as well: working from the more technical definitions to more concrete applications. I also know that many writing instructors, including myself, also engage in "CHAT mapping" where you take a text and use the seven different aspects of P-CHAT to analyze and explain how a text culturally situated. Therefore, the last thing that I wanted to include in my zine was a couple of questions that would prompt the student to think about the ecology of any given text.

Once my pencil draft was completed, I met with a few of my peers, who are also writing instructors, to get their feedback on my draft. I often find that while something that I write might make complete sense to myself, it may be unclear to someone else. Not everyone thinks like I do, and no one can see into my head to understand my writing and uptake processes. After having read my zine, my peers had a few suggestions for me, such as, "You need more examples on this panel of other outside factors that could affect the ecology of a text" and "Your questions about CHAT mapping ecology are pretty vague . . . could you be more specific about what you mean?" I wrote down all of their feedback and then asked them follow up questions based on their feedback, taking notes on that as well. Sitting back down with my zine draft and my feedback notes, I made a list of changes that I wanted to make for the final draft. I took out another sheet of paper and my trusty gel pens and got to work.

When writing the text in the final draft, I called upon some of my skills that I use when I am bullet journaling. "Bullet Journaling" is a genre of planner where the writer (usually) creates their own planning system in

a blank notebook using hand drawn fonts, doodles, themes, and spreads. Because I make my own bullet journal, I am used to drawing fun fonts and making my writing fairly legible. I also like to doodle in my bullet journal because I am not a naturally talented artist, so I decided to incorporate that skill as well for the visuals of my zine. I wanted to make sure that my zine was consistent and cohesive, and so I decided that the color green was going to be my theme for my zine. When I think about ecology, I think about science and nature, and that (for me) has an association with the color green. I also used quite a bit of purple in my zine, as that is a complementary color of green and would therefore add to the cohesiveness of the artifact. My doodles were similarly color-associated. For example, my doodle for stress was drawn with a blue gel pen because of the metaphor that if someone is upset, they are "blue."

When I made all of the changes to my final draft, I was happy with the results. I think that the audience for this zine, students learning about P-CHAT, will find it helpful because it explains not only what ecology is, but what it looks like in the real world and provides multiple examples. It is also my hope that instructors will find it useful as well and could use this zine alongside discussions about genres, genre conventions, multimodality, P-CHAT mapping, and more! If I were to continue this project, I think that I could make it a series with a different zine covering each of the seven different elements of P-CHAT. The most challenging aspect of this project were actually these uptake notes! It is difficult to describe the "why" behind my decisions, as many times the decisions I make while writing are more subconscious. However, after writing about my uptake, I realized how integral the peer review process is for me and how much I rely on constructive feedback. Without it, my final artifact would have definitely not been as clear or effective. I will be more verbally appreciative to my peers after this project, knowing that they are a vital part of my creative process!

Emily Capan is a PhD student studying rhetoric and composition. Her research interests include multimodality, writing program administration and pedagogy, and risk and crisis communication. She loves all things pop cultural and fantastical, from *Star Wars* and *Lord of the Rings* to witchcraft and astrology. You can usually find her hanging out with her dog, Clover, reading a book, and listening to dance music or Machine Gun Kelly.

Notes

Let's CHAT about Machismo in Mexican Culture

Emily Reynoso-Romero

In this article, Emily Reynoso-Romero dives into machismo in Hispanic–and more specifically Mexican–culture. She uses Rhetorical Genre Studies and P-CHAT (Pedagogical Cultural Historical Activity Theory) to suggest that, by identifying gender norms as a type of genre, it's possible to see how gender norms can be reinscribed through the ways that humans use them to shape their behavior. As part of the article, Emily interviews different people, asking them for their thoughts on the concept of machismo in order to learn from their antecedent knowledge and opinions on the topic.

A Woman Needs a Husband More than an Education

"*Por que vas ha ir a la Universidad? Encuentra un hombre que te puede mantener!*" While I was applying for college my senior year of high school, my Mother told me that I shouldn't be applying for college but focus my energy on finding a husband that can support me financially. My Mother grew up in a very traditional Mexican society, so I understood why she thought this was useful advice. *Machismo* is a Spanish term defined as aggressive masculine pride found prominently in Hispanic culture. On a smaller scale, machismo affects the day-to-day life in the household, limiting women to subservient roles and men to the dominant decision-making roles. On a larger scale, it perpetuates gender inequality, domestic abuse, and lack of representation of women in the work force. My Mother's advice exemplified the socioeconomic subordination of women that follows machismo. Mexico itself has made a lot of progressive strides in the fight for women's rights. For example, according to the *Washington Post*, "For the first time, 50 percent of lawmakers in Mexico's lower house of congress are women. (That compares with 27% in the US House of Representatives)." However, machismo is still very alive in

Mexican communities, as well as in Mexican-American communities in the US. Generally, in many of these communities, working is seen as a symbol of masculinity whereas not working is seen as feminine. Many Mexican men and women, particularly from older generations, believe that a women's livelihood should be reserved for domestic work and as a provider for the men of the household. According to *The Pursuit of Gender Equality*, "Only 44.9% of working-age Mexican women are employed" while "Mexican men, in contrast, have a relatively high employment rate (78.5% of men are employed), leading to one of the largest gender gaps in employment in the OECD." Women in Mexico do indeed work, however the gender employment gap illustrates that Mexico is far from gender equality when it comes to working outside of the home. This is one example of how the concept of *machismo* works in Mexico, resulting in unequal opportunities for women. Gender norms are reinforced in the nuclear family and machismo experienced in people's day to day lives connects to large-scale phenomena such as the gender unemployment gap. When it's reinscribed through the everyday practices of people, a gender-norm genre such as machismo can continue because machismo values are passed down by older to younger generations.

In my own experience, I was given a broom before I was given a book, which was my first encounter with machismo. This might seem like a small, unimportant gesture, but being encouraged to learn how to clean before prioritizing education is part of how many Mexican women are socialized in ways that discourage them from empowering themselves outside of home responsibilities. Being born and raised in the United States has given me the privilege to use many resources to accomplish my goal of being a first-generation college graduate. That being said, machismo is not absent in Mexican-American society, but seems to appear differently than machismo in Mexican society. For example, if we look at modern day romantic-comedy, telenovela, *Jane the Virgin*, it focuses on a family of three Hispanic women, independent and working hard to be successful. In one of the episodes that came out in season five, episode eleven, about machismo. In this episode it showed how the grandmother accepts her boyfriend's machista behavior such as being expected to be served his food, to be cleaned after, and requesting women's products to be out of the bathroom so he can feel more comfortable. The main character Jane does not accept this behavior. She was infuriated by his lack of household responsibilities. This exemplifies how two different generations of Hispanic women raised in two different environments have encountered machismo and feel differently about it. But even though younger generations of Mexican and Mexican-American women are resisting these Machismo-based definitions of gender roles,

they are still embedded in understandings of gender that can make change difficult.

Gender as a Genre: Examples of Subgenres

In this article I've connected the ways that gender roles work in Mexican culture to ideas about genre that help me see some of the ways that behavioral patterns get repeated, helping to prevent a move away from machismo in Mexican culture. In rhetorical genre studies, **genre** is defined a lot more flexibly than just as way to categorize literature (which is how many people understand the concept of genre). As defined by Berkenkotter and Huckin (1993), "Genres are dynamic rhetorical forms that develop from responses to recurrent situations and serve to stabilize experience and give it coherence and meaning (479). When understood in this way, *Gender = Genre* can become easier to understand because our understanding of gender roles and norms is not some fixed set of categories, but instead these understandings are built, over time, through the ways that people behave, the ways they teach behaviors to younger generations, and the ways that they "police" behaviors that don't match up to expectations. In other words, if we understand that genres are built through activities, repeated over time, then we can understand that gender norms are built in the same way.

In some cases, a concept can be like an umbrella genre that contains lots of different understandings or subgenres beneath it. For example, in this article I'm trying to look at gender as an umbrella genre, which would mean that subgenres might include women, men, transgender, intersex, gender fluid individuals and other identities. While there are many possibilities for examining how different genres related to gender are built through expected behaviors, in this article, I want to focus specifically on women and men as subgenres in relation to heteronormativity. This is because the concept of *machismo* heavily influences heteronormative standards and gender roles for women and men in Mexico, as well as shaping attitudes towards other gender groups. Mexican society has come a long way in changing the conventions that identify how people in different gender categories can (or should) behave (act, dress, think, work); however, traditional conventions, like those related to Machismo, that define women as women and men as men, can work to prevent people from shaping gender categories in more flexible ways.

When studying an unfamiliar genre, a researcher can use **genre conventions** "to describe all the things [they could] discover (and discuss) about a particular genre that makes us recognize it as . . . what it is" ("Key Terms"). The conventions that fall under the traditional gender genre of

woman can include "teach[ing] the importance of caretaking, self-sacrifice, and self-denial" ("Gender Norms"). *The Pursuit of Gender Equality* explains how different factors influence Mexican women's lifestyles by stating "Gender stereotypes and discrimination continue to restrict women's choices, and women perform over 75% of all unpaid housework and childcare." This means that providing Childcare and unpaid housework are also conventions that fall underneath the expectations of being a woman.

Traditionally, Mexican women are expected to give up a part of themselves up in order to be a perfect homemaker, but are rarely encouraged to empower themselves and be independent. Rather than taking care of themselves, they are tasked with taking care of everyone else in their immediate family, especially the men. Machismo, as it works to shape expectations differently between genders, causes humans who fit into the gender category of "woman" to lose their autonomy. On the other hand, conventions that identify the gender category of "man" include "pride and domination, sexual potency, and benevolent sexism towards idealization of females" (Gender Norms"). If we try to see gender conventions as part of what identify the different ***genres*** of gender, then these conventions create a foundation for machismo as a particular genre of manhood that is enacted in Mexican culture.

Mexican women uphold machismo just as much as Mexican men. Men that explore beyond their masculinity as defined by machismo are seen as inferior men. In this way, both men and women reinscribe machismo as an important convention of the genre, by ridiculing men who fail to exhibit these conventions in their daily behavior. Thus the cycle continues.

Let's Focus on the Production of These Gender Norms and How Reception is Affected

Let's go back to the introduction when I said, "In my own experience, I was given a broom before I was given a book, which was my first encounter with machismo." This may have seemed like an exaggeration, but this is actually a true story. When I was four years old, I lived in Mexico for some months before my Mother decided to immigrate back to the United States. One day, my Grandfather came home from work and gifted me a toy broom and dustpan and said "*Aquí ten esto para que ya aprendes a limpiar*" which translates to "Here have this so you can start learning how to clean." My Grandfather was a good man, but his understanding of the conventions of being female were based on the way he was raised. As I think about this story, I can connect it to the ISU Writing Program P-CHAT term known as **production**.

Production is a term that contributes to the model for talking about how **cultural-historical activity theory** (**CHAT**) can be used to think about writing. P-CHAT is designed to help writers and researchers navigate through different aspects of literate activity, including representation, distribution, reception, socialization, activity, and ecology. One of the things that P-CHAT can help us do is to study the way a genre develops, how it's used by humans, and even the ways it can make humans feel and behave. According to the ISU Writing Program website, **Production** "deals with the means through which a text is produced," and, using this concept, writing researchers can consider "the genres and structures that can contribute to and even pre-shape our ability to produce text" ("Key Terms).

When using the idea of **production** as it applies to gender in Mexican culture, we can see how Mexican women and men are a production of their environment. Women and men are produced differently in machismo culture because of what they are taught and because each gender category has different activities, expected behaviors, and responsibilities. For example, Mexican women are usually pushed to do household chores, take care of younger siblings, and taught how to cook; while the men are expected to be the breadwinner of the family but are not expected to handle any responsibilities around the home. My sister, who was born and raised for most of her life in Mexico, has had three boys of her own. I have seen her do all the household chores, cook, and groom the men in her family while her husband does none of these tasks because his responsibilities involve being the breadwinner and mowing the lawn. This strong understanding of the division of activities that men and women can do obviously isn't based on what different genders of humans can physically do. Instead, it's based on conventions that, when acted out, create an unequal distribution of work in the Mexican family.

Another feature of machismo that shapes how gender is understood includes the idea that men are the decision makers in the relationship. They tend to control their partner's looks, actions, and sexual acts. Machista men act like this in part because they imitate the family dynamics that they grew up with, but machista men also continue to act this way because they are expected by women to treat them as their fathers treated their mothers. Any feminine characteristics a man shows are frowned upon by both sexes, which is the reason why it is hard to move away from machismo lifestyles. And even when men do move away from certain expectations, they can, at the same time, be reinscribing other norms. For example, in 2018 Bad Bunny, a Puerto Rican trap artist and reggaetonero, was denied a manicure in Spain, another country where machismo is a prominent cultural feature. In a 2018 article, Cepeda explains that the rapper Bad Bunny was "attempting to

reinvent masculinity outside of homophobia." But interestingly, when Bad Bunny used his social media feed to complain that he'd gone to a salon to "get my nails done (manicure + color) and "they told me NO because I'm a MAN," he got support for his statements about outdated gender norms, but also had Twitter users "question his sexuality" (Cepeda, 2018). In response, Bad Bunny reacted defensively, making statements of extreme virility, like "saying he could impregnate a troll's wife," which caused another round of backlash, and an later apology by the artist.

This complex interaction exemplifies that machismo is maintained because people can perceive things like getting a manicure as feminine and a threat to their understanding of manhood. They strongly believe that activities that are strictly for each sex should stay that way. But in pushing back against detractors of his genre-bending manicure, Bad Bunny used some of the same kind of language and thinking that are part of a traditional machista understanding of manhood. The production of these conventions for the subgenres of men and women cause machismo to persist. The reception within the Mexican community is similar when it comes to the production of how women and men are raised. **Reception** is defined by the ISU Writing Program as the way a "text is taken up and used by others" ("Key Terms"). But instead of using it to talk about how people take up texts, I will use **reception** as a way to describe how people take up gender norms and make use of them. The Mexican community allows the production of machismo ideologies because they interpret it as the norm. Machismo is taken up in many different ways, and it shapes how people think of other tools in terms of gender. For example, a broom is a regular cleaning tool, however, the broom I was given as a child was interpreted as a feminine object. Reception of gender is not limited to personal objects but also mannerisms, employment, and appearance. Individuals also interpret and experience machismo in different ways.

Interviews with People Who Have Different Antecedent Knowledge

So far this article has dealt with my own understanding of how machismo works to help define masculine and feminine genres in Mexican culture. But in in order to try to get a broader view, I also conducted four different interviews to explore what people with different antecedent knowledge know and feel about machismo. **Antecedent knowledge** is defined as "things a writer already knows that can come into play when a writer takes up any kind of writing" ("Key Terms"). What people have been taught in school and what type of environment they grew up in can affect what they know and feel

about machismo. That is why I thought it was crucial to get four different interviews with people who come from different backgrounds. I hope these responses will add to discussions about the genres of gender norms.

Key

- **Interviewee #1:** Eighteen-year-old Caucasian female who is a freshman in college. She has always lived in the suburbs of Illinois. All her family is born and raised in the United States.
- **Interviewee #2:** Eighteen-year-old Mexican female who is a freshman in college. She was born and raised in the suburbs of Illinois. Her parents immigrated to the United States from Mexico.
- **Interviewee #3:** Fifty-six-year-old Mexican female mother of six who immigrated to the United States and now lives in the suburbs of Illinois.
- **Interviewee #4:** Fifty-eight-year-old Mexican male father of five who was born and raised in Mexico and lives there.

Interview

Q1: How Would You Define Machismo?

Interviewee #1: "Well, I am not 100% sure because I was never informed on this topic."

Interviewee #2: "Machismo is the belief in which men are looked as superior to women within, more specifically, Latinx/Hispanic culture."

Interviewee #3: *"El machismo es un hombre que nada más piece en el mismo y es egoísta*." This translates to "Machismo is when a man only thinks of himself and is egotistical."

Interviewee #4: "*Es una creencia social generalizada donde se cree que el hombre tiene más valor y derechos que una mujer y que la mujer debe dedicar su vida al servicio sobre su hombre y los hijos*." This translates to "It is a generalized social belief that a man has more value and rights than a woman and that a woman should dedicate her life to the service of her man and children."

Q2: Is There Any Instance of Machismo That You Have Witnessed in Your Family or in Your Daily Life?

Interviewee #1: "The women in my family have always been expected to clean and cook."

Interviewee #2: "Yes, within my home. For example, my Mom gets off of work at 4:30pm every day and feels like she has the responsibility as a wife to create home-cooked meals. If she does not cook and clean before my Father gets home, he gets angry that she did not do what she was expected to do."

Interviewee #3: "*Si, los hombres en nuestra familia nada mas hacen lo que se les pegue la gana*." This translates to "Yes, the men in our family do what they want to do."

Interviewee #4: "*Sí como cuando el hombre se niega a apoyar en las labores domésticas y que las mujeres se dedican al hogar y al trabajo como si fuera responsabilidad absoluta de la mujer*." This translates to "Yes, as when men refuse to help with housework and women dedicate themselves to the home and work as if it were the woman's absolute responsibility."

Q3: Do You Feel the Men in Your Family Act As if They Are Superior to the Women in Your Family? Why?

Interviewee #1: "No, because my Dad always says that my family would not be the same without my Mom bringing us together."

Interviewee #2: "Yes, because at my family parties the men in my family always talk about how they have more responsibility than the women do because they are providing a roof over the family's head. They always try one upping the women."

Interviewee #3: "*Siempre, los hombre piensan que son mas mejores de las mujeres. Que son la majorité de las mujeres. Yo experencia esto en mi con mi ex-esposo*." This translates to "Men always think they are better than women. They believe that they are the majority. I have experienced this with my Hispanic ex-husband."

Interviewee #4: "*Se consideran que por ser hombres tienen derecho hacer cosas como salir de fiesta a deshoras de la noche y no permiten que la mujer vista ropas que al hombre no la parecen a él.*" This translates to "They consider that because they are men, they have the right to do things like go out partying late at night and not allow women to wear clothes that they do not find appropriate."

Q4: From Your Antecedent (Prior) Knowledge, How Would You Differentiate the Way Women are Treated in America Compared to a Latinx/Hispanic Country?

Interviewee #1: "Truthfully, I do not know because I was not taught much about women's rights other than in American culture."

Interviewee #2: "American Women are more respected by their husbands. They are more recognized for what they do than a Hispanic woman for the

work they do within and out the home. Hispanic and Latina women have restricted freedom due to their husbands' expectations."

Interviewee #3: "*En los Estados Unidos, mujeres veo que hay más justicia comparada a otras países. Esto depende de cada persona, pero aquí los hombres tiene miedo a los niños que ellos crean porque tiene obligacions legals que pueden destruir sus vidas. En la instancia donde un hombre está en su propio país hacen lo que se les pegue la gana pero en los Estados Unidos tienen más respeto y cuidado con sus acciones*." Which translates to "In the United States, I see women receive more justice compared to other countries. It depends on each person, but here the men are afraid of the consequences that come with having a child due to legal obligations which can destroy their lives if they do not cooperate. In the situation where a man is in his own country, he will do has he wants but in the United States they have more respect and are more careful with their actions."

Interviewee #4: "*Sí como la libertad de poder vivir sola, viajar solas, el despertar sexual en américa del norte. Las situaciones de feminicidios y las leyes más flexibles. En México el abuso sexual en los trabjaos y la inseguridad pública es mayor entre otras cosas, la trata de blancas*." This translates to "Yes, like the freedom to live alone, to travel alone, the sexual awakening in North America. The issue of femicides and more flexible laws. In Mexico, sexual abuse in the workplace and public insecurity is higher, and among other things, sex trafficking."

Interview Results: Making Machismo Visible

My interviewees were all asked the same questions and I tried to answer any questions that they had. All my interviewees understood machismo except my Caucasian interviewee. All four of them saw forms of machismo in their families. The Mexican interviewees had and seen more experiences with toxic masculinity than the Caucasian interviewee. Interviewee #3 and #4 were both from older generations and responded in relatively similar ways. Although interviewee #2 is younger and lives in the United States she still encounters elements of machismo within her family.

What follows are some of the takeaways I got from these interviews, but of course I can't claim that these four people represent all the possible understandings of machismo. However, I hope they will spark some conversations for readers:

- To me, interviewees #1 and #2 both show that machismo also exists in the United States and even Americans experience machismo.
- Interviewee #3 and interviewee #4 displayed how institutions in Mexico maintain machismo in the large scale through laws that do not hold

men accountable and do not protect women as much as they should. To me, these responses highlight ways that Institutions in Mexico enable individual machista behavior, thus linking large scale machismo to small scale machismo.

Why Does This All Matter??

Women empowerment is on the rise in Mexico. More than ever, Mexican women are attending college and entering the workforce. But it's concerning to see all of this improvement while still seeing how prevalent machismo is as a cultural genre for understanding gender. The prevalence of machismo in the family dynamic is what hinders the progress for Mexican women's equality. Creating a government that upholds feminismo rather than machismo will end gender inequality, domestic abuse, and lack of representation in the work force and improve women and men's daily lives in the Mexican family. Discussing the effects machismo has had on generations of Mexican women and men is vital to stopping the cycle. The P-CHAT terms used, and ISU Writing terms have allowed me to express the root problem that is machismo using an understanding of how genres are formed and maintained in the world to help me illustrate the ways gender norms become stable within a culture. I hope my readers will use this article to build different kinds of antecedent knowledge as they try to make a change within their own actions and make a change in the world.

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Emily Reynoso-Romero is a senior at Illinois State University majoring in exercise science. She plans on pursuing a graduate degree once she gets her undergraduate degree. Emily comes from a big Mexican family thus she is fully aware of the problems surrounding machismo. She strongly believes in the empowerment and equality of all women worldwide. She is excited to become a clinician one day and help low income minority communities by promoting health and fitness.

The Value of Podcasts as a Form of Composition, and Socialization Ignitor

Joey Dundovich

Drawing upon his various uses of podcasts, Dundovich seeks to advocate for the value of podcasts as more than just a form of passing time. Instead, podcasts can be phenomenal educational tools, credible research sources, as well as tangible ways to form connections with the other human beings directly/indirectly involved with the creation of this genre.

My Switch from Music to Podcasts of Varying Lengths

By the time I graduated from high school, I had grown tired of the music I was listening to during travel, working out at the gym, and used as background noise whilst doing schoolwork and general household chores. Even today, modern music still does not offer much to me. I was at a loss when I thought my only other listening options were audiobooks or general radio. I knew I wasn't going to have a car during my undergraduate years at Illinois State University, which meant I would have a lot of long walks around the community and bus rides when coming to/from the Chicagoland area. I also knew I wouldn't be able to walk and read (I'm jealous if you can) or walk and watch a video on my phone or computer, so my campus walks consisted of hearing construction noises and local Midwest wild animals during the first few weeks of summer.

Then, while reading a professional wrestling article on the sports media website, *Bleacher Report*, I stumbled across a podcast. According to Merriam-Webster, a podcast is defined as "A program (as of music or talk) made available in digital format for automatic download over the Internet." Until

this moment, I had assumed that "podcasts" were reserved for interviews, sort of like a longer version of a talk show's guest appearance.

And I was definitely wrong.

The hosts of the show *Ring Rust Radio* are three writers for the website that all shared a similar love for pro-wrestling. Their podcast episodes, which consistently last over three hours, cover news large and small, debates, predictions, fan emails/interactions and a sense of humor that frequently leaves me awkwardly laughing or talking back to my headphones like I'm on speakerphone—in public.

Soon after discovering the show, I branched out to different categories of podcasts. I listened to everything from comedy, celebrity interviews, journalistic reporting, philosophy, or just people discussing their less than glamorous jobs to a wider audience than just their coworkers. Overall, since the summer of 2013, I would estimate that I've listened to a podcast for *at least* thirty minutes each and every day. My travel, workouts, study sessions, and obligations were never overall time wasters, as I always had several podcast episodes at the ready to give me the boost I needed to get through it.

And as I look back over my interactions with podcasts, I can see a lot of evolution in how I understand them and what I use them for. This kind of self-reflection and awareness of texts is something that the ISU Writing Program does a lot through use of pedagogical cultural-historical activity theory, or P-CHAT. **P-CHAT** is a theoretical framework that focuses on how humans think and feel and act in the world, and Joyce Walker explains that the ISU Writing Program uses CHAT as a way to investigate "how people act and communicate in the world, specifically through the production of texts (71–72). In addition, the ISU Writing Program has developed some terms that can help researchers use CHAT concepts to unpack different kinds of literate activities by studying not just the text themselves, but all of the activities that can go into their **representation**, **production**, **distribution**, **reception** and **socialization**. Because the program focuses on using this framework for teaching, they call it **P-CHAT** (pedagogical cultural-historical activity theory). For example, a literate activity can be something as simple as a store posting a sign of their hours of operation, and with P-CHAT, we can discuss how people walking past the store can easily see the written sign that the owners of the store want to communicate to their potential customers (**reception**). This then impacts the likelihood of attending their place of business due to the schedules of various community members or visitors. P-CHAT looks at literate activities that go beyond the written papers in any standard English class, the written or spoken comments given by peers and the grade the final product receives. P-CHAT considers

communication at all stages of a text's life for all kinds of texts that involve communications between humans.

While much of my communication as a podcast listener is with myself, as the podcasts I listen to are typically recorded, they are a type of text. The avenues of communication I've been able to reference podcasts in, or conversations I've had based on a specific podcast, show the validity it has to fit into a P-CHAT framework. Something that is frequently paired to the concept of P-CHAT is **genre**. Again, according to the ISU Writing Program, genres are productions that we can "identify by understanding the conventions or features that make that production recognizable" (ISU Writing). Thus, genres can be identified by understanding features that might include things beyond just a certain kind of content, like how it is produced, what it looks like, who uses it, or what they use it for. If we follow the definition of a podcast as "an audio file that is downloaded off the Internet," this definition could be understood as one of the basic features that we can use to identify texts that we think fit the gene of podcast. But that very general criteria would certainly not be enough to truly understand what a podcast is. To understand podcasts, we'll need to consider all kind of other features, as well as identifying "subgenres that we might determine through looking at the content in the podcast, the target audience, format of the podcast, usage of speakers and writers, and time length of the audio file" ("Key Terms"). Creating these personalized and open-ended definitions of a genre can help a reader find the ideal text for their preferred use, much like my desire to use podcasts on commutes around a college campus.

Nowadays due to my career as an educator, identifying and understanding the value of different genres most often comes up when trying to help students identify sources that might be useful for their persuasive, argumentative, or informative projects. If we step back and consider what genres are though, the classic definitions of what kind of sources are appropriate for this kind of writing involve some pretty rigid, and sometimes not very helpful, definitions of genres. However, using a P-CHAT framework lends itself to my own teaching style of having a very open-minded framework of what "sources" can be, which I'll discuss below, in part to illustrate my own evolving understanding of the genre of podcasts.

An Atypical, but Sometimes More Valuable, "Source" for Research Projects

Whenever you recall working on a project that required a specific number of credible sources, I'm guessing some standard sources would include books, newspapers, magazines, database articles, and web pages . . . besides

Wikipedia of course). These would fit into the general consensus of what kinds of genres are worthy of being used for formal, school-based research.

As shown by the prior paragraph's scenario, there is something about the phrase "credible sources" that seems to cause people to either include or exclude certain kinds of texts based on their own understanding of research projects. Therefore, both the terms "credible sources" and "research projects" could be viewed as referring to specific types of genres!

But what causes this? In my time as an educator at the middle school, high school, and college, I've heard the following answers from students when asked what they believe makes a source credible enough to be used in a school project or to be a trusted location to learn about something outside of school.

- "If it's online, it has to have a .org, .edu, or .gov to be used."
- "It has to be a 'peer reviewed' source, and you have to be able to find it through our school library's database."
- "The author has to be a professional in the area they're talking about."
- "It has to be available in print in some form . . . it has to be WRITTEN on a document."

And yet, these associations all serve (intentionally or not) to limit potential gold mines of information, any of which might end up being more helpful than the "traditional" associations so many of us are conditioned to use to become educated on a subject. This kind of traditional thinking fails to acknowledge frequently used items in educational environments including Ted Talks, blogs, social media posts, podcasts, documentaries, filmed speeches, billboards, posters, symbols, and other multimodal and uniquely formatted genres that can be, and often are used. Other kinds of sources ultimately used in research can also involve genres that do not fit some/any of the above definitions of a credible source, especially audio and/or visual only genres. But since these texts are actually used all of the time in scholarly writing, understanding what genres could be labelled as "credible resources" all depends on what each individual audience member wants to utilize a text for. So in other words, the kinds of texts an author might decide to use as resources is influenced by how a person understands and uses them.

Joyce Walker defines **reception** as, "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)" (75). In the case of an audio file, which is what a podcast is, the possible uses are

truly up to the audience member. While my original purpose for becoming a podcast listener was desperation of wanting something to listen to/view during my commutes, chores, and workouts (my reception), I ended up learning new things about topics I was and wasn't already knowledgeable about. I also became a fan of podcasters/guests, cited certain podcast quotes as legitimate sources in essays, and made friendships with other fans of the podcasts. So my personal understanding of the genre of podcasts evolved over time, based on the kinds of podcasts I listened, the activities I engaged in related to podcasts, and my sense of what they could be used for, by me or by other people (including my students). For me, podcasts now include "source of credible research" as one of their possible features, which is much different than my original understand of them as "mostly for entertainment," or as a kind of "background noise" for other tasks I might be completing.

Some of the new knowledge I learned directly from listening to podcasts would include: stand-up comedy from hearing comics discuss their profession on their own/friends' podcasts, courtroom and law enforcement practices from *Serial*, and learning more about some of my favorite actors and the TV/film communities through interview-based podcasts such as *The Joe Rogan Experience* and *WTF with Marc Maron*. The content from all of these podcasts ended up becoming crucial pieces of "expert testimony" in research I was completing, which focused on communication and writing practices in each industry such as stand-up comedy, criminal justice, TV/film production and communication to their respective audience members or colleagues. On top of that, Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL), one of the top citation style guides for research practices, has citation procedures for citing a podcast/spoken word text in MLA, APA and Chicago Style formats.

The Production of over Ten Years and 500+ Weekly Episodes

Donald Wood, a writer for the transit based website *Travel Pulse* and frequent contributor for the popular sports media publication *Bleacher Report*, had the hobby of hosting a pro-wrestling podcast for over 500 weekly episodes for a decade at the time of our interview. Wood and his co-hosts, fellow *Bleacher Report* writers Mike Chiari and Brandon Gallivan, have perfected the show's format throughout the years via their current outline:

> We know the outline really well at this point the efficiency of time is very important to us. The crossover between podcasting and writing is pretty prevalent right there. I think that writing allows

> you to figure out a way to articulate the points you really want to convey. Whereas when you do it on the air, it's more off the cuff. So essentially what I'll do is write an "article" (the outline) about what the show is going to be, and then I'll roughly follow that once we are recording (the show or specific segment).

Their current outline has evolved to a show format that is typically around three hours but has been as long as seven hours of content. Currently, there are six main bullet points, one per segment of the show's format, with each "main bullet point" having between six-to-eight sub-points that will vary each episode in terms of the content being discussed on the show.

The hosts have mentioned that these changes have occurred due to their personal lives changing and work responsibilities at their "actual paying jobs" adjusting since the show's beginnings. Just like a long running television or books series adjusts as the key producers, and the world around them, changes, so to do audio based texts.

This long term process of adjustments is a form of **production**. While the basic activities the hosts engage in for writing articles vs. writing podcast outlines might vary somewhat, the processes involved can still be viewed in a similar manner. This is because production is described within P-CHAT as "the means through which a text is produced. This includes both tools . . . and practices" (74). For podcasts, the practices can involve the changes that Wood and his co-hosts have made over a ten year period to the show's length, content, and focus areas. **Tools** are just as diverse, given the technological advances that often occur from year to year, and especially over a decade with regards to computers, microphones, headphones, noise canceling equipment, editing software, advertiser involvement, and publications/ platforms to upload the finished podcast to.

Therefore, my comparisons between podcasts, traditional academic assignments, and social media groups make use of the kind of research involved in understanding production. Walker describes this metacognitive process as work an author does when they are "thinking about or investigating production for a specific text . . . [and] really trying to uncover how individuals and groups create texts under specific conditions, using specific tools, and following certain practices" (75).

Of course, there are still remaining inside jokes, enduring segments, and audience interaction on the show. But just as the pro-wrestling world has changed over the past decade, so have the conversations discussing this corresponding industry.

The Similarities/Differences between Socialization for Writing Articles and Podcasts

Another clear component of a P-CHAT investigation of literate activity is the involvement of other human beings directly/indirectly involved in the making of a text. This involved the term **socialization**, which is viewed as, "the interactions of people and institutions as they produce, distribute and use texts. . . who we are, what we do, what we know" (ISU Writing Program 76). Thanks to Wood's primary career as a writer, he is very experienced in dealing with all forms of socialization and reception from collaborators and audience members of his work. Due to a majority of his work being published on Internet based publications, he has seen the good, bad, and the ugly of comments/reviews audiences are allowed to give. This differs from the traditional view of an educational text. As Walker points out that:

> A text like the five-paragraph essay is highly socialized—this means that when a teacher assigns this kind of essay, he/she is (conceptually) interacting with a whole set of ideas and beliefs about what this essay is and what it does. These interactions are "made up of" the ways people have discussed and used the five-paragraph essay over time. (76)

For *Ring Rust Radio*, interactions typically exist in the realm of inside jokes/humor about the hosts' lives and writing experiences brought up on *Ring Rust Radio*, Wood will roll with the punches, as feedback is simply a part of being a legitimate producer of content. These forms of reception by the audience have evolved over time in terms of how he considers their views:

> I used to take it all very seriously. But we live in a very "troll oriented" society and with all due respect, I know the content of my article is quality. Otherwise, I wouldn't have posted it on the website. So I don't need some random person telling me my AEW and WWE (two pro-wrestling companies) trade article "sucks" because they don't agree with the premise. That doesn't always mean the entire article sucks, it just shows that you don't agree with the premise. There's a difference.

Unlike receiving a letter grade, a graded rubric, or comments in a school assignment's margins, the comments Wood gets are often public. Given that these comments can be extremely negative, Wood has had to develop "thick skin" as a professional. When asked how this confident style of handling feedback occurred, Wood believes:

> It progressively happened over time. I originally started at a newspaper after college covering the Philadelphia Flyers (a pro-hockey team) for like three years. Then I went to *Bleacher Report*,

> there they encourage you to read all the comments, and I was really doing that. In case I misspelled something or an error I missed. After a while it just became, "This article sucks" and "He shouldn't be doing this!" That's not feedback. If you're looking for feedback and find someone who commented and said, "I think this hypothetical trade is a little lopsided. Here's what I would've done to make it a little more fair" then I can understand that, and I would genuinely consider that.

Drawing upon earlier connections made in this article about writing and other forms of composition, Wood feels that this kind of response to the wide range of feedback any published work will get is comparable to the passion shown by sports fans on radio shows:

> If anyone listens to sports radio, they can talk about this. Say the Phillies (Philadelphia's pro-baseball team) are not doing really well. A caller goes, "The bullpen is not doing very well, this player hasn't been doing well when he comes in. I wish the starters would get more time." Or the guy that calls in and goes, "Yeah man the Phillies suck! They don't know what they're doing. We should fire this person!" That's the difference, most comments online are the latter.

Ironically, the most notable example of a negative review in Wood's writing career which his co-hosts and fans of the pro-football team the Seattle Seahawks still bring up to him over half a decade later is a *Bleacher Report* review he gave of their team's decisions in the 2012 National Football League Draft. Wood gave the team an "F" but two years later the team ended up winning the league championship with key players from that same "F" graded draft class. He chuckled when stating the life the article has taken on:

> Every NFL draft I get hate. Every time the Seahawks make the playoffs I'll get hate. Any time Russell Wilson eats a meal I'll get hate. It's awful. But that goes back to what we were doing at the time. We wrote "Quick Hits" which were twelve-to-fifteen articles a day. That article took me thirty minutes to write at the end of a shift and it meant nothing to me. Two years later it came back to be on *The Soup* (a comedy news show on E! Television) and it just blew up on me ever since.

On the flip side, another podcast co-hosted by Wood, *Attention Horrors*, got positive feedback from its much smaller audience base than his other creative endeavors, it formally ended after thirty-four episodes. This was due to the lack of success in trying to make a hobby a worthwhile endeavor financially, "I've been told not to look at it (*Attention Horrors*) as a failure, but there's no other way to look at it. In this business you have to be very

honest with yourself. That was an abject failure because I couldn't secure the advertising necessary to continue it." The show itself covered historical true crimes and long discussed myths/superstitions. To put their own spin on the popular topics in podcasting, the hosts added comedic elements during conversations about these topics in a heavily research based show. Even with the show's premature conclusion, he remained positive about reflecting on the show's active life, "Content wise, I'm most proud of some of the stuff I did with it, some even more than *Ring Rust Radio* or my writing career. It's really hard to convey some of those points and be very specific and true to fact, while also adding humor, with horror and murder crimes." All in all, it appears that for a producer of content to have long-term enjoyment with their career, the need to persevere through every potential reception an audience member might have is arguably just as important as putting out what you truly feel is quality content for the world to see. Wood, a self-described introvert, ended the interview by saying that he feels that when he and his co-hosts "stop having fun, we're gonna stop the show."

Podcast Fan Group Monitoring and Starting Two Podcasts in the Past Year

Throughout my years of listening to podcasts I've heard hosts mention various social media based fan groups for their podcasts. The two wrestling podcast groups I am a member of have around 250 and 7,500 members. While clearly not as gargantuan as the group membership numbers of certain television shows or movie franchises, the interactions I've had within these two groups has been extremely memorable and fulfilling. These cyber forms of socialization, and occasional friendships, have absolutely played a large role in my continued fandom of the pro-wrestling world as my schedule has changed ever since my discovery of podcasts.

Someone that I developed a cyber friendship with, Jeff Lippman, has a particularly unique entry into the podcasting world. He ventured into podcast listening "probably in 2012–13 because my girlfriend at the time listened to some. I never started downloading any myself until I had a dull long term assignment and one of my coworkers suggested I listen to podcasts to pass the time." Like myself, Lippman joined the group a while after becoming a listener to the wrestling podcast *Solomonster Sounds Off*. However Lippman has made the time commitment of moderating the group we met in. As one might expect with a group of thousands of members, Lippman described the backstory of becoming a mod, "The podcast host became embarrassed by his group and decided to add 2 moderators. He asked the group to nominate potential mods. I was only in the group 7 months, so I kept out of it until

I saw an enormous amount of members nominated me. I was shocked. I didn't think I was well liked." Through these interactions from before (and after) his moderator role, his own listening to the genre, knowledge of pro-wrestling, and other niche topics, Lippman made the decision to start his own two podcasts with co-hosts interested in similar content. Both shows were less than a calendar year old by the time I interviewed him for this article. He claims the choice to take on this unique side business was simple. He stated, "I thought I had things to add that I wanted to bring to larger audiences. I thought I could add new things to the crowded field." Because of the high level of accessibility the podcasting world offers for those that want to start their own show, even the most niche fields have a plethora of listening choices for any individual with hosts holding different forms of credibility. A range of hosts covering this topic include all kinds of current/former employees for pro-wrestling companies, journalists who work for wrestling centric publications, journalists who podcast as a hobby (like Wood and his co-hosts), and fans in career fields that have little to do with the entertainment world.

This lack of gatekeeping to the genre of podcasting makes the path to being involved with a successful/popular show all the more difficult due to oversaturation. Beyond hosting his own pro-wrestling podcast, *The Hammerlock Hangover*, Lippman also co-hosts a variety podcast called *The Garden of Doom*. This second podcast covers lesser known areas of science, culture, world history, and macabre stories, which can venture into the extremely crowded podcast topics of true crime, historical legends, and scientific anomalies.

Despite describing himself as an excellent multitasker, Lippman feels that the biggest stressor between co-hosting two podcasts is, "finding new content I can speak on intelligently. Also, trying to force myself out of repetition. No one wants to hear the same thing over and over again. I've had some success with guests but it's not nearly as easy as I thought it would be—at least real experts." The fact that he actively understands that "no one wants to hear the same thing over and over" shows the awareness of potential listeners making the active choice, as podcasts are not bound to original air times as television shows or movies debuting in theatres, to try out his shows for a different perspective than other shows. This encapsulates some of the P-CHAT concepts covered earlier in this article, this audience awareness impacts a show's production, socialization, and reception for a genre that has such open availability and access as podcasts do. It is for this reason that podcasts can serve as valuable educational tools for listeners finding (or often stumbling upon) a show for whatever reason/purpose. Like any text, podcasts are what the audience makes of them. So don't miss out on the opportunity to have topics presented in styles you're desiring or in a

manner that can open up opportunities for conversations and interactions with others that you would have never engaged with otherwise!

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Joey Dundovich is a high school English teacher in the suburbs of Chicago. A graduate of ISU's English education Bachelors program, as well as their English studies Master's program, he is elated to find a way to continue to give back to a place that has helped him grow so much as a person and educator. An avid podcast listener, he hopes this article can show students that it's always worth it to try and reach out to others to converse about your shared interests.

The *Grassroots Writing Research Journal* Presents: Picturing Literate Activity

Write Baby, Write!

Laurel Krapivkin

PLA Narrative: I used to be able to spend seven-to-eight hour stretches of time writing for classes, answering emails, and reading for my research. Since the pandemic, I've been the sole caretaker for my daughter and much of my day is spent caring for her. Now, I'm lucky if I can find fifteen-to-twenty minutes of uninterrupted time to work. This is the plight of many parents and caretakers in the pandemic who now find their writing/work time after their little ones go to bed. I've also found that the physical spaces I write in have drastically changed. I now often write on the floor of my kid's nursery, constantly pulling my laptop cord out of her hands and moving my phone/laptop out of her reach. I've noticed that it even takes a physical toll on my body, as her rocking chair that I often occupy isn't exactly ergonomic.

Figure 1: My pandemic writing views have changed drastically over the past year. Being the primary caretaker for my daughter, I often write in short bursts, usually from her nursery rocking chair.

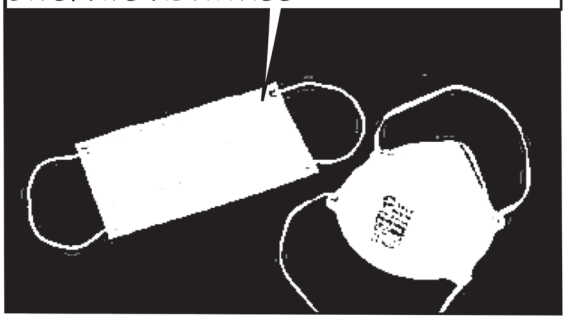
Pandemic Bio: Laurel Krapivkin is a third year PhD student in children's literature, and she currently live in San Diego, CA with my daughter, spouse, cat and dog.

MASKING LITERACY

BY ANYA GREGG AND ELLIE STAMER

In this graphic article, we offer a point-of-view perspective of a tool that has become prominent in our everyday literacies in the last two years: Masks. Masks are a great example of a tool or material object that can be considered as a component of everyday literate activities. We use masks for very practical purposes, but we also understand them to represent a wide range of meanings. Our uptake of masks and masking shapes us and our communications. They impact our physical activities, and they act as visual representations of our ideas, opinions and identities. In this article we share our ideas about what a mask might have to say regarding their role in our complex literate lives.

HI THERE! I'M A PROTECTIVE FACE MASK. I'M A USEFUL TOOL, BUT WE'VE BEEN IN THE NEWS A LOT LATELY, AND WE'VE BECOME INVOLVED IN A LOT OF PEOPLE'S LITERATE ACTIVITIES.



SOME PEOPLE SEE MASKS AS A NECESSARY INCONVENIENCE, BUT AS THEY'VE BEEN INCORPORATED INTO EVERYDAY LIFE, MASKS HAVE ALSO BECOME A WAY FOR PEOPLE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES.

COOL COLORS AND FUN DESIGNS CAN HELP TO COMMUNICATE THE WEARER'S INTERESTS OR PERSONALITY. YOU GO GIRL!

BECAUSE OF THE PANDEMIC, I'M ALSO BEING WORN IN TONS OF MEDIA.

THIS IS SUPERSTORE, AN NBC SHOW. THEY CHOSE TO INCLUDE MASKED ACTORS!

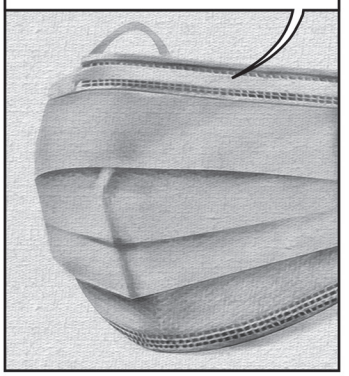
MASKS HAVE ALSO BEEN INCORPORATED INTO PERFORMANCES BY MOVIE MAKERS, DANCE CHOREOGRAPHERS, AND THEATER COMPANIES.

EVEN THOUGH THE IDEA OF WEARING MASKS IN PUBLIC IS VERY YOUNG IN THE USA, OTHER PLACES HAVE USED MASKS AS A TOOL FOR A LONG TIME.

IN 2020, TIME MAGAZINE RAN AN ARTICLE ABOUT HOW EASILY COUNTRIES SUCH AS CHINA, THAILAND AND JAPAN ADAPTED TO WEARING MASKS AT THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, BECAUSE THEY HAD ANTECEDENT KNOWLEDGE FOR THE PRACTICE.

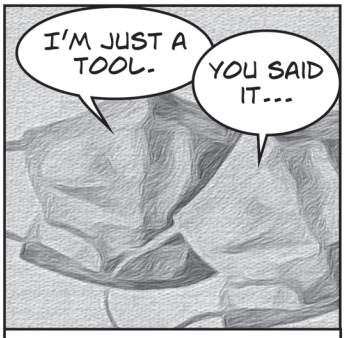
PUBLIC MASK WEARING HAS BEEN USED REGULARLY TO FIGHT THE SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE IN JAPAN SINCE THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY! THE SPANISH FLU PANDEMIC CHANGED THE GAME FOR MASK WEARING THERE, AND IT'S USEFUL TOOL FOR HEALTH CARE EVER SINCE.

IN THE U.S., MASKS USED TO BE SEEN MOSTLY IN HOSPITALS.



MASK WEARING IN THE U.S. IN PUBLIC PLACES, OR EVEN IN PRIVATE HOMES, ONLY BECAME COMMON DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC IN MARCH 2020.

AND SOME PEOPLE (IN THE U.S. PARTICULARLY) STILL FEEL THAT I (THE HUMBLE MASK) REPRESENT A KIND OF INTERFERENCE OR CONTROL THAT THEY FEEL IS OVER-REACHING.



MY IDENTITY CHANGES BASED ON HOW COMMUNITIES USE ME AS PART OF THEIR ONGOING EXPERIENCE.

WHILE I DO HELP KEEP PEOPLE SAFE, I CAN ALSO CREATE PROBLEMS. FOR MEMBERS OF THE DEAF/HARD-OF-HEARING COMMUNITY, COVERING MOUTHS MEANS THEY CAN'T LIP READ, WHICH CAN CREATE COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES.

HERE IS A MASK THAT LETS YOU SEE THE WEARER'S FACE! GREAT FOR GAUGING EMOTIONS, AND FOR PEOPLE WHO NEED TO LIP READ, BUT MAYBE NOT SO GREAT WHEN YOU HAVE SOMETHING IN YOUR TEETH.

IF YOU LOOK AT MASKS AS TOOLS, IT MIGHT BE A LITTLE EASIER TO SEPARATE ME, YOUR MASK, FROM THE WAYS PEOPLE ARE INCLUDING ME IN LARGER ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE PANDEMIC, AND OTHER POLITICAL ISSUES.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS MASKS ARE IMPACTING YOUR EVERYDAY LITERATE ACTIVITIES?

Anya Gregg is an eighteen-year-old intern at the *Grassroots Writing Research Journal,* but because of the pandemic has to work at home.

Eleanor Stamer graduated in May 2021 from ISU. She was in the publishing studies sequence and was one of the editor interns for the GWRJ for two years. When she isn't reading or searching for jobs, she's probably listening to Taylor Swift or watching the Great British Baking Show.

I Read It from (Back) Cover to Cover: Reading Japanese Manga as Literate Activity

Dorothy M. Stone

You might think books are pretty typical, but in other parts of the world, a book can look totally different. In this article, Dorothy M. Stone analyzes the genre of Japanese graphic novels called manga. Read from right to left, manga has a growing number of readers in the West, who celebrate their love for it in all kinds of ways!

Introduction

Have you ever opened a book upside down? How quickly did you flip it back over and find the place you left off? Pretty quickly, I bet. But imagine the book you're reading is backwards—literally; front is back, left is right, and suddenly what you're reading doesn't make sense. That's what it's like to read manga for the first time. While I'm a seasoned reader now (and often have to double-take at American comics instead), there was once a time when I didn't know what manga was or how to read it—and that might be you right now, too.

"Manga" is the name of Japanese graphic novels and comics. The word derives from two kanji characters, 漫 (*man*), which means "whimsical," and 画 (*ga*), meaning "picture." This form of art and writing dates back as early as the 12th century when stories were depicted on scrolls, but really started developing into the form we know around the 1700s (Matsutani). The subject of these stories could range from legends to lessons, or mundane events to magnificent tales. Manga is such a huge part of Japanese culture that it's used not only for entertainment, but also for education, business,

tourism, and other industries. Worldwide, manga is rapidly growing, with over 400,000 volumes sold each month in the U.S. alone (for comparison, the most popular series in Japan sells almost 200 million copies monthly)!

What makes a manga?

Manga has a wide range of **genre conventions** that readers will recognize, though they may take some getting used to. While manga may be the Japanese equivalent to American comics, there are quite a few things that differentiate the two genres. Much like Western comics, manga combine a series of pictures and words that are meant to be read in a sequence. Because manga is printed for mass distribution, it is composed entirely in black and white. So, for instance, if a character has light hair, their hair might be left blank, whereas someone with darker hair might appear to have black hair because it is filled in. This can make it challenging to differentiate between characters, props, or backgrounds, which is why manga artists additionally use what are called screentones to shade things in. **Screentones** are a variety of gray shades and patterns that provide depth to the page, and can be used for things such as hair, shadows, clothing, and more.

Genre

From the ISU Writing Program, Genre means a kind of production that it is possible to identify by understanding the conventions or features that make that production recognizable.

Since comics are printed pieces, it's easy to see and read what's going on, but it may be harder to imagine the sounds. Luckily, manga has you covered! In manga, **onomatopoeia**, or, words that describe sounds, are used to express movement and impacts (like "zoom" or "bang" in English), but also the things that we wouldn't usually hear anyway, like surprise, staring, and heartbeats. Sounds and movement can also be expressed in the drawings themselves through the use of lines, gestures, and more screentones.

Of course, sounds also come across in actual speech bubbles. Like in the comics you might be used to, manga is driven through dialogue, or the conversations that characters have with one another. These reveal plot, feelings, and motivations and lay everything out for the reader to understand, with additional side comments written in smaller font outside the bubble. It's easy to tell the tone each character is taking when they speak by looking at their facial expressions, or the shape of the speech bubble. While a full, round bubble indicates regular speaking, bubbles with dashed outlines usually mean whispers, and jagged ones show shock or yelling. The hard part, though, might be in following the conversation itself—try it for yourself (Figure 1).

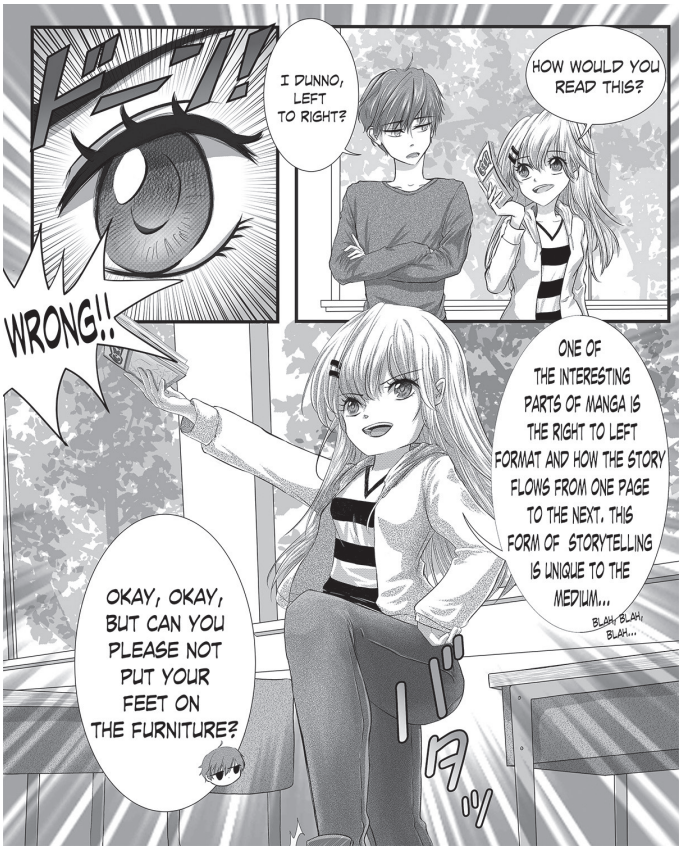


Figure 1: A typical conversation, illustrated by mintsie.wixsite.com /minstie.

Western comic readers like you or me might get confused at first when we're reading speech bubbles and it sounds like the conversation is going backwards—that's because it is! In Japan, text is read in columns, starting from the right side and moving toward the left (Figure 2). As a result, the orientation of the page itself is flipped. If it's your first time, reading manga might take some getting used to, but once you get the hang of it, you'll be able to follow along.

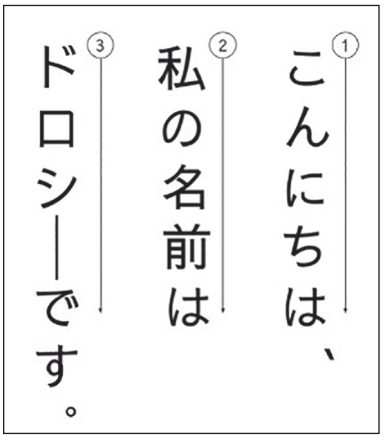


Figure 2: *Tategaki* reading direction. Translation: "Hello, my name is Dorothy."

There was a time, however, when publishers would actually mirror the pages of a manga so that it conformed with Western writing conventions. While it might have been helpful for new readers, it sometimes damaged the original art because characters would appear differently, such as if they had writing on a t-shirt or a scar over their

left eye rather than their right, or changing nuances that are plot-specific, like a right-handed character becoming left-handed. These days, though, manga is published in the original right-to-left format.

Different Needs for Different Read(er)s

So while the orientation of the page remains based on Japanese language conventions, a lot of the content in manga is dictated by who the intended audience is. Whenever a new series debuts, it's already been tagged with a particular audience, each with its own expected **genre conventions**. Some common manga subgenres are ***josei*** and ***seinen***, which are aimed at women and men, and ***shōnen*** and ***shōjo***, which are aimed at younger boys and younger girls, respectively. For the sake of describing some of these differences, I'll be looking closely at the latter two, since those are the most mainstream (Table 1).

Shōnen manga series are typically action-driven and star a protagonist whose quest is to become strong or to save others (whether or not he wanted to in the first place). These types of stories often involve fantastical worlds or insert mystical elements into a real-world setting. Probably the first manga series I ever picked up, *Naruto,* is considered one of the most mainstream examples of a *shōnen* manga. Its titular protagonist is a class clown whose goal is to become the strongest ninja in his entire village. Over the course of 700 chapters (yes, I read them all), he masters difficult ninja techniques, defeats world-threatening powers, and proves his strength to everyone around him.

Table 1: Conventions of *shōnen* and *shōjo* manga at a glance.

Shōnen (Translation: "Boy")	***Shōjo*** (Translation: "Girl")
• Action • Main character goes from weak or unpopular to strong or famous • Fantasy setting • Characters are somewhat muscular • Dramatic shading and expressive gestures convey emotion • *Naruto* and *Inuyasha* are examples of series in this genre.	• Romance • Plain, relatable main character • Realistic setting • Characters have large eyes and slim bodies • Lots of sparkly or flowery special effects and close-up shots • *Sukitte Ii na yo* and *Kamisama Kiss* are examples of this genre.

Shōjo, on the other hand, are often romance stories that begin with a single, relatable heroine in a common setting, such as high school, who falls in love with someone very much her opposite. I could name a million different series with this premise, but one I remember being unreasonably obsessed with in high school was *Sukitte Ii na yo*, or *Say "I love you."* In it, Mei Tachibana navigates high school as a loner, unwilling to make friends with the classmates she finds shallow. One day she kicks Yamato, the most popular guy in her grade, down the stairwell, and he instantly becomes interested in her atypical personality. Okay, reading that back, I'm getting a lot of secondhand embarrassment, but that's what you sign up for if you read *shōjo*. Prepare for lots of super-saccharine love stories and even more tossing manga across the room.

In addition to the plots, the art for a *shōjo* manga series will also differ from that of a *shōnen*: the former will have characters with large eyes and skinny proportions, use lots of sparkly screen-tones and close-up shots, while the latter might have more muscular characters, darker lines, and more expressive gestures.

This isn't to say that manga geared toward these audiences adhere strictly to these rules; like any other book, TV show, or movie we're familiar with, though, these stories can overlap with other themes, such as comedy, horror, or fantasy, and looking through any collection will show you plenty of exceptions. The things I've listed are some conventions specific to certain manga subgenres, but despite all of it, audiences overlap much more than that. For instance, despite being a girl, I loved *Naruto* growing up, and that's as standard of a *shōnen* as it gets!

From the Drawing Board to Your Shelves

Now the whole publishing process for manga is a pretty complicated thing, so I won't get into the nitty-gritty, but I do want to share a couple things about it that will help us understand its representation—the things that shape how authors plan a text or how readers take it up. Manga is usually serialized, or regularly published, in either a weekly or a monthly magazine. These magazines collect a number of new chapters from ongoing series, which is great for readers reading more than one title at a

What is representation?

The ISU Writing website describes **representation** as one of its PCHAT terms (which are designed to help writers think about writing and genres as complex situations where people make many choices, rather than fixed or standardized texts that never change). The concept of representation connects to "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" (ISUwriting.com)

time. The series that appear in each magazine differs depending on who the intended audience is. For *shōnen* series, chapters usually appear in weekly issues such as *Shōnen Jump*, and *shōjo* are published in monthly magazines like *LaLa*. Because *shōnen* series are published so often, they usually have shorter chapters, anywhere between fifteen and twenty pages. *Shōjo* series have a longer time frame between chapters, so their chapters are usually around thirty pages.

Once enough chapters are out (and "enough" depends on the length of the chapters), they are compiled into books called volumes, or *tankōbon* in Japanese. I should also mention that just like the order of the words on a page, the orientation of books and pages themselves are also right-to-left. This means that readers flip pages to the left, and the front cover is on what we Western readers would call the back! Once you've flipped the book around in your hands a couple times to get it right, you'll see that the cover—unlike the contents—is a fully colored illustration, usually of a prominent character, with the series' title and author. A quick flip through the volume will reveal the chapters you've already read if you've been keeping up with the serialization, but you might also discover new additions, like illustrations, author comments, or previews for the author's other works. I love looking at these little extras because they're usually pretty funny and a great way to start reading more things.

Manga Takes New Forms: Remediating Manga into Different Modes

Now that the series has hooked a faithful reader like you, one that buys the volumes and eagerly awaits the next installment, I'm sure that its popularity is gonna blow up (thanks to you, trendsetter!) When it does, you can expect a multitude of adaptations to start coming out. As we've already talked about, manga is taken up most clearly through its visual and textual **modes** (those pictures and words). Sometimes, a popular manga will get a spin-off manga that follows a new plot or character or puts existing ones in comedic situations. Other genres that the series gets adapted into might communicate in completely different ways.

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).

If you're not one for pictures and just want the story, light novels would be an excellent choice for you. Like the name suggests, light novels are entirely text-based adaptations that make for easy reading. If you're a fan of audiobooks and podcasts, maybe you'd also be a fan of drama CDs. The discs usually come bundled with the

purchase of a new volume of manga and contain acted voice recordings of the characters. Drama CDs follow the characters through a story independent from the main series, which are often seemingly mundane activities like going shopping or studying but with a bunch of crazy shenanigans to keep it entertaining. To make up for the missing visual aspect, these CDs incorporate conversations, inner monologues, background music, and various sound effects so that listeners can imagine the scene unfolding in front of them.

The most notable adaptation of manga is in the form of anime. The term **anime** derives from the English word "animation" and is used to describe the Japanese style of cartoons. If your manga series gets turned into an anime, you know you've made it—anime tends to reach a wider audience than just manga for the same reason your friend might watch the movie but not read the book it's based on: the anime is a very casual watch, it's not as long of a commitment, and you can just listen along instead of focusing on reading. Anime is also popular because it's visually appealing: those black and white drawings have now become a fluid movement with animated expressions and vibrant colors. Lots of anime have a talented voice cast and powerful soundtracks that add drama and emotion to the scene that you can't get from manga alone. However, one caveat of anime adaptations is that they are sometimes unfaithful to the source. The translation of a text from their paper form to the screen forces animators to add or cut out certain elements in order to fit the flow of the anime; since manga are mostly driven by the dialogue between characters, the anime has to find ways to stretch whole chapters into twenty-two minutes of animation while keeping audiences in suspense. This often results in scenes getting cut out, plots changing, and long-time fans being left disappointed. So if you weren't satisfied with how the anime ended, there's a chance that the manga will fix that.

Manga and Fandom and Friends (Oh My!)

If the series left you with a ton of feelings, it's perfectly okay to let it all out. People who enjoy manga and anime, like fans of any other media, form communities where they can talk about their favorite series and characters. Many manga hosting sites, and other platforms like Reddit, offer forums for comments, theories, sharing, and other fun topics. On social media, you might see people creating blogs or groups dedicated to certain series, roleplaying with one another, or producing fan content. Many creatives like artists

Figure 3: Lilith from the game *Borderlands*, cosplayed by IG@themisadventuresofjaz.

and writers get their starts producing fanart and fanfiction. While these works used to be housed on particular sites, such as DeviantArt or FanFiction.net, they're now getting posted to popular sites like Instagram and Twitter and receiving lots of casual engagement. And don't even get me started on the anime music videos—just type the letters "AMV" next to your favorite anime or manga series on YouTube and you'll see how huge the community is.

But people's love for manga transcends the online space. In many places across the world, fans come together at gatherings called conventions, or cons for short. Most conventions have dedicated spaces for meet and greets with industry professionals, panels and discussions, and singing karaoke to your favorite songs. It's extremely common to find people dressed as their favorite characters, whether they purchased a costume online or worked tirelessly for months sewing it from scratch like my friend Jaz (Figure 3). Cosplayers have the confidence to show off the things they love because they're surrounded by others who love the same thing.

Figure 4: Badges from FanimeCon, featuring art from IG@ZambiCandy.

My hometown hosts the largest anime convention in northern California (Figure 4). Every May, more than 30,000 manga, anime, and gaming enthusiasts gather to share their love of media and make new friends. I go with my cousin (who drew the earlier comic, by the way!) almost every year, and we spend whole days on our feet browsing merchandise and trying to find any trace of our favorite series, since the things we tend to like never get that popular. My favorite part of going to a convention is the chance to buy official and fan-made merchandise of the series I like, but this can sometimes be a challenge when your tastes are as obscure as mine. One of my best memories from a convention is when my cousin and I spotted a person wearing a shirt from our favorite series, *Chihayafuru*, which is about teenagers playing a traditional Japanese card game (it's not as boring as it sounds, I promise!). We approached her and shyly complimented her shirt, and she started bursting with excitement, thrilled that we recognized it. She pulled some stickers she had made out of her wallet—mascots from that series—and gave them to us, and while she didn't have enough for both of us, we were happy to have found a fellow fan in a sea of literal thousands.

There's so much to see and so many experiences to be had at con. If any of the things I just talked about sound interesting to you, I highly recommend you attend one! Chicago has its own Anime Midwest convention every July, so these events are much closer than you think.

Manga Culture in Japan

I've talked a lot about my experience as an American fan of manga, but I think it's also important to also talk about the concept of manga as a cross-cultural genre. Since Japan is where manga originated, it would be wise to understand the specific ways that Japanese people interact with the genre in their own contexts.

In Japan, it isn't rare at all to see someone reading manga on the subway. Whether it's a businessman going to work, a kid on their way home from school, or anyone else, you might look around and find people reading physical copies or on their phones and tablets (Rash). Walking by a bookstore, you might look through the window to find a bunch of people browsing through the latest issues and volumes. Others might go to manga cafes—places where one can sit, eat, and read manga—but overall, manga-reading is just another typical part of the culture.

As much as manga-reading is a casual act in Japan, though, it can also be pretty over-the-top! Imagine going to your favorite café or bakery for a snack, but you notice that there's a line out the door. You queue up and notice that everyone in front of you is chattering about this or that and finally, once you make it through the door, you're greeted by cosplayers, large cutouts of manga characters, and a special menu themed around a certain series. What are the chances? Well, this is a pretty common experience in Tokyo, and particularly in its Akihabara district. Akihabara is the manga fan's paradise: its streets are lined with manga bookstores, arcades, character cafes, and other brightly colored attractions. Another important event for manga-lovers in Japan is the twice-yearly Comiket, a convention for sharing self-published work that draws in more than half a million attendees every year.

How Japanese Culture is Represented in Manga

As a product of Japan, manga tends to include cultural norms that are unfamiliar to Western readers. These can range from specific behaviors such as bowing one's head as a sign of respect, saying "itadakimasu" before eating, and washing off prior to dipping into the public bathhouse, to the peculiarly large presence of vending machines (it feels like they're on every corner, really!). Since I've been reading manga for so long now, a lot of these nuances go without much second thought from me, but they were certainly strange to me at first. However, all of these features have their roots somewhere, whether that be due to a lack of tubs in traditional homes, the need to save space while providing food, or simply an emphasis on showing respect to others.

I want to look more closely at another aspect of Japanese culture that shows up in manga, which are shrines and beings called ***yōkai***. *Yōkai* is a hard word to translate into English because it can refer to monsters, spirits, or demons depending on the context, and I think you'll agree with me when I say those things are not the same. *Yōkai* are deeply rooted in folklore and Shintoism, a religion that honors nature and ancestry, and so these characters, who often resemble animals, tend to appear around shrines. The common occurrence of *yōkai* probably has to do with the representation of an author's experiences: Japanese manga tends to include cultural references that are part of how Japanese artists and creators understand the world, which in turn influences the kinds of stories they use and how they visualize those stories in manga. My early introduction to *yōkai* was in the *shōnen* series *Inuyasha,* which features a shrine maiden, or person that lives at and takes care of a shrine, who gets transported to feudal Japan and meets a half-dog-demon warrior. The series introduces readers to both good and evil *y*ōkai and, although I wish I could forget the images of the evil ones, tells stories about each that make these beings seem almost human. *Inuyasha* started as a manga and spawned a long-running anime and multiple movies (and as of 2020, there's even a series about the next generation!); its popularity is a testament to the interest Japanese readers have in such supernatural occurrences. If you're into spirits, malicious or kind, other series like *Natsume's Book of Friends* and *Kamisama Kïss* are bound to teach you more. I still have much more to learn as a reader myself, and a great way to do so is to experience more.

Blending Manga and American Comics

You can usually find manga in the "Teens" section of the library here in the U.S., but from what I've seen, the demographic of readers is broadening to include older adults and younger children. Maybe part of it is due to the fact that people who grew up with manga (like my cousin, who started reading when she was a freshman in high school) have started having their own children and sharing their interests with them. But while the culture surrounding manga is changing here, things are also changing in Japan.

As we've discussed, there are so many conventions of manga that make them uniquely Japanese. At the same time, there are also a lot of cross-cultural influences, which means that American comic books and superhero movies affect manga authors just as much. Take Kōhei Horikoshi, for example: Horikoshi is the author of the hit series, *My Hero Academia*. This series takes place in a world where 80% of humans are born with a quirk, or superpower. But because with great power comes great responsibility, many aspire to become heroes and save people from those who use their power for evil. To this end, students apply to high schools specifically meant to train

heroes. The main character, Deku, begins the series like any other boy his age with big dreams, but there's just one catch: he doesn't have a quirk. From the very beginning, you root for the underdog—something that is very common in Western comics. In fact, Horikoshi's favorite superhero, Spider-Man starts out very similarly to Deku: both are young and inexperienced but show their heroism through bravery, and although they do become heroes, they still face relatable, everyday problems that go hand-in-hand with being high school students. Both even find mentors in more experienced heroes, and in a serious nod to American comics, Horikoshi draws Deku's mentor All Might in the heavy-lined, hyper-muscular style that is trademark of Western heroes.

By fusing American culture into his work, Horikoshi demonstrates how genres like manga, something with such a long tradition in Japanese, are dynamic and evolve constantly with the introduction of new media. Aspects of different cultures, as we see here, go beyond national borders to inspire new art forms and create things that people of all different backgrounds can enjoy together.

Become a Part of the Story

So now that you've been introduced to some manga, know how to read it, and seen all the ways you can enjoy it, you can keep the story going by sharing it with others or producing your own fan-media. Whether you choose to embrace this genre or leave it on the shelf, or any genre for that matter, it's important to know where it came from and what it means to others, culturally or otherwise. Learning these details, even as they appear in a book of comics, can help us appreciate one another's cultures and make us more responsive to the things taking place around us. Plus, giving a new piece of media a chance can only help when trying to avoid a boring situation. So, the next time you're taking the long train home for the weekend, consider bringing along some manga to make the journey a little more entertaining. (If you'd like some recommendations, all you have to do is ask!)

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Have You Really Seen *Hamilton: An American Musical*?

Justin So

In this article, So investigates the history and the creation of *Hamilton* through ISU's pedagogical cultural historical activity theory, or P-CHAT.

Introduction

Do you know who Alexander Hamilton is and what he has done for our country? Well, you might have heard about him if you are interested in US history and the stories surrounding the origins of the United States, but you may also have heard about him because of the musical that came out in 2015 all about his life, called *Hamilton*. Since the musical came out, many people have learned about this lesser known founding father, and Alexander Hamilton now has a large pop culture presence that recognizes him as equal to other important historical figures in US history.

The idea for the musical *Hamilton* was first introduced at the White House when Lin-Manuel Miranda made his debut, on April 2009, with the rap song about the forgotten founding father which would later become the song "Alexander Hamilton." This song would ultimately become the song that introduces Hamilton, the first song of the first act in the musical. The musical premiered January 20th, 2015. Three months later Miranda would come back again to the White House to perform with the original Broadway

cast of the musical, because the musical had made its name and become very popular nationwide.

Using **P-CHAT, or Pedagogical Cultural Historical Activity Theory**, we can explore the evolution of an idea to a song to a world-famous musical, as well as many other **genre remediations**. We can also explore some of the historic texts and ideas that Alexander Hamilton, this historical figure, was involved with. P-CHAT is a framework used by Illinois State University's Writing Program to examine literate activities and how people navigate literate activity systems and how they produce and use texts as part of these systems. Specifically,

P-CHAT will help us look at *Hamilton* by looking at all the different activities, thinking, and tools that went into creating *Hamilton.* This musical is not just an entertaining story. It also works to remediate history through the genre of modern music. I will be using P-CHAT concepts to investigate this process, and even though I am no historian, I will also be using P-CHAT to discuss some of the historic texts that were a part of Alexander Hamilton's story.

Alexander Hamilton

The first thing you need to know about the Broadway musical *Hamilton* is that Lin-Manuel Miranda, the author and star of the musical, was inspired by the biography, *Alexander Hamilton*, written by Ron Chernow. The fact that Miranda was inspired by the book to make a musical about the forgotten founding father Alexander Hamilton, is an example of **Genre Remediation,** which is a process through which a text is altered for a new purpose, allowing it to have a new trajectory or situating it within a different activity system (Tidmarsh).The musical features details of Hamilton's whole life story—his personal life, his involvement with the beginning of the US democracy, and his work as the first secretary of the treasury, as well as lots and lots and lots of writing. For example, in the musical Miranda includes as one of the song lyrics, "I wrote my way out" because of how Hamilton literally did. He wrote his way off the island he was from and got a scholarship that took him to New York City. Miranda's interactions with the author of the biography, Ron Chernow, can be considered through the P-CHAT term **socialization**. Socialization involves looking at how humans interact with texts and with other humans, sometimes in complex ways (Giovagnoli), and this concept can be seen in an interview with Miranda. Miranda had said that he had interacted with Chernow about some ideas he had for the play,

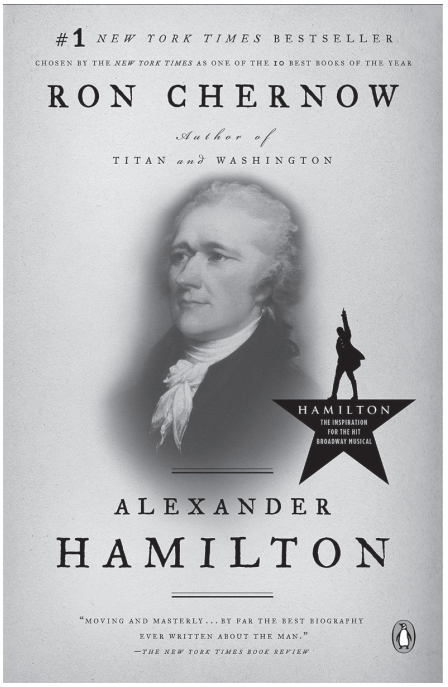


Figure 1: Alexander Hamilton's autobiography written by Ron Chernov.

as well as fact-checking to make sure he had the whole story right. So even though Miranda is the author of the musical, Chernow is involved in the **socialization** of ideas about Hamilton, which in turn were important to the creation of the musical.

Figure 2: Lin-Manuel Miranda and Okieriete Onaodowan in Hamilton (https://www.vox.com/21308627/hamilton-movie-review-disney-2020)

This process of remediating the book into the musical also brings up two more components of P-CHAT which are **production** and **activity**. **Production** involves specifically the processes involved in producing a text (Giovagnoli), while **activity** involves all kind of other things that happen throughout the entire life of a text as it is produced and moves around in the world. I would like to say these two components go hand in hand, as the production is the planning and making, and the execution of these plans involves all kinds of peripheral activity. Production can be seen as part of the process through which Miranda chose sources and decided what parts of history he thought were most relevant to add into the musical, and activity would include the work to actually create the musical, which would also include the times when he talked over the subject with Chernow. The production process also included a lot of remediation as the content of the book morphed into the musical. Later on, I will talk about the Reynolds Pamphlet and you will see that I go over some parts that Miranda kept out of the musical because he knew that he couldn't possibly fit all of Hamilton's life into a two-hour and forty-minute musical. Well, he could have, but that musical would have been very hard to make and would probably have been very long and boring.

The Federalist Papers

The Federalist Papers are a series of eighty-five essays produced by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison in in 1787 and 1788 (Library of Congress Research Guides). This document Hamilton contributed a lot of his time to, was created to encourage the ratification of the new constitution that would replace the Articles of Confederation. This new constitution is the same United States Constitution we still use today.

The song "Non-Stop" from the musical goes over how Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison wrote *The Federalist Papers* during the Constitutional Convention. Hamilton had written fifty-one out of the eighty-five letters to defend to ratification of the new US Constitution by introducing a new form of government. The crazy thing about this is that I know all this information only because of the song, and because of how many times I have listened to the two-hour and twenty-three-minute original Broadway Cast *Hamilton* album. It could also be because of the **representation** of this work, as Miranda emphasizes it in the song. **Representation** is a P-CHAT term that deals with the understanding and intentions related to a literate activity—or how the people involved in producing a text understand what it will or might be or how users might understand or use it (Giovagnoli). In this case, the song really emphasizes how much more energy Hamilton had put into

The Federalist Papers compared to John Jay and James Madison. Here are the actual lyrics from the song:

> Alexander joins forces with James Madison
> And John Jay to write a series of essays
> Defending the new United States Constitution
> Entitled The Federalist Papers
> The plan was to write a total of 25 essays
> The work divided evenly among the three men
> In the end, they wrote 85 essays
> In the span of six months
> John Jay got sick after writing five
> James Madison wrote 29
> Hamilton wrote the other 51 (Miranda, 2015, track 23)

In this part, Leslie-Odom Jr. who portrays one of the main antagonists in the musical, Aaron Burr, is narrating this part in the song, but when it gets to the last line he sings with a lot of power, emphasizing how much work Hamilton had put into *The Federalist Papers*. Now we can take a look at **reception** which is how the audience interprets a piece of text (Giovagnoli). In this case the audience is me, and I interpreted it as Hamilton putting in the most work based on the lyrics of the soundtrack.

There is a very small detail that Miranda put into the lyrics, and I didn't realize until I actually did the research behind *The Federalist Papers*. My reception of the last three lines in the lyrics above John Jay had gotten sick of writing. My reception of John Jay was that he must have not been as enthusiastic or didn't have as much motivation as Hamilton, but he did in fact actually get sick. John Jay had to stop contributing to *The Federalist Papers* due to rheumatism. Rheumatism, as defined by Merriam-Webster's dictionary is "any of various conditions characterized by inflammation or pain in muscles, joints, or fibrous tissue," which led to John Jay only writing five out of the eighty-one essays, not because he didn't care as much as Hamilton, but due to an illness (History.com).

The Reynolds Pamphlet

The *Reynolds Pamphlet* was a crucial document in Alexander Hamilton's history because the story surrounding and leading up to its publication was a scandal that led to the end of his political career. We can use P-CHAT to analyze the complicated situation surrounding this text's production and distribution. But we can also use the concept of **trajectory** to help us understand how this text evolved. According to Tidmarsh, trajectory is "what texts do and how they move around in the world," and it can also

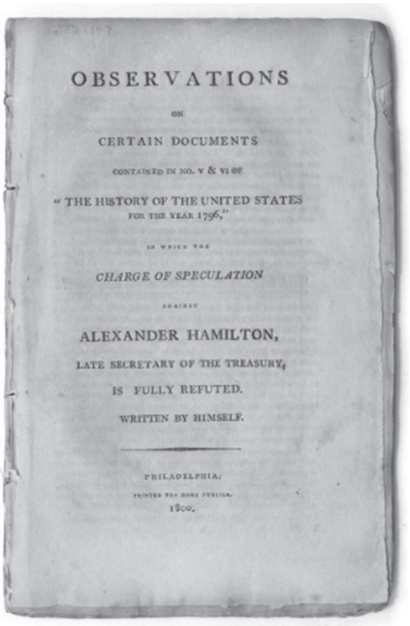
help us to think about how a text moves in the process of production. There are five songs in the musical that deal with the Reynolds scandal, explaining it from beginning to end, but of course not all of the history behind the scandal is included because all history can't be explained in just one musical. I mean it could be, but it wouldn't be as entertaining for an audience unless it was a bunch of historians.

The first song that deals with the beginning of the scandal is "Say No to This" which goes over how Mariah Reynolds shows up to Hamilton's house asking for help. Hamilton and Reynolds begin a love affair, but as it turns out, the whole scene has been set up by Reynolds' husband, James Reynolds, who both encourages the continuation of the affair and blackmails Hamilton over it for a about year beginning in 1791. But before I get into the second song, I have to explain some context that isn't covered in the musical. James Reynolds would be arrested towards the end of the year of 1792, and in trying to deflect the consequences of his arrest, he accuses Hamilton of financial crimes, which are especially serious since Hamilton was secretary of the treasury at the time.

This leads us to the second song, "We Know." In which Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Aaron Burr confront Hamilton about the accusations that he has embezzled funds from the federal government. Hamilton proves these accusations wrong by providing the letter from Reynolds that outlines the blackmail and the payments Hamilton has been making, and by documenting that he had been using his own money and not the government's to make these payments. However, the letters between Reynolds and Hamilton end up getting leaked to the press. At this point, in an attempt to clear his name, Hamilton produces the Reynolds papers, a ninety-five page document, with seven pages of explanation and another

Figure 3: Mariah Reynolds and Alexander Hamilton from the play

fifty-eight pages of documents. He intends these documents to be semi-private (given only to specific people) but they are also leaked, and the resulting scandal creates a great deal of pain for his family and effectively ends his political career. This whole story has a lot of connections to P-CHAT and literate activity concepts. For example, **production and activity** are both involved, as well as trajectory, in tracing how the affair, the original letters between Reynolds and Hamilton, the accusation of embezzlement, and the Reynolds papers are all activities and texts that are intertwined. The various productions of different texts are a response to certain situations, but then they end up influencing each other as well as subsequent events and activities. Ultimately, Hamilton writing the *Reynolds Pamphlet* is the result of all of the previous activities and texts, providing an excellent example of trajectory. Hamilton writes the papers in an effort to get a particular result, but the text ends up going to places and being read by people he didn't anticipate. And while the text does have one intended effect, which is to prove that he hasn't done anything treasonous, there are also a lot of unintended (by Hamilton) trajectories which have negative results.


OBSERVATIONS

ON

CERTAIN DOCUMENTS

CONTAINED IN NO. V & VI OF

" THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES FOR THE YEAR 1796,"

IN WHICH THE

CHARGE OF SPECULATION

AGAINST

ALEXANDER HAMILTON,

LATE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

IS FULLY REFUTED.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED FOR SUNDRY PERSONS.

1800.

Figure 4: A picture of the front of the *Reynolds Pamphlet*. (https://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/the-reynolds-pamphlet-fully-titled-observations-o-99-c-0124fbe959)

Another literate activity concept that the Hamilton saga allows us to consider is the way the musical remediates the story—changing some of the historical events and leaving others out. I mentioned before that Miranda couldn't possibly have included all of the details, but he also changes some of the facts in order to make the story in the musical work better. In the musical, Miranda has Jefferson, Madison and Burr confront Hamilton, but in fact, James Monroe, Abraham Venable and Frederick Muhlenberg were the ones who initially confronted Hamilton about the embezzlement accusations (Wikipedia). Monroe is actually the one who "leaked" information about the sex scandal to Thomas Jefferson, who was an enemy of Hamilton's, and Jefferson gave copies of the documents and letters to a journalist, James Thomson Callender, who printed a pamphlet including this evidence of Hamilton's affair with Reynolds and the hush money he paid to her husband (Wikipedia). Alexander Hamilton would then blame James Monroe for the pamphlet getting out and would almost get into a duel over this. But these details aren't provided in detail in the musical, although Miranda does have

the character Aaron Burr allude to it at the end of the song "We Know," when he says,

> Alexander, rumors only grow
> and we both know what we know

The third related song in the musical, "Hurricane" offers a look at Hamilton's thought process about whether to publish and release the *Reynolds Pamphlet* to the public in an effort to protect his reputation, or to avoid ruining his relationship with his family and not releasing the *Reynolds Pamphlet*. He looks back at the past and thinks about how the truth has done good for him in other situations, and he proceeds to release the *Reynolds Pamphlet* to the public. The P-CHAT concepts of **distribution, reception** and **socialization** are all important here. Hamilton distributes the text, supposedly to only a few people, but it goes public. So the distribution of the text is already out of control, exceeding his expectations. The text is then **socialized**, as people read it and talk about out it. **Reception** comes into play as people in the government, and Hamilton's family, are impacted significantly, although in different ways.

All of this leads us to song four "The Reynolds Pamphlet" which involves the result of the published sex scandal. Hamilton isn't ruined completely because he's proven that he isn't an embezzler, but his political ambitions are at an end, and the scandal would also ruin his relationships in his family. In this song, **representation** and **reception** are both involved. Representation comes into play in an interesting way because Hamilton clearly has a particular representation of what releasing the *Reynolds Pamphlet* will do. He had hoped that the people would see that he was not committing any crimes affecting the nation but instead was paying off James Reynolds with his own money. Reception is certainly happening in the song, as we see how Hamilton's wife and his wife's sister react. In the fifth song in this part of the musical, "Burn," Eliza Schuyler Hamilton is basically narrating how their lives are ruined because of this affair (Prokop). Significantly, she burns his letters to her, saying

> Let future historians wonder how Eliza reacted when you broke
> her heart
> You have torn it all apart, I'm watching it
> Burn

In this song, Eliza is denying Hamilton the chance to use distribution, reception, and socialization to further protect his reputation by using his letters to his wife to prove he was a loving husband.

Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story

Hamilton: An American Musical is a "text" that we can definitely use to think about **Trajectory**. Like the *Reynolds Pamphlet* the story of the musical became very famous, very fast. In addition, Miranda was asked to participate in a huge range of printed interviews and new stories, as well as appearances on show like *The Late Late Show* with James Corden or *Late Night* with Seth Meyers. There are also many other forms of further distribution, spreading themes and ideas from the musical even further, such as bringing Miranda into TV shows like *SNL* or even on *Drunk History*. If you haven't heard of *Drunk History*, it is a show where they retell history from a drunk perspective. I would take a look at the episode about Hamilton because Miranda tells you the history with funny reenactments while he's explaining the history behind *Hamilton* while he's—you guessed it—drunk. These multiple forms of distribution increased and sped up the reception of *Hamilton*, and performances of the musical also expanded, moving beyond the Broadway production.

The musical would end up touring in London, Chicago, San Francisco, Milwaukee, and even Philadelphia, and other cities as well (broadway.org). However, with this increasingly diffuse distribution, the representation of the musical would change as well because representation would differ as new casts performed the show for different touring destinations. With this new cast Miranda might not get the same reception he had worked for when he was with the original Broadway cast in New York because different actors would perform the roles and songs differently. This is especially interesting since Miranda not only created the musical but played the starring role in the

Figure 5: A scene from *Drunk History*.

Broadway production. Therefore, in these productions you could argue he had a lot of control over **representation**, but as other casts play the roles his control diminishes. Additionally, in an interview, the director, Thomas Kail, even brought up how they wouldn't change anything about the show based on a stage and/or venue size in different locations. I don't know if the size of the stages changed drastically by the location, but Kail's statement shows that they were definitely making efforts to represent the story consistently, so that audiences in different venues could have a similar reception. (Heim).

When I was planning to see the show live in Chicago, I at first thought the original cast would be coming to Chicago as well as to all the other cities, but I soon realized that it is impossible if their shows are playing at multiple cities at the same time. It would be a different cast for Chicago and every other city, and because of that, the reception was different for me, seeing the show in Chicago, than for people viewing the show in other cities. And even if I were to compare to people watching it in the same city, my reception would still be different due to the fact that I have listened to the original Broadway cast recording beforehand.

This brings up the idea that the album is also another source of distribution, as well as being a **genre remediation**, because it allows people to listen to the album without watching the show. Their reception would change based on watching the show first and then listening to an album or vice versa. For me specifically, and others like me, who couldn't afford to watch the show, we will have listened to the album and will have a different reception because of how we aren't getting the full story. We have to make the image in our own heads compared to people actually watching the show. Finally, since Disney+ now offers a video of the live performance, this would count as still another genre remediation, since people can see something that, in many ways, looks like the original production, with Miranda in the starring role. However, many of the other physical elements of seeing the show live would be different. This bring up the final P-CHAT term I want to use, which is **ecology**, or "the physical, biological forces that exist beyond the boundaries of any text we are producing" (ISU Writing Program). This is an important concept that helps you think about how many differences there would be in seeing the show live vs. seeing it in the theater. Certainly someone seeing the show live would have a different reception than someone who watched almost the identical cast preforming the musical in a video.

SPOILER ALERT! For example, from only listening to the album, I wasn't aware that John Laurens, who is an ally to Hamilton, dies. Now that I've been able to watch the show live and on Disney+ there is a song

not included the album called "Tomorrow There'll Be more of Us" where Hamilton gets a letter from John Laurens's Father. Here is a part of the lyrics in the song entailing what the letter had said:

> On Tuesday the 27th My son was killed in a gunfight against the British troops retreating from South Carolina. The war was already over. As you know, John dreamed of emancipating and recruiting 3000 men for the first all-black military regiment. His Dream of freedom for these men dies with him. (Miranda 2015)

The album also acts as a different kind of genre remediation based on whether audiences have already seen the show or not. If they've already seen the show, their reception of the music is going to be different because they'll have a memory of the live performance, with actors moving and talking, and they'll know more details than they would if they had just listened to the album alone. This is a genre remediation of a remediation, you could even say a double remediation.

The mixtape of the musical would be released soon after the premiere of the musical which would spread around the world. This is another example of distribution, since the text is getting to an audience wherever this mixtape is available, such through music platforms like Spotify or through online purchase, or even in physical stores where they might sell music such as Target. This mixtape consists of covers from famous people, like Sia, Queen Latifah, John Legend, etc, and songs that were cut from the original production. The remediation can also be seen in this situation. A possible purpose of this remediation is opening up the target audience to an even bigger population, as there are famous people on the mixtape might get more people to give the music a listen. This might even lead them to listen to the original album with the original cast, which would further the distribution of the musical. And speaking of distribution, if you haven't watched *Hamilton* or listened to the music, I recommend you listen to the original Broadway cast recording or even watch the musical if you have Disney+. If you're ever in New York City, you could of course buy tickets and watch it live, which I highly recommend.

Hamilton has become so popular that its distribution has grown in the years since the show has come out, and because of that, Alexander Hamilton, the historic figure, is becoming more known by our society as one of the founding fathers. People have even been inspired to remediate their own versions of Hamilton, such as a student writing a song on Abigail Adams's perspective set in the same time period.

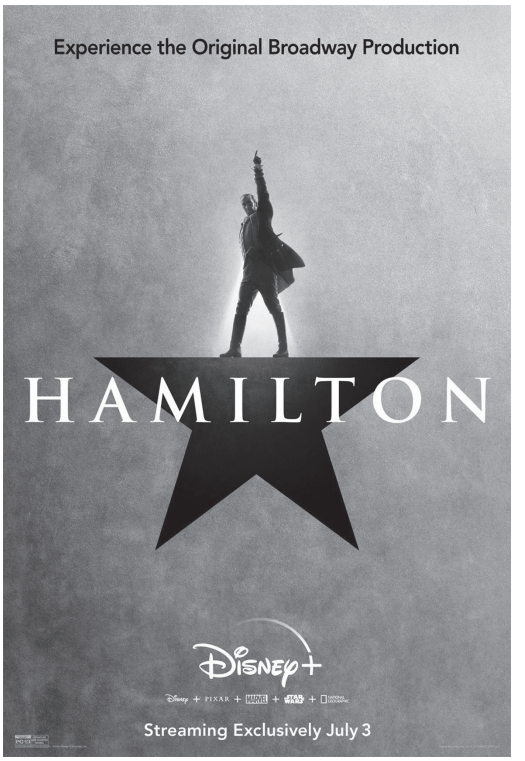


Figure 6: Thumbnail for *Hamilton* as it appears on Disney+.

The World Wasn't Wide Enough for Both Hamilton and P-CHAT

With all of this information I hope you are able to see how intricate and complex P-CHAT can be as a tool for looking at complex literate activities. With *Hamilton*, I could go on about the elements of P-CHAT present in the actual history, and the many more ways the different P-CHAT components are involved in the creation of this musical, but I hope that I was able to show you how intertwined this theory already is in our everyday activities. To conclude, I encourage you to go listen to the original Broadway cast album on YouTube, Spotify, Apple Music, or even go watch the show live or through a streaming platform such as Disney+. My favorite song is "Non-stop." If you are a *Hamilton* fan, I hope you enjoyed the song references, and some of the background history that I've provided.

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The *Grassroots Writing Research Journal* Presents: Picturing Literate Activity

Surviving Post-Pandemic Transition with Pomodoro Timers as Writing Space Tools

Edcel Javier Cintron Gonzalez

PLA Narrative: The transition from my apartment space to the outside world has not been easy. I've struggled to keep myself motivated with teaching and work from the university, and even household chores. My friends started inviting me to Zoom study sessions, where they use the Pomodoro Timer to keep track of their work. This is when I started Googling more about Pomodoro Timers, experimenting with different tools and apps. For online study sessions, I've been using the Flora app which awards you with different trees and flowers if you successfully complete your time sessions. For in-person, I love using my countdown timers because I can physically rotate them into timed sessions I need to complete my next task. I feel like I can encourage myself to work again thanks to using tools that help facilitate my writing space.

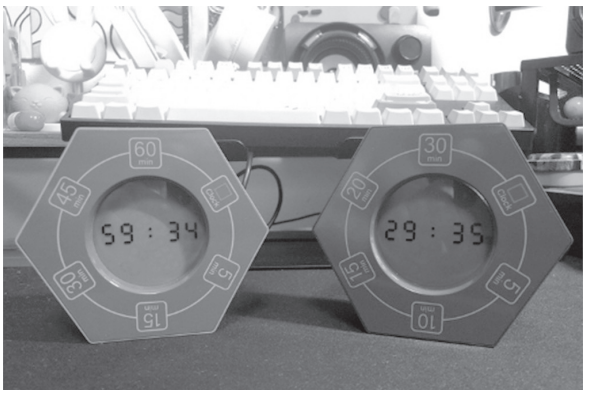

Figure 1 (above): Countdown timers come in different time settings. Edcel uses his sixty-minute timer for longer work sessions and chores while the thirty-minute timer is for short-term tasks.

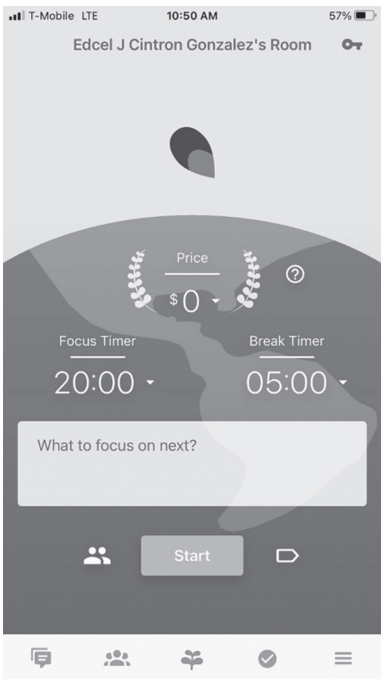

Figure 2 (right): Edcel loves using Pomodoro apps on his phone during zoom writing or study sessions. They allow him to invite his friends so they can grow a virtual garden together, while also getting work done!

Pandemic Bio: Edcel J. Cintron Gonzalez is rocking his pandemic long hair and beard. He has no plans to get a haircut soon.

CHATting It Up With Scorecards: A Genre Analysis of a Golf Scorecard

Ali Schrock

In this article, golf scorecards are explored using P-CHAT. P-CHAT is a process used to analyze how genres work as part of different literate activities. A golf scorecard is a genre that golfers use when they are on the golf course. I use the process of P-CHAT to break down the genre of a scorecard and the role it plays in the activity system of a round of golf.

Golf Scorecards: What Are Those?

Let me begin by giving you a scenario. Imagine that you are at your dream destination, where the grass is green and lush. The weather is just right out, and you are warmed up and are ready to enjoy a beautiful day on the golf course! Yes, you heard me right. The golf course! Some of you may not be familiar with this place and that is totally fine. Golf is not an easy game and will always provide you with a challenge, but it is a sport that a person can play for many years of their life. After learning a little more about the game, you may soon find yourself eager to give the game a few good swings!

After arriving to the first tee, you are greeted by the starter who hands you your very own scorecard. The starter at a golf course is someone who is responsible for teeing off each group of golfers on schedule. The starter is the individual who gives you THE most important document on the golf course: the scorecard. The starter will usually say, "Please introduce yourself to your playing partners and exchange your scorecards." After the scorecard exchange, the starter calls you to the tee and you hit your first shot right down the middle (see Figure 1). What a way to start the round!

Figure 1: The starter and I at the IHSA State Golf Tournament.

You may be wondering what I am describing in this scenario and how it relates to a scorecard. In this example, I am describing the exchange of scorecards that takes place between players before a golf tournament. However, even if you never play in a golf tournament and just like to golf for fun, a golf scorecard will still be an important part of the round of golf. Using what writing research calls pedagogical cultural-historical activity theory, or, P-CHAT, we will break down the genre of a scorecard into much more detail and be able to understand the role of scorecards on the golf course.

P-CHAT! What Is It?

You may be wondering what P-CHAT even is and how it even relates to a scorecard. Before we jump into how a scorecard relates to P-CHAT, it is important to understand the basics. I had never head of P-CHAT until my freshmen year of college in English 101. In this class, I learned that P-CHAT is an acronym for **pedagogical cultural-historical activity theory**, and was created by the Illinois State University Writing Program to provide students like myself with a way of thinking about research and writing. Before analyzing the components that make a scorecard using the process called P-CHAT, I think it is important to understand the basics of the process. If you are unfamiliar with this P-CHAT term, you are not alone! I was introduced to P-CHAT not too long ago myself. It may seem like a complicated concept at first, which it is but as a student like you, I can assure you that it is a very useful tool that has helped me improve my writing and analysis skills. Through lots of practice and of course some inevitable failure, I have become much more comfortable using this process and I know you will too! There are seven concepts associated with P-CHAT: reception, representation, socialization, production, ecology, distribution, and activity. These terms can be used to evaluate and understand how a complex genre works, as they help to trace aspects of how the genre is produced, how it's used, how it relates to other genres, and how it evolves over time, which can help you to gain a better understanding of that genre.

You may have noticed that I keep using the word 'genre' as I discuss scorecards and P-CHAT. As defined by Berkenkotter and Huckin (1993), "genres are dynamic rhetorical forms that develop from responses to recurrent situations and serve to stabilize experience and give it coherence

and meaning" (479). There are so many types of genres that surround us every day that we do not think of as genres. Think back to the last time you looked at a menu? Did you think of it as a genre? Probably not. I didn't either, until a short time ago when I learned that basically everything around us is a genre.

In the scenario above where I was describing the starter giving you a scorecard, that scorecard is a genre that is used to keep your score as well as other player's scores if you are in a tournament or competition. According to Golf Distillery, "in its physical form, the **scorecard** is a rigid piece of paper that a golfer uses to keep track of the number of strokes taken on each hole, among other things" (Scorecard Terms). Although it may feel weird to call a scorecard a genre, a scorecard fits the definition of a genre that I just discussed. If you think about it, a golf scorecard for the golfers at a golf course is really no different than a menu or any other genre. We can probably all agree that a menu is definitely a genre as it contains distinct conventions that tell the viewer that they are looking at a menu. For example, a menu includes the title of the restaurant on the front as well as a list of sides, appetizers, entrees, drinks, desserts and more that the restaurant has to offer. In addition to this, a description of each dish may be listed underneath the name of the dish, and prices are included next to the dish at most restaurants. We don't have to think about all of these features that make a menu a menu because we have grown accustomed to what a menu should look like. A golf scorecard is just like this. A scorecard contains many specific features that let us know that it is a scorecard. The following section will explore the specific genre conventions that make a scorecard recognizable as a genre.

The Genre of a Scorecard: Where Did It All Begin?

Before we talk about the modern scorecard we use today and the genre conventions of it, I think that it is important to discuss how this genre arose and why it has stood the test of time and still exists today. If you are at all familiar with professional or amateur golf, or any sport for that matter, think back to the day when score didn't matter to the game. You probably will struggle to do that as score is a vital part of any type of game or sport. A competitive game requires scoring to determine a winner and a loser. How a game is scored and documented may differ among games, but the underlying reason for keeping score is the same. The game of golf is no exception to this. The golf scorecard first began as a way to track everyone's individual score to determine the winner of the game. Ever since the fifteenth century

when the game of golf began, a scorecard has played a vital role in the game (The History of Golf). Since golf is very individualistic in nature, each player needed a way to track their own score. Individual scorecards played a vital role in achieving this purpose and still continue to play a very important role in the scoring process for the game. Although the process of keeping score in golf may look different than other sports, the underlying reason is the same. The scorecard in golf allows players to record their own scores after the completion of each hole, and these scores are tallied at the end of the round to arrive at the final score.

As someone who has transitioned from playing mostly leisure golf to mostly competitive golf, I have experienced how the purpose and importance of the scorecard changes depending on the circumstance I am in. For example, when I go out to play just for fun, I only keep my own score. This is probably the same for many of you. However, this all changes when I am in a golf tournament because now, I am responsible for not only keeping my own scorecard but also the scores of my playing partners. However, despite the differences in the environment between a leisure golfer and a competition golfer where a scorecard is present, the scorecard still plays a similar role in the **activity system** of a round of game. In both cases, the golfer is responsible for understanding what is on a scorecard and utilizing the information provided in an appropriate way to meet their specific needs, which in most cases is keeping score. Angela Sheets' explains what an activity system is in her Grassroots Writing Research Journal article, *Angela Rides the Bus*. She says that "an activity system is all the people, texts, tools, and rules that work together to achieve a particular objective" (Sheets). So, when thinking about a round of golf, a golf scorecard would serve as text because it provides us with information to read. It also serves as a tool for our round of golf because it gives us course yardages, a course map, as well as pin locations in some instances that are vital to know when playing a round. On some scorecards, a few local course rules are also included so we can say that a scorecard also provides us a set of rules for a round of golf.

- *Course yardages* – a number on the top of a scorecard that tells you how far the course is playing in total from different tee markers
- *Course map* – a small diagram of each hole showing which way the hole goes and what you will come across throughout the hole (water, bunkers, hazards)
- *Pin locations* – a small diagram of each green with numbers on it indicating which areas of the green the pin is located on for that day (the course will tell you which number the pins are playing for the day)

Therefore, no matter if I am playing a competitive round of golf in a tournament or just playing for fun on the weekends, a scorecard is a part of the activity system of a round of golf for me and is one of the many genres that is present and used as I navigate through my round of golf.

Now Let's CHAT It Up a Bit.

Using the activity theory of P-CHAT, we will begin to break down the genre of the scorecard. First, the P-CHAT term **production** "deals with the means through which a text is produced" ("Key Terms & Concepts"). The production aspect of the genre of a scorecard dates way back to when the game first began. Although the original scorecard is not highly documented, it can be presumed that scorecards we have today look quite a bit different considering the resources we have available to make and design the scorecards. Even scorecards that are used today at different golf courses vary dramatically in terms of layout, design, and color. There is an entire industry that focuses on creating scorecards for golf courses.

A scorecard may not seem like a big deal to a round of golf, but in reality, a scorecard is a very "integral component of the round" as "anyone who plays [the] course will look at it at least eighteen times, actively engaging with it as they fill in their scores" (Lavoie). There are standard components that every scorecard will have. These standard components are what make up the conventions for the genre, ultimately making the scorecard what it is. As stated by the ISU Writing Program, "*genre conventions* or *genre features* describe all the things a writer could discover (and discuss) about a particular genre that makes us recognize it as, well, what it is" ("Key Terms & Concepts") A scorecard's size is one of the biggest indicators of what genre the document belongs to. A basic scorecard is usually about six inches tall and eight inches wide when fully opened up. This does not speak for all scorecards, but in general, a scorecard is smaller than a piece of notebook paper in size and is folded at least one time. Inside the card, it is up to the course to decide where the hole number, length of various tee boxes for each hole, the par for each hole, and the slope and rating for each tee box is placed on the card.

There is also additional information that is included on some scorecards depending on the course's preference. For example, some courses include a small map of every hole on the course. This provides golfers with an idea of where the hole is going, especially since it is very likely that one will not be able to see the green from the tee box. In golf, the green is the destination of where the hole is located. A golfer is trying to get their ball into the hole on the green on each of the eighteen holes. A tee box is where a golfer tees off

to begin each hole. Also, some scorecards include a section on special local rules that are specific to that course. Each golf course has the opportunity to make their scorecard unique by adding various features that they think will be useful to the golfers, but still follow the basic genre conventions of a scorecard in the process.

How Does a Scorecard Work?

The P-CHAT term **activity** is another important aspect for a scorecard. The activity of a scorecard deals with how a scorecard is used. Figure Six shows an image of the scorecard for the Illinois State University golf course called Weibring. Being on the ISU Women's Golf Team, I use this scorecard on regular basis and am very familiar with the information on it. However, this is not the case for all people, so I think that it is important to discuss aspects of the scorecard that people use.

The first thing that catches most people's attention is the name of the golf course on the front. This is simply a handy reminder of the course name if it is not a course you play regularly. The next thing that people will usually do (I am speaking based off my antecedent knowledge) is open up the scorecard to review the course yardages to determine what tees to play for the day. For most people, tee yardages are some of the most important numbers on the card as they will determine how far back you have to tee off from on every hole. In addition to the yardage, people will usually look at the par of the hole before teeing off every. The par of the hole is important for people to know how many shots it should take to finish a hole. If a scorecard says the hole is a three- par, that means that if the golfer takes three shots to finish the hole, they come out even, or "at par." And in golf, a lower score is better, so each golfer is trying to use as few shots as possible to make it to the green. So it makes a big difference whether the par for the hole is a score of three, four, or five when a golfer makes a decision! Again, this varies by player experience, but in general, the par of the hole is the goal score that is in mind for each hole.

The last part of the scorecard that is generally used in most circumstances is all of the blank boxes in the middle of the scorecard. You may be wondering why there are so many boxes necessary when there is only one score to write down for each hole. This idea comes back to the P-CHAT term **reception**. For me, I see all of these boxes as space for me to keep my stats for each hole. I like to make checkmarks in the boxes to keep track of the fairways and greens I hit as well as the number of putts I have on each hole. For other people, these boxes may provide them room to keep tally

marks to count their shots or as a place to write different notes about each hole or shot. The way these boxes are used solely depends on what each person thinks is the best use of space for their situation.

As you can see from the image of the scorecard (Figure 2), there is *tons* of boxes to fill out on a scorecard. However, not everyone will use all of the blanks every time they use a scorecard. A person's **ecology** will determine what parts of the scorecard they will use each time. Ecology consists of the outside factors that exist that affect the text during the production stages as well as affect how the scorecard is used ("Key Terms & Concepts"). For example, if a person is just playing for fun and keeping score for their own benefit, the Scorer and Attest blanks at the bottom of the scorecard will not be used as these blanks are meant to be signed to verify that the score on the scorecard is correct only in a competitive setting.

Also, on the upper right-hand corner of the scorecard, there are two small columns called "Hcp and "Net." These columns are also not used by everyone every time a scorecard is used. The two columns are only used when people are playing in a competitive environment, usually in a scramble or group event, where the tournament organizer wants to level the playing field for everyone. A person's handicap, which is a plus or minus number based on one's stroke average, works hand in hand to determine one's net

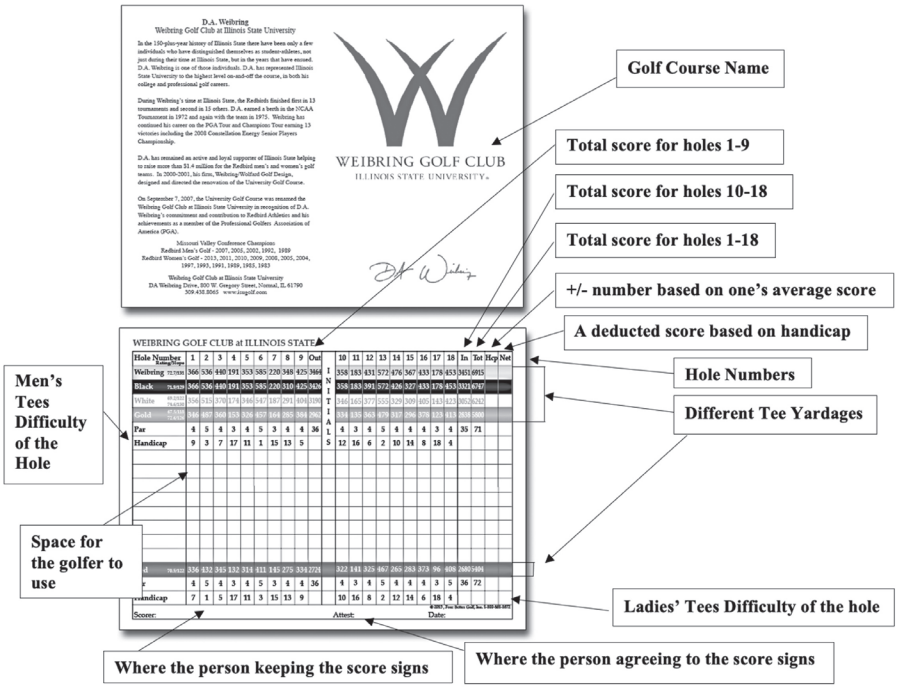

Figure 2: Annotated ISU Weibring Golf Course Scorecard.

score, which a score that has shots deducted off the person's gross score (actual number of shots a person took) based on their handicap. As you can see, these two columns require a special situation to be used and are not used all the time. To be honest, I have never noticed these two columns before since my ecology has never forced me to become familiar with this area of the scorecard. This is very common with a scorecard because it can be used in so many different ways depending on the environment in which it is being utilized.

To give a unique example of how ecology matters, during practice one day with the ISU Woman's Golf Team, my scorecard consisted of only checks and Xs and no numbers on it. Since our team was only working on short game that day, the scorecard was used in a completely different way. Things like this happen all of the time with genres as people will find various ways to utilize genres that are not necessarily the genre's intended purpose.

The Changing Scorecard: A Scorecard's Genre Trajectory

Now that we understand some of the basic genre conventions of the scorecard and how a scorecard is used, it is important to look at how these genre conventions have changed over the years. Although the genre of the golf scorecard does still exist today, the trajectory of this genre has changed over time. According to ISU Writing, the term **genre trajectory** "means both how a text moves through a process of production, but even more importantly how texts move through institutions and spaces and in relationships among different people" and to the "changes that occur in a genre as it gets used over time." That being said, if we look at a scorecard in Figure 3 from many years ago and compare it to a modern scorecard in Figure 4, we will still see many similarities but also many examples of how the genre has evolved over the years.

If we look at a scorecard from the 1930s compared to the scorecards we use today, we can see that genre conventions for a scorecard have not changed much over the years. The earlier scorecards were usually formatted in a vertical arrangement instead of a horizontal arrangement like we have today, but much of the information is still same. However, it is evident based on the scorecards we use today that the trajectory of the genre has expanded.

For example, today it is not uncommon to see a lot of advertisements on scorecards. Businesses are beginning to see scorecards as another opportunity to communicate their message to the public. Most golfers who are using the scorecard with all of these ads don't have a positive reception toward the ads because it takes up space they could be using on the scorecard. On the other

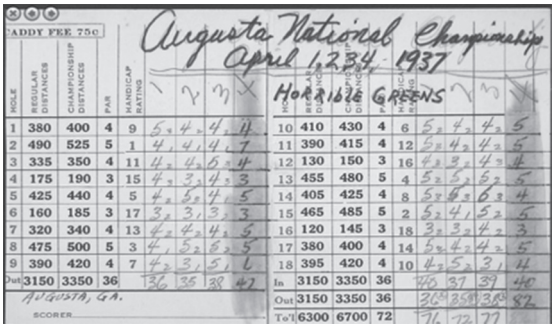

Figure 3: 1937 Master's Scorecard. (greenjacketauctions.com/bids/bidplace?itemid=21018pro).

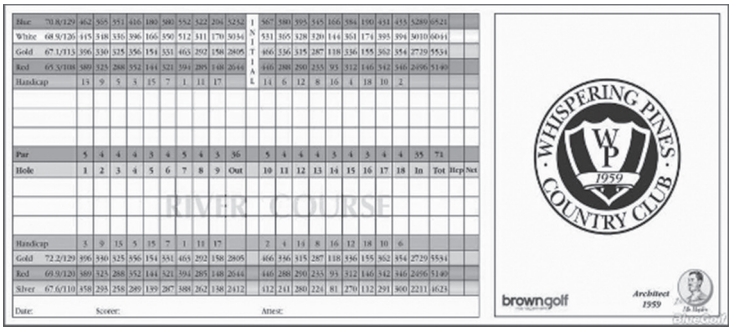

Figure 4: Whispering Pines CC Scorecard. (chronogolf.com/blog/golf-scorecarddesign-best-practices).

hand, golfers who may not be familiar with the area the golf course is in may have a positive reception to the ads since it may help them find a good restaurant to eat at after their round! Nevertheless, having advertisements are seen as a norm in our day in age and golfers are adapting to seeing ads on their scorecards.

Continuing with the discussion of genre trajectory, even the traditional word "scorecard" has expanded into multiple meanings. In addition to the traditional paper card, there is what is called a digital scorecard. In terms of production, not all digital scorecards necessarily fit the standard conventions of a scorecard as different types of digital scorecards serve different roles in the activity system of golf. A digital tournament scorecard is often used in an online setting to reflect one's score (hole by hole) to viewers of the tournament. This is what is called live scoring in a tournament setting where outside viewers are able to see the score of a golfer on each hole in real time without actually being at the tournament. This type of scorecard strictly contains the hole number and yardage as the golfer playing the round of golf does not see this scorecard, so no additional information is needed.

It is also common for golfers to track their scores digitally on a digital scorecard on an app instead of on a physical scorecard. This allows golfers to keep track of all their stats without having to keep track of a piece of

Figure 5: Patrick Reed's Digital Scorecard from the 2018 Master's Tournament (https://progolfnow.com/2015/07/23/patrick-reed-in-the-mix-at-the-omega-european-masters/).

paper over time. Although a physical scorecard is still used in competitive tournaments to keep score most competitive golfers have an online resource they also use to track their score, as well as many other stats to see what areas of their game they need to work on. As a competitive golfer, this process is something I work through for every round of golf I play. During the round, I will have the official scorecard where I keep a specific person's score as well as my own. I will also have a stat sheet that I fill out after the completion of each hole. The stat sheet is something that the ISU Women's Golf Team does as well as other college golf teams to keep stats. However, it is also not uncommon to see other teams keeping their stats on a blank scorecard. It is all up to what the coach wants their players to do. Either way, competitive golfers are not permitted to use their cell phones or any other digital devices during the round so a digital scorecard is not an option. For a leisure golfer, they have the freedom to choose between a physical scorecard or a digital one, if they have a golf app with scoring capabilities.

As more people abandon the traditional physical scorecard, it is quite possible that they may be less prevalent in the golf world in the future. As technology continues to become an even stronger force in our society, the genre of scorecards is changing as well. Of course, this is not absolute, but as our society continues to advance in technology, it is very possible that the production aspects of a scorecard will also continue to change, and that the trajectory of this genre will continue to expand in other ways.

Back to the Definition

After analyzing scorecards and examining the expanding trajectory of this genre, it is important to come back to one other important element of the definition of scorecards. You may have noticed that in the definition of a

scorecard that was mentioned earlier in the article, Golf Distillery includes the words "among other things." I am guessing that most of you probably didn't think much of anything when hearing those words and probably disregarded it. That is because your previous knowledge of scorecards is a bit different than mine. Like many other genres, a scorecard is something that is looked at by many different people, with different antecedent knowledge for this genre. According to the ISU Writing Program website, **antecedent knowledge** is "a term we use to describe all the things a writer already knows that can come into play when a writer takes up any kind of writing." In the genre of a scorecard, the golfer is the writer, and the kind of writing (genre) is a scorecard. So, if you have never really been exposed to a scorecard, you don't have much antecedent knowledge of this genre. You don't have a lot of past knowledge about a scorecard that you can use to help you read and fill out a scorecard right now. For people like myself, however, who have been frequently exposed to scorecards, I have gained a lot of antecedent knowledge about this genre that I use to help me write my score and other information on my scorecard. So, when I am given a scorecard, my antecedent knowledge of scorecards comes into play and impacts what I write on my scorecard.

That being said, these "other things" in the definition of scorecard are the many other things that people are able to write on a scorecard in addition to just their score. Having quite a bit of experience with scorecards, I have quite a few ideas that come to mind when I hear those words in the definition. Figure 6 is example of my "among other things" that I include on my scorecard. I take many detailed notes about what happens in my round,

Figure 6: These are the "other things" that I keep track of on my scorecard. These details provide me with the ability to break down my round and are essential to help me to recognize where I need to make improvements to my game.

in addition to simply keeping score. These small details that I track allow me to analyze my golf round in great depth and to see what areas of my game need improvement. I like to use many of the boxes on the scorecard to write whether or not I hit the green on a hole or if I was successful in hitting the fairway of the tee. I also included approach distances and putt lengths on this particular scorecard. However, I do not always include that distance information because in some instances, my golf coach gives me a different document to track that information that is used for a different purpose. Therefore, the circumstance makes a difference what "other things" that I include on my scorecard.

Your Uptake of This Genre

At this point, you may be completely overwhelmed and confused by this genre. You are probably wondering why in the world I wrote so much on my scorecard and how I ever learned to do that. I can guarantee you that you are not alone, as even I was thinking the same thing earlier on in my golf journey. I didn't always write all of this information on my scorecard and have learned to do so over time as my golf game as progressed. What I now write on my scorecard and how I utilize the information on the scorecard is a result of my uptake and my reception of the genre.

That being said, my **reception**, or how I perceive the genre of a scorecard, may be much different than someone who may be seeing a scorecard for the first time today because of my antecedent knowledge. For example, since I use the genre of a scorecard almost every day, I am no longer overwhelmed by all of the information on a scorecard and have learned how to use this information to help me. Today, my reception of scorecards is that they are a simple tool for me to use on the golf course. But, for those of you who may be seeing scorecards for the first time today, your reception of scorecards may be much different and that is okay.

Reception is not something that doesn't ever change. Our reception toward a genre is something that may change with each new experience or encounter with the genre. Speaking from personal experience, I can remember when I was first introduced to the genre of scorecards. I was overwhelmed and confused, to say the least. However, as I continued to be exposed to scorecards in a variety of different settings, I gained lots of antecedent knowledge by seeing what other golfers did and trying to make sense of it. This is what writers call **uptake**. As I was being exposed to scorecards, I was thinking about what I was seeing other people and how

other people wrote on their scorecard and then applying this to how I did my scorecards. With practice and exposure, I have grown accustomed to reading other courses' scorecards and figuring how to use the information on the card to my advantage. In addition, I have gained the confidence to use the scorecard in a way that I have found that helps me, which in my case is having a lot of writing on the scorecard. This may be different from what other people do but that is fine because everyone sees things in a different way and has a different reception of the genre. This same concept applies to all genres and not just scorecards. Everyone has different backgrounds and antecedent knowledge in different genres, which ultimately shapes their reception of a genre.

A Life Full of Genres

If at this point you are still feeling a bit overwhelmed with all of this P-CHAT and genre discussion, it is important to realize that a feeling like this is *completely* normal. As I said before, I was very overwhelmed and confused when I first was exposed to the genre of a scorecard. If you think about it, why wouldn't I be? It was the first time being exposed to a genre that I had no antecedent knowledge in.

The same idea applies to all genres. Almost every genre can seem simple from the outside, but one quickly can find out that this is not the case when they dive a little deeper into the genre. For example, this is the first time I have ever analyzed a scorecard in this way before. It amazes me how complex this genre is in reality and how much information is actually contained on such a small piece of paper. Since I use scorecards all of the time, I normally don't stress too much over seeing and using a scorecard. However, as I analyze the genre of scorecards through a whole new lens using the theory of P-CHAT, I have become much more aware of what I know about this genre (antecedent knowledge and uptake) and why I see this genre the way I do (reception).

With this being said, it may seem scary at first to confront genres head on, but there is nothing to be afraid as you experience and come in contact with all types of genres in your life. You have been exposed to new genres for your entire life. You probably didn't associate the term "genre" with them, but it is important to be aware that genres are everywhere around you. The P-CHAT concepts give you the tools you need to conquer any genre you encounter. It takes some practice with working with these concepts, but before you know it, you will be able to break down complex genres and to jump out of the box as you think about all of the aspects related to the genre,

ultimately allowing you to get a comprehensive understanding and analysis of any genre that you encounter.

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Grassroots: A Fine Dining Literate Activity Experience

SAM MOE

Abstract

This article explores the restaurant industry as an activity system while also drawing on scholarship from rhetoric and composition to help readers learn more about how to explore the everyday literacies they might encounter.

Introduction: I Like to Cry in the Walk-In

In which we enter the restaurant activity system and think about how we learn new things and transfer our knowledge across different settings.

Fire: Appetizers, Activity Systems and My History with Restaurants

An exploration of antecedent knowledge and a breakdown of activity systems.

Burn the Ice!

We're really in the weeds now, especially since the author broke (another) glass into the ice bin. Don't panic: we're going to talk about the interaction of tools and texts that permeate the restaurant.

~~**I Dropped Your Entrée on the Floor.**~~ **We're Just Running a Little Behind, Have an App**

We're going to start thinking about knowledge transfer. We'll focus on some of the more important questions to ask when starting any new restaurant job and how transfer exists in each restaurant space.

The Kitchen Macerated Berries for Hours, Please Order Dessert

Did you enjoy my service performance? Please order dessert so we can spend more time together ($).

In the Weeds with Literate Activity in the Restaurant Industry

Sammy Moe

In this article, Moe explores the restaurant industry as an activity system while also drawing on scholarship from rhetoric and composition to help readers learn more about how to explore the everyday literacies they might encounter.

Introduction: I Like to Cry in the Walk-In Freezer

Waiting tables is both thrilling and terrifying. Most of my learning at the restaurant was anxiety-inducing, but through research I learned to find my way and even became pretty good at keeping the guests on my side by handling small difficulties calmly, and occasionally offering a free drink or appetizer to smooth the way. In framing this article through activity systems, I hope to show that there are different ways to engage in literate activity, knowledge transfer, and uptake. As Stephanie Danler writes in her first novel, *Sweetbitter*, "A certain connoisseurship of taste, a mark of how you deal with the world, is the ability to relish the bitter, to crave it, even, the way you do the sweet." This can be true not just in learning new genres in the classroom, or perhaps in an office workplace setting, but in all kinds of everyday workplaces, like restaurants, that you might not see as filled with literacies.

I also want to share my own process of knowledge making—both thinking about how I learned about working in restaurants and how I learned to think about how my learning happens across settings as diverse

as restaurants and classrooms. So let's do dinner. Waiting tables will never be easy, but just like writing in a new setting or genre, it can be worth it, especially once you've cracked the code of what to do and how to do it. And if someone yells at you, just go cry in the walk in (the last walk-in because it's where the bins of ice-cream are kept). Without further ado, please keep reading and someone will explain appetizers and activity systems to you shortly.

Fire: Appetizers, Activity Systems and My History with Restaurants

Even though we weren't allowed to hang out in the kitchen, I would always linger after my orders went in, eager to hear either of the head chefs shout "Fire!" before listing off specific entrees. If they read my order out loud—fire ribeye, salmon, calamari—I was in the clear to walk away and proceed with the rest of my tasks. I was hiding during this time, tucked into the corner between the salad station (also referred to as the **cold window**) and the computers. Beyond every station, hot and cold, were anywhere from one to fifty ticket slips containing appetizers, entrees, and desserts. Some slips were stamped for allergies, others written on with pen (something else we weren't supposed to do). If we thought we were hot standing in front of the line, a heated metal space where all hot plates rested before we picked them up and carried them to guests, it was nothing compared to the heat of the kitchen. The only solution for cooling off was to hide in the walk-in freezers, which were also spaces for crying and gossiping.

From the very first weeks of a graduate seminar I took in rhetoric and composition, I've been thinking about the ways I might use rhetorical theories in communicating with my research interests and goals for my degree. I've also been thinking about ways to combine my **antecedent knowledge** of everyday genres (such as pens, notebooks, and sometimes even menus) with my interest in exploring how literate activity systems work—specifically in the restaurant industry. In reflecting on my ten years working across seven restaurants, as well as my own everyday literacies in these spaces, it is obvious to me that the restaurant industry is historically situated, community based, and communicative (which are features of an activity system). What surprises me in my reflection, though, is how much literate activity is involved in working (or even dining) in a restaurant. What started out as confusing to me when I first entered restaurants as a worker—what the heck was a "refire" order, a dupe, or burning ice?—quickly became a set of activities, terms, and knowledges that were deeply embedded in my muscle memory. It can help to visualize waiting tables as a complex activity system with many moving parts. It became a muscle memory of activities.

First, there are specific tools you'll need to excel in this restaurant activity system: strong coffee, slip-resistant shoes (trust me, you will trip and fall otherwise), a serving book (formerly referred to as a "credit-card holder"—this is where you'll store all your cash and receipts), and at least ten pens. If you need something to write guest orders on, you can always steal paper from the ticket printers. Or you can use the back of discarded menus, just don't let the guests see the water and wine stains covering the paper. However, before we continue further with all this restaurant and rhetoric talk, I want to bring in David Russell's explanation of the five key elements of **activity systems** as a way to help you understand this concept. According to Russell, **activity systems** are:

1. **historically developed**, meaning that they developed over time and interactively with the culture in which they operate
2. **inherently social**—that is, they are changing systems of interaction between people, their environments, and their culture
3. **dialogic**, meaning that they are in constant conversations with their objectives and how best to achieve them
4. **collective**, rather than individual. Activity systems are not the product of one, but of many
5. **always changing and adapting** to meet the needs of participants within the system

It might be obvious to me now how these five key points are present in the restaurant industry, but I didn't always have this knowledge. After looking at the tools used in the industry, the second, perhaps most important aspect of the restaurant activity system, is the community. Any server, cook, host, or even your guests who are willing to socialize with you will also be part of the system, although they may or may not see or understand the activity in the same way. The servers and I used to repeat the silly saying, "Teamwork makes the dreamwork," until we got so weeded we couldn't talk to each other anymore. The activities we took part in for preparation and teaching became the lifelines we utilized during a busy—or, **weeded**—shift. We couldn't have made it to the end of each shift without supporting one another. On the other hand, while guests are also a necessary part of the system, they don't have the same goals (surviving the shift, making money) and also don't have access to a lot of the tools and knowledge that the employees have.

In order to exist and thrive in the activity system that is the restaurant, a participant needs to learn how to use the tools (genres, communications, human interactions) in successful ways. But that doesn't happen

instantaneously. Instead, a new participant has to learn, usually by making a lot of mistakes along the way. In the next sections, I want to talk about the language and procedures involved in making mistakes, including the steps I had to take when I shattered eight martinis in front of an entire bar of guests.

Burn the Ice!

When you are new to a restaurant, the bartenders, food runners, bussers, and kitchen staff don't always care about why you are making mistakes. They just want you to stop making them. In the midst of a busy shift, which involves multiple steps to service, your coworkers only care about two things: using the proper code words to call for help, and fixing the problem(s) as soon as humanly possible.

The first thing I tell new servers when I train them is balance. It's impossible to survive any shift if you can't balance two plates of food on your nondominant arm or a tray of drinks or a stack of dirty dishes. For this section, however, we'll just focus on drinks, or what we like to call, "bar service." Each guest in your section of tables needs a drink. Even if they never touch their water, they at least need one water glass throughout the meal, which must be filled away from the table. I learned this the hard way, of course, when I grabbed a guest's drink at the top half of the glass and the server training me yelled at me. Scolded is perhaps a better term, but believe me when I say we would also get yelled at—by each other, and by guests. But back to the glasses. We learn something called the 50/50 rule. The top half of any glass is for the guest, and the bottom half is for the server to hold. Depending on what type of restaurant you work in, your drinks, nonalcoholic or alcoholic, will be served in (deceptively delicate) glasses atop a drink tray. This tray must be balanced by one hand only—your nondominant hand. For me, my nondominant hand was shaky at best. Prone to anxiety throughout the shift, it was at times nearly impossible to carry a drink tray to my guests. Then one night, I broke glass behind the bar itself, shards of a once-full glass of sauvignon blanc flying into our bucket of **consumption ice** (ice that is consumed by the guest). I had to burn the ice, and quick.

Burning the ice isn't easy. I had to scoop out the entire contents of the bin, melt the ice in a large sink out back, then ferry hot water to the bartenders so they could send any last remnants of broken glass down the drain. Last but not least, the ice bin must be wiped down. You might be wondering how such a devastating mistake factors into literate activity, or you might even be wondering what my guests were up to while I was cleaning up my mistakes. The entire time I was burning the ice, I was also moving,

communicating, and socializing with my coworkers and guests. Every single person I walked behind, I had to say "behind you." I had to walk quickly (never run in the restaurant) to my guests to let them know I'd be just another moment with their drinks. At the same time, I was getting sat with a new table—who would also need to order. I was socializing in many ways with different actors: polite and apologetic with guests, sometimes silly with the bartenders, and always quiet in the kitchen.

However, the beverage list is just the tip of the iceberg, or rather, the tip of the restaurant activity system. To quote Jerry Stinnett's article "Using Objective-Motivated Knowledge Activation to Support Writing Transfer in FYC,"

> The relationship of the actions and tools in an activity system and their collective relationship to the objectives of the activity not only reveal why particular actions make sense but also identify the usefulness of particular tools as tools and the particular knowledge needed to use them effectively within that system. (360)

The relationship between the different tools we use—in this case, the drink lists we created and memorized—is an example of the ways in which our relationships are formed in the restaurant activity system. More specifically, we use these beverage lists to provide knowledge for our guests, while also helping them to consider different **flavor profiles**—the ways in which different foods and drink work together to harmonize on the palate—in order to create the best experience possible. Our lists may seem messy, stained (often with red wine or sauce) and frayed at the edges, but their usefulness within this activity system takes priority over appearance. Besides, our **server booklets**, the place in which we store all these notes, are meant to be messy as well as out of the guests line of sight, stashed in cabinets or hidden in our aprons.

White wines are paired with seafood and chicken, red wines are paired with beef and dessert. Rosé is best in the summertime, and martinis can either come straight up in a glass, or on the rocks with ice. Servers use a myriad of genres with which to write down their lists, from notecards purchased at the grocery store, to receipt paper when we're low on notecards. Sometimes we use birthday card envelopes or sticky notes, any dry surface that will allow us to write key information that we'll need to recall later on when talking to our guests. The creation of these beverage lists is an example of a server's **antecedent knowledge**, or, our prior-existing knowledge of writing, note-taking, and the different literate activities we've taken part in. Many of us applied study methods from school. For me, I always use a notecard booklet (Figure 1) to help me keep track of the different types of beverages, both

Figure 1: A notecard booklet with three tabbed sections.

alcoholic and nonalcoholic. Normally, a server would need to study their notes for a menu test, which all new servers are supposed to take early on. I'll let you in on secret though, I never took the menu test, which I've kept from my fellow servers for over a decade. My manager bumped me up to server one fateful season when we were lacking in staff members with deep knowledge of the menu, and she told me she trusted me enough to not take the menu test. Though I knew the titles of each dish, I knew nothing about their ingredients. Not wanting to let anyone down, I started compulsively taking notes, hanging out in the back prep station with the kitchen staff as they crafted recipes and skinned fish. I learned that sea beans taste best with flavorless fish, like halibut, and found tiny blue crabs in the buckets of oysters we used on Mondays. I studied paring knives verses butter knives (the former is sharper, more able to pry open a mussel) and what it meant to reduce something (to cook it down until it's half the original amount) to make a sweeter or more flavorful sauce, (regardless of the ingredients). I quickly became obsessed with the culinary world, not realizing back then how greatly my serving skills would transfer into my academic projects and research interests.

~~I Dropped Your Entrée on the Floor~~ We're Just Running a Little Behind, Have a Free Appetizer

I wasn't so much worried when I began working in the restaurant industry about breaking glassware or forgetting information. I was more worried about the overall chaos of the dinner shift. The entrées on any menu don't have to only apply to dinner—it can be applicable to breakfast or lunch depending on whether or not you work from the opening of the restaurant (generally around ten in the morning) til the close (around nine, ten, or later if you're behind the bar). Dinner, and its complexity, was the meal that taught me about transfer. Now, it's true that if you had asked me about how I was transferring my **antecedent knowledge** when I was just learning about being a server, I wouldn't have had the slightest clue what you meant. But learning transfer (taking existing knowledge and practices and applying them in new situations) is in fact something that we're doing all the time, and transfer can be particularly interesting when we're looking at people moving

around in a complicated activity system. When I first started as a server, learning how to work a busy dinner shift drew on my antecedent knowledge of running food in and out of the kitchen (in order of how guests are sitting at my tables) and cleaning after the guests left (also known as "bussing") and knowledge about good customer service that I had learned from hosting. Follow me to take a look at the high highs and low lows of restaurant transfer. Oh, and never balance three plates on one arm, you're going to drop the fried zucchini sticks on your guest's lap.

I learned the language of the restaurant industry over more than a decade working in restaurants and hotels, and I've also learned a few of important concepts about writing from taking classes in rhetoric and composition. One key thing I've learned is that all the activities I listed as part of my learning in restaurants were, in fact, part of a process of high-and-low-road transfer of knowledge. Jerry Stinnettt writes that "writing studies researchers have demonstrated that effective transfer of writing practice demands the ability to call on and transform existing writing knowledge for new contexts. Indeed, one of the 'five essential principles about writing transfer' identified by Jessie L. Moore is that 'Successful writing transfer requires repurposing prior knowledge' (5)" (357). While I didn't know anything about the terms **high and low road transfer** during my time in the restaurant industry, that didn't stop me from transferring my skills between different settings. I've worked in the hotel industry, in restaurants a few steps below fine dining, and I also helped to open a brand new restaurant. Looking back, I can see I was engaging in low-road transfer across these different restaurant spaces. Each time I got a second restaurant job to help pay the bills (sometimes working seven days a week between both locations) I had a practiced list of questions and activities memorized. Below is a list showing some of the ways low-road transfer was at work between each restaurant:

Low-road Transfer

From ISUWriting.com:

According to Perkins and Salomon, "Low-road transfer 'reflects the automatic triggering of well-practiced routines in circumstances where there is considerable perceptual similarity to the original learning context'" (Perkins and Saloman qtd. in Reiff and Bawarshi 315).

- At each restaurant, I knew to ask about their allergy process. Some restaurants have you stamp your tickets so the chefs know, others require you tell every manager on duty, the food runner, and the head chef.
- Where was the dry storage? (Paper goods, sauces, salts, sugar).
- Where was the side-work sheet? Side-work involves ongoing tasks we complete throughout the shift that help service to run smoother. Examples of side-work can be anything from refilling sauces, getting ice

for the bar, stocking paper towels, and bringing out racks of glassware to the bar.

Even though these steps appear as questions, once I figured out the layout of the restaurant, I had already incorporated every task (and more) into the routine of each shift. I learned where things were located and the rules for using familiar tools (which can be different in different restaurants) at the same time that I was mapping and finding my way through the physical space of the restaurant.

Since the main restaurant I worked at (while oscillating between side restaurant jobs) was only open for dinner, I engaged in a lot of high-road transfer for tasks I never would have imagined were a part of dinner. These are the tasks that took me the longest to learn. In order to prepare myself better for each shift, I began taping static notes into my server book, wanting to make sure that until this knowledge became ingrained in me, I would always have an answer ready for a guest.

Before the dinner rush began, I had to learn wine service, how to roll silverware, side plate policies, and alcoholic beverage garnishes. The first seemed easy. I had watched the bartenders rip off wine bottle foil with their bare hands before quickly uncorking every bottle and pouring each glass without spilling. At first, I kept forgetting my wine key (wine opener). I dropped a bottle of champagne on the floor, which didn't break, but I did make a joke with the guests about how they would be getting "extra bubbles"—they didn't laugh. I had to roll seventy-five silverware bundles a night or I wasn't allowed to leave (each containing two forks and a knife). I wasn't allowed to put metal sauce boats on entrée plates or salad dishes. This last part was complicated for me. I asked what a sauce boat was, and my coworkers explained they were also called "ramekins." What they really meant were small containers of sauce and salad dressing that appeared "unprofessional" jammed onto a plate with an expensive steak. I had to carry all sauce out of the kitchen on a separate, smaller plate, with a napkin underneath to prevent slippage. I wasn't a server, yet, and I had a long ways to go before I would master food running (carrying every dish from the kitchen to the guests). Temporarily demoted from food running, I was back to hosting, then bussing tables. Once the kitchen was convinced I could recognize every dish, I was allowed to train to food run.

I haven't mentioned this before to anyone, but I wasn't trained to wait tables. My manager, confident in my abilities, tossed me onto the floor after doing everything but wait tables. I had exactly three days of training, no menu test, and only two tables for the first month. I cared about succeeding because I loved my job. I studied every shift until I could recite the entire

menu from memory—including ingredients of every single dish. I worked my way up from waiting two tables at a time to waiting on seven. The most I've ever had in one night was half the restaurant—over ten tables, including a party of eighteen. Half the staff had called out sick, so my friend and I took over the front-of-house. Though I was unfamiliar with transfer and antecedent knowledge, that shift was an example of how I had successfully used my antecedent knowledge of customer service and carework to successfully complete the shift. The way I see it, all of the low road transfer (memorizing tasks and menu items, studying how others did things) ultimately meant I was engaging in **high road transfer** (where you see the system as a whole and adapt your knowledge more easily across situations, rather than just learning specific, isolated new skills). I transferred knowledge I learned from outside research—spending nights watching *Chef's Table* and reading Anthony Bourdain, Alice B. Toklas, and Ruth Reichl until I had bags under my eyes—to the tasks I did as a server and to my interactions with guests. Luckily that evening, I was only yelled at once, for uncorking a wine too late. This, too, I filed away into my memory: get the guest a drink before anything. If you're busy, give everyone water, then free bread. Return with alcohol and an apology, take their entrée orders, and move on as quickly as possible because you're about to get **double-sat** (when the host sits you two tables at the exact same time, usually during a busy rush).

High-Road Transfer

From ISUWriting.com:

Conversely, "High-road transfer . . . 'depends on deliberate, mindful abstraction of skill or knowledge from one context for application to another'" (Perkins and Saloman qtd. in Reiff and Bawarshi 315).

The last, most important lesson to learn in order to be a successful server are the table numbers in any given restaurant space. Memorize the guests who like the window seats, the guests who need extra lamplight, and the guests who don't care where they sit as long as it's with you. Just like in a classroom setting, there was terminology I needed to study so that I could be good at my job, and terminology I needed to study so I could make myself a better team member. I didn't realize until I was working

Figure 2: A slice of birthday cake my guest gave to me during a shift. Image text reads "Omg today is wild and amazing."

and studying at ISU that I began to that the restaurant industry is full of these literate activities. As servers, we were all taking part in calling forth our antecedent knowledge, low-and-high road transferring our knowledges across different shifts, and making meaning out of all these activities—sometimes positive, sometimes negative, but always part of the ongoing knowledge we were building.

The Kitchen Macerated Berries for Hours, Please Order Dessert

In some ways, studying for work as a restaurant server has a lot in common with the kind of learning we do in lots of different activity systems, including those inside of school settings. Many of these settings have similar goals, which are to accomplish our tasks the best we can, with the tools we've got, in a timely fashion. If you time your guest's experience on your watch or in the margin of your server notebook, then about an hour and a half should have passed by now, which means the last section of this article is dedicated to dessert. Dessert is the wrap-up of a meal, much the same way an article is meant to be wrapped up. However, rather than simply finishing this article and claiming that I've taught you all you need to know about working in the restaurant industry, I want instead to add my voice to an ongoing conversation about the ways in which the work we take part in both inside and outside of school is full of meaning-making opportunities and different genres of composition.

Macerating Berries:
Maceration is the act of soaking fruit in sugar and water to soften the berries—you can also add alcohol, and heat up the mixture to pair it with cold desserts, such as cheesecakes or ice-cream cake. Ordering a dessert with macerated berries takes longer, so make sure to alert your guests ahead of time. And if you get to work early enough, you can try all the dessert specials before your coworkers.

To cite "Integrating Rhetorical and Literary Theories of Genre," by Amy J. Devitt, "Most of the scholarship on genre . . . fails to recognize the commonalities across different works. Text and textual meaning, whether literary or rhetorical, are not objective and static but rather dynamic and created through the interaction of writer, reader, and context" (697). Both the activity systems present in the restaurant industry and the tools and genres we employ are there, are dynamic, always changing, and always evolving. My note-taking habits while waiting tables involved taping key terms and ingredient lists onto my server notebook. In grad school, I find myself taping key terms and theories to the covers of my binders and notebooks, as it helps me study better. Where once in the restaurant industry I would prep the entire front-of-house with specific tools to help the shift move smoother, I

now prepare for writing in the same way—by setting up my desk ahead of time, so I can work on my creative projects with greater ease. Prepping ahead of time also means I get up less, and I can stay in the writing zone more—which is incredibly difficult for someone who is easily distracted (and then the food writing turns into hunger, but luckily I've already hidden snacks in my bookshelf before my *writing shift* began). As a freelance writer in my spare time, I use my restaurant knowledge to help me create plot and story. And if I'm ever in the weeds with a project, I just turn to my carework skills I learned in the restaurant: keep calm, retain all information, and complete the tasks of highest priority next.

To reiterate my original goal for this article, the methods we employ when we engage in everyday literate activities and take up new knowledge are unique in execution (we learn different things in different settings) but we often employ similar learning strategies across these boundaries. In addition, our learning is community-based (not just in the immediate community, like other workers in a restaurant, but from other sources, like books or TV shows). We learn from one another, from our antecedent knowledge, and most importantly, we can, if we're lucky and pay attention, get the chance to transfer this learning across really diverse situations, even bridging a gap as wide as the space between a restaurant and a classroom.

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Baking Reinvented: Strategies and Tips from a Pro

Sydney Kotowski

In this article, Kotowski analyzes how Pedagogical Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (P-CHAT), Antecedent Knowledge, and Trajectory are incorporated in the process of baking. She gives insight to her family's baking traditions, including their kolachy cookie recipe, to illustrate her desire for readers to try the recipe with their own families.

Batter Up!

"This is my invariable advice to people: Learn how to cook—try new recipes, learn from your mistakes, be fearless and above all have fun," says Julia Child, a cooking teacher, author, and TV personality. Child received many awards and nominations some of which include being a Cookbook Hall of Fame Inductee by the James Beard Foundation in 1987, and receiving the Culinary Institute of America's first female Hall of Fame inductee in 1993, and the Best National Television Cooking Show by the James Beard Foundation in 1996. Now I am not saying we can all achieve this, but what I am saying is we should all try something new and maybe some good will come out of it. Whether it is cooking or baking I have found my passion. Getting to create something, even if it turns out to be a failure, I get to see the end result, and I have fun.

Cooking and baking are relaxing activities that allow you to spend time with family, as well as let you expand on previous traditions that came before you with new flavors and styles. In this article, I am going to use Pedagogical Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (P-CHAT) terms to better understand

and to show the process of baking. According to the ISU Writing Program, P-CHAT is defined as a way to help us think about and study complex genres that we encounter in simpler, smaller concepts (ISU Writing Program). P-CHAT is a system that was created to help students better understand-how humans engage in producing and using texts in the world. P-CHAT can also be helpful for students who wish to better apply knowledge they learn in class to real world applications. In this article I am going to focus on the P-CHAT terms Production, Activity, Representation, Reception, and Socialization. By looking at baking through the lens of P-CHAT, I'm hoping to show how it can work to unpack activities we engage in every day, and hopefully illustrate how you might use P-CHAT to think about other parts of your life outside of your writing classes.

The Evolution

Now, before I go more in depth as to how P-CHAT is related to baking, I think it is important that I define some other terms first. First, let's start with something simple. A **Genre** as defined by the ISU Writing Program to be "a kind of production that is possible to identify by understanding the convention or features that make those productions recognizable." This definition of genre is different from the traditional meaning of genre because the traditional definition of genre is a style of writing authors choose to write in. Some of these traditional genres could include comedy, drama, fiction, nonfiction, etc. However, in this article, I will use the ISU Writing Program genre definition by looking at the genre of baking. Baking is a type of genre that when you look behind the scenes at the end result you see how a dish was produced as well as how the features were pulled together to make the final product possible. In addition, there are subgenres within baking, such as cakes vs. breads. The features used to create these items include specific tools, things such as ingredients, measuring tools, a mixer, and an oven.

Genre is not the only thing that you need to understand before you can start getting your hands dirty. Another term that I think will come in handy when baking is **antecedent knowledge**. This is a term used to describe all the things a writer already knows about the topic being discussed. Antecedent knowledge can influence how you approach new genres and can be important to the end result coming out the way you imagined. There are certain skills that you need to know before you begin, such as how an oven and mixer work—and how to use them—understanding basic measurements, and knowing the correct way to read a recipe. All of these skills can drastically impact the way your end result turns out. Sometimes people use antecedent

knowledge without even being aware of it, so considering what you already know and do not know before starting a project can really help the outcome. Another aspect worth considering is where your antecedent knowledge comes from and how you acquired it. Antecedent knowledge can be used in baking by remembering terms that you use while cooking and applying it in a different, but still similar way.

Traditions can help you find where the recipes originated as well as where your antecedent knowledge came from. According to Merriam-Webster, **traditions** are long established customs or beliefs that have been passed down from one generation to another. In my experience, I have many traditions that my family and I have been doing over the years, some that I was not even aware of until I started to think about what we do every year. When looking back at the traditions my family and I do every year around the holidays, I think of decorating the Christmas tree, watching the movie ELF, decorating gingerbread houses, making kolaches, and so forth. Since all of these traditions have been taking place over several years there is a lot of memories and history behind them. For me, it is getting to spend time with family. Despite the yearly traditions, something new always happens that makes us laugh, cry and smile all at the same time, creating new memories for us to share for years to come. Behind all the fun times, what we do not see is the history of where these traditions and recipes came from. The recipes may have come from our grandparents or older ancestors, whom may have lived and created these recipes and memories in the past, which can makes us feel as if they're with us as we make some of the same foods. I believe that sharing traditions with the ones you love helps to show who you are and where you came from in the best light.

In addition to all the traditions that have taken place around birthdays, holidays, and weddings, many of these types of events are where large gatherings take place between family and friends bringing different cultures and communities together. When cooking and baking recipes are shared with others of different cultures and backgrounds it opens their perspectives to the ways of others. Discussing differences with people of different cultures opens up new and interesting conversations that may not have taken place originally.

But sometimes sharing recipes that have been in a family for a long time can feel risky. Some recipes may be more precious to the family or creator, so the family may be unsure of whether or not they wish to share. Precious recipes like this are usually the original recipes that start an entire tradition of saving and sharing recipes within a family. However, there are some recipes that families like to share with others to see what kind of

different spices they can add or alter to change the whole flavor profile of the dish. Moreover, most recipes that have been passed down in the family for generations start out handwritten but over time recipes wear and tear, these might get transferred to a digital file or rewritten and printed out. Because of advancements in technology more and more recipes these days are typed and printed and then handed out to other friends and families or shared online. What I am getting at here is the way that these recipes are distributed and passed around continues even though the initial recipe may change slightly.

Knowing your past and keeping traditions alive are not the only secret to making new memories. Over the years things and people change based on many factors such as personality, where you live, if you traveled, etc. A term that the ISU Writing Program uses that I believe really shows us these changes is called trajectory. **Trajectory** is a way for us to understand "what texts/genres do and how they move around the world" (ISU Writing Program). In simpler terms, it describes the shifts and changes that occur in a genre as it gets used over time. Tradition and trajectory share similar characteristics but differ in an important way. Traditions describe your past, but trajectory describes how those traditions change over generations. Trajectory looks more at how genres are produced and distributed by different generations over time. For example, when baking at my house everyone has different styles and flavors that influence or change the trajectory of a recipe. A popular cookie recipe that my family and I make around Christmas time is a kolachy. A kolachy is a polish cookie that is folded with jam in the center. When you take a bite of the cookie it melts in your mouth and makes you want more. This recipe has been adapted over time, such as the amount of jam in the center, flavor of the cookie, size of the cookie, and some batches even seem different with some more crumbly than others. These are just a few of ways that a family recipe has turned into a tradition and the recipe's trajectory has evolved.

Let's CHAT Baking

In this section, I want to share more about the process of baking my previously mentioned kolachy cookies. This process does not take simply an hour like a batch of Tollhouse chocolate chip cookies. The process of making the dough, letting it chill in the fridge, rolling it, cutting out the squares, filling it with jam, folding it, and putting it in the oven, takes time. Patience is key in this recipe! Before I start to explain the process, I want you all to be aware of some terms I am going to be using from the P-CHAT theory. These include production, activity, representation, reception, and socialization. With these

Figure 1: Preparation process of rolling out the dough to be cut into squares for them to be filled.

terms in mind, I will define them, and give you examples as to how they are used in making the kolachy cookies.

First let's start with the P-CHAT term production. **Production** is the tools/materials and practices you need to make the kolachy cookies from Suzy Crofton's recipe down below. Such tools include a mixer, measuring spoons, measuring cups, the ingredients, and lastly miscellaneous tools, for example, a spatula, spoons, knives, a bench scraper, a rolling pin, etc. Along with production, a term that I previously mentioned that could be helpful in this process is using your antecedent knowledge of things like how does the mixer work or how to use measuring spoons/cups.

Our next P-CHAT term is activity. **Activity** is the physical action or process that an individual does to make the cookies. In creating kolachy cookies, for example, gathering the ingredients, combining the ingredients, mixing them together, rolling out the dough, filling it with jam, and putting it in the oven, are all steps in the recipe that involve the activity of baking the cookies.

Representation is our next P-CHAT term and is defined by how you plan to carry the recipe out and what materials can help you do that. For example, representation can involve following the recipe's instructions, thinking about the mise en place (or "putting everything together" in English). In other words, you need to think about the prep needed to be done

before you can start baking and considere how the tools/materials listed above can be used.

Our next P-CHAT term is reception. **Reception** is how others might react to the gesture (of being given the cookies, in this case), how they use it (eating it, of course!), and how others might use or repurpose it. How others might use or repurpose the recipe or the cookie itself can become a tradition by making them every year, when they are passed down from generation to generation, or the creators make their own spin on the style or flavor of the cookie.

Distribution is another P-CHAT term that I would like to talk about. **Distribution** involves how a text is given to others and who takes them up. For example, how might the recipes shared at a holiday gathering be distributed to others, such as through text, email, or paper, as a handwritten recipe on a recipe card? Also, distribution can extend further than just sharing with your family and friends. It could be shared with the world through a blog post or a YouTube video demonstrating how to cook or bake a recipe.

The last P-CHAT term I am going to talk about is socialization. **Socialization** can be defined by the interactions between people as they produce/create the cookies, distribute them to others, and use them (to eat). Furthermore, socialization can unintendedly be spread through social media. For example, recipes can be shared through videos on TikTok, Pinterest, blogs, or even YouTube. While producing or making the cookies you get to spend time with family and make memories and really bond with them in ways you might not have been able to before. When you distribute the cookies to others—for example other family members, grandparents or cousins interact with each other and thank you for the generous gift. Of course, you can't forget the part where you get to indulge and eat the delicious cookies. When others engage with the cookies and the people who made them, they are consciously and unconsciously engaged in the practice of representing and transforming different kinds of social and cultural practices. For example,

Figure 2: Nothing better than waking up to make a batch of cookies!

they are engaging in how a recipe changes and transforms from generation to generation with people's different styles and flavors of their take on the family recipe and tradition.

Don't Forget the Crumbs!

So, now that you have learned that recipes (and the cookies that result from them) can be a genre, and how the P-CHAT terms apply to a genre as different as this, I hope you consider some of your passions as genres and see if you might apply P-CHAT terms to them as well. Throughout this article you learned about baking, traditions, and some English tools that can be applied to pretty much anything. But why? Why might it have been important for you to learn all this? I think the most important aspect of thinking about our everyday activities through P-CHAT is to better understand that some of the same skills we apply to learning to bake cookies, or write and revise recipes, are also utilized when we are learning to write something new for school, or for work. Trying to understand the approaches and important features of these texts through P-CHAT might make it less confusing and scary. Like with baking, you might find that you learn something new and get to be creative.

I also chose to write about baking because it was my hope that you and your family have some baking or cooking traditions of your own that you want to continue. By making these recipes that have been shared with family and friends, and passed down over time, you are carrying on a legacy, and keeping the memory of loved ones alive while you carry on their recipes for generations to come.

As an added bonus I have attached the popular kolachy cookie recipe that my family and I make every year around the Christmas holiday. I hope you consider the challenge of making this a new cookie tradition in your own homes! After all, no one said it better than Julia Child, "The only real stumbling block is fear of failure. In cooking [and baking!] you've got to have a what-the-hell attitude."

Figure 3: Holiday tradition at the Kotowski House!

Kolachy Cookie Recipe

Preparation time: 40 minutes *Chilling time:* 4 hours or overnight

Cooking time: 15 minutes per batch *Yield:* About 25 cookies

- 1 cup (2 sticks) of unsalted butter, softened
- 4 ounces of mascarpone or cream cheese, softened
- 1½ cups of all-purpose flour
- ⅛ of a teaspoon of Salt
- ⅛ of a teaspoon of Sugar
- ½ cup of preserves (the filling)
- Confectioners' sugar (the garnish)

1. Put butter in bowl of electric mixer. Beat on medium speed until butter is light and fluffy, about two minutes. Add mascarpone/cream cheese; beat until smooth and well incorporated, about two minutes. Beat in flour, salt, and sugar just until most of the flour is combined. Stir by hand until all flour is incorporated (this is to ensure you are not overmixing!), result will be tough if overbeating or overmixing occurs. Flatten the dough into a disc; wrap in plastic wrap. Chill for four hours or overnight.

2. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Divide dough in half; return one half to the refrigerator. Roll dough out on a lightly floured surface to about 1/8 of an inch thick. Cut dough into three-inch squares with a sharp knife. Put the squares on an ungreased cookie sheet; place 1 teaspoon of preserves in the center of each square. Fold each corner to the center of the square; press lightly into preserves (with water to ensure it doesn't break open). Repeat with the remaining dough.

3. Bake in batches until very lightly browned, fourteenn-to-sixteen minutes. Let sit on cookie sheet for five minutes. Remove cookies to a cooling rack. Generously sprinkle with confectioners' sugar while still warm. Enjoy!

Figure 4: Congrats you made kolachys!

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[Ghost]Writing and Retrospective Transfer: Creating Writing Research Identities Over Time

A *Grassroots* Collaborative Co-Interview

The Ghost and Joyce R. Walker

In this *Grassroots* Co-Interview, two writing researchers got together to talk about doing writing-for-hire work. As they dredge up and share their less-than-perfect writing experiences, they both begin to see this process as a kind of "retrospective knowledge transfer," where they figure out what they've learned by looking back at moments when they had no idea what they were doing.

"I Didn't Know That Was a Thing:" Writing Research in a Gig Economy

This Grassroots writing Co-Interview started out with a story the Ghost told Joyce about doing creative freelance writing as a side job. "What!" said Joyce. "There are jobs where people write fiction as part of a gig economy? I didn't know that!" From that conversation we evolved a plan to do a "literate activity co-interview" for the *Grassroots Journal*, which is when two people who are really interested in the ways writing works in the world get together to ask questions and tell stories about literate activity, like the writing geeks they truly are. The first writing research co-interview was published by the *Grassroots Writing Research Journal* in Fall 2021, so the "genre" of the co-

Unstable Genres

The Writing Commons, an online encyclopedia for writers, defines genre as, "social constructs . . . [that] reflect the activities, values, and histories of communities of practitioners." Genres also "reflect shared textual expectations." But when a genre is new (like these Co-Interviews), participants have less restrictions (and less internalized guidelines) for the activity, so they tend to create texts that are not as consistent. Readers of this interview might want to compare it to the co-interview published in the *GWRJ* issue 12.1, "Everyday Writing Researchers," by Kevin Roozen and Anya Gregg (2021).

interview is still pretty unstable. What follows is our effort to capture some of the ways we talk and think about everyday literacies, professional writing, and writing research.

Writing WAAAAAAY Outside of School

During the interview, Joyce and the Ghost quickly learned they had much in common related to the different types of professional literate activities they have engaged in. One important theme of our co-interview involved a discussion of the idea of ***retrospective transfer***. That is, we realized that we use our past experiences with writing as examples that help us to understand how literate activity works. But back when we were actually engaged with this writing, we were just trying to survive, to do the writing we needed to do. We learned, but we couldn't really see all that we learned until we looked back at those experiences from the perspective of writing researchers, using the tools we've learned through being involved in the ISU Writing Program. It was only through this process of looking-backwards-with-new-information that we could see how these experiences ultimately contributed to our understanding of how writing works. We began our interview with a conversation about genres of "writing work-for-hire," and some of the difficulties that come with the job:

Retrospective Transfer

According to King Beach, the processes of making generalizations about our knowledge from one situation to another, are not "located within the developing individual, nor can they simply be reduced to changes in social activities. ***Rather . . . they are located in the changing relation between persons and activities***" (113, emphasis added). For us, the activity of this interview ended up being a moment where we both experienced ourselves "becoming someone or something new," as writing researchers, but still in direct reference to past experiences. We use the idea of **retrospective transfer** to describe what happens in these moments of coming together, sometimes days, months, or years after the original experience, when we "re-uptake" that particular knowledge back into our current understanding of what we know, acknowledging that that memory is also transformed in the process.

Joyce: I had no idea there was a **genre** of genre-fiction work-for-hire. I mean, I know people do writing-for-hire, but I understood that to be more like technical writing. I didn't know people did fiction ghost-writing for hire. The way you talked about it made me think. I'm interested in hearing about the actual writing experience, but I'm also interested in the way you found out about this job as something you could do.

Ghost: I found out about this job during undergrad I think it was about seven years ago, in 2015. I actually needed money for applying to grad school. One of my professors was a freelancer but she's a journalist, and

she told me to join freelance sites, which is when I found out about Guru and UpWork. They had creative writing calls and I figured I was a creative writer, so I started applying and got a few consistent hires. I would not submit my own creative fiction, especially because my name isn't attached to any of this. I started working consistently with one client for a very long time, but it turned out she was sort of a middleman (she was making calls for work on these sites as a client, but then presenting the work to other clients as her own and charging higher prices than she was paying me). I ended up finding out she was taking about half of my pay.

Joyce: How did you find out that was happening?

Ghost: I didn't find out about that until later, when I started applying for more clients and noticing that the calls were identical to the work I was producing. Genre fiction is so specific. They'll have keywords and phrases like, I want a *Cinderella* story with your own plot, which means there has to be a certain villain, an overbearing family, money issues. The main character needs a prince figure to save her. There's also a *Red Riding Hood* version. The client who was stealing from me only found out that I had discovered her scam after I quit working with her. She went to PayPal and requested all the money back (that she had already paid me for completed projects), and I had to dispute it. It was absurd. Luckily, I had all our emails as proof that she disappeared without paying me; I ultimately won the dispute and I continued freelancing after securing more consistent, trustworthy clients.

I'm the writer, but not the Author

When taking on a ghostwriting project, most writers have to sign an **NDA** (non-disclosure agreement) detailing the project, and agreeing to the terms proposed by the client. Ghostwriters aren't allowed to disclose any ideas, examples, or quotes from the texts they write, and they don't have any ownership (or copyrights) to the work that is published. But as it turns out, Joyce also had a story of a less formal writing-for-hire situation, which didn't end particularly well for her. Right out of college, she got a job working as a telephone receptionist at a hotel. Her manager at the time found that she had studied writing in college and asked her to rewrite the employee

NDA, or, Non-Disclosure Form: From Investopedia, "A non-disclosure agreement is a legally binding contract that establishes a confidential relationship." In ghostwriting, specifically for creative writing (novellas, novels, memoir), the ghost agrees to not disclose crucial details about the project, which can also include samples of the project (unless this is disclosed to the client, since some ghostwriters will use examples of their work to secure new clients).

"front desk" manual. What followed was a similar situation involving another employee taking credit for Joyce's work, without consent.

Joyce: The texts they had (instead of a coherent manual) were kind of a mess. There were just a bunch of miscellaneous guidelines and directions and handwritten notes, but nothing coherent. They had a computer system that was really antiquated and hard to use, so they needed directions for that, and also general directions for operations at the front desk. I didn't get very good directions for the rewrite. If I took on that kind of assignment now, I'd (of course) be doing all kinds of writing research, asking questions, interviewing people, etc. But back then, I really had no experience with that kind of technical writing, and no experience with being a writing researcher (not professionally, you know, but just to know how to research new kinds of writing). I had no idea about how to do that. And the hotel's front desk manager didn't either (clearly!). What I did know was that folks at the front desk thought that all of the rules and the computer stuff was really complicated and hard. They told me that they found it intimidating. So, I basically took all of these handwritten directions, and single sheets of instructions and "wrote it up." I also attempted to make it funny, and not intimidating, adding little notes like, "don't panic" and "this isn't that hard"; basically writing it with a personal tone that I imagined might help a scared employee. The job turnover rate there was intense, and I wanted the manual to help new people feel more at home, similar to a family, because management kept saying it was a family. I gave the finished copy to my supervisor, and a couple of days later he called me into the office to yell at me (he actually yelled, and I remember that was the first time I'd ever been yelled at at a job), asking why I'd put in all of these ridiculous informal notes. And I was like, "I didn't know, you didn't give me any instructions and I thought that making it informal would be helpful to people." I mean, I had a justification for the writing style, but I couldn't just tell him that. I was so confused and felt ashamed. Now that I think back on it, this supervisor was also pretty young, and he didn't know what he was doing either, but at the time it was really scary. It turned out that he was so angry because he'd passed the manual on to his supervisors as his work (not mentioning me), and he also hadn't read it first!

Ghost: Oh my gosh.

Joyce: He was really mad because now it looked like he didn't know what he was doing. He hadn't even read the text before he sent it on. So anyway, he was really mad at me, and I remember being confused at first. I was like, "Well I can rewrite it." It took a few minutes for him to admit his lie [that he had, in fact, turned it in as his own work]. And then I was like, "Well, that's

not my fault." He couldn't tell them that I had written it because he'd already told them that he had written it. So then I got all righteous about it because that seemed really unfair to me. And so then I got fired because I was still in the three-month probationary period and they can fire you for no reason, so he just fired me basically the next day because I made him look bad. So that was my first out-of-college job experience and so it feels . . . I don't know . . . it's interesting you had a similar experience.

Retrospective Transfer and Realizing the Importance of Writing Research

Writing is not static. For those of us who like to write, who have some sort of affinity for it, we end up taking on jobs where writing is involved. But neither of us really knew (during the time we had these experiences) how to do any kind of practical writing research to figure out how to do the writing or to understand the activity system (and it's dangers, as it turned out for both of us). We were just kind of winging it, based on "Hey, I like to write . . ." If we had known enough to investigate these genres and activity systems more fully, we might have had different types of conversations or made different choices in how we approached these writing opportunities. But we suspect that these kinds of "hard knocks" learning experiences are not actually all that uncommon for people moving into different writing-for-hire experiences for the first time.

Joyce: If I had known then what I know now, I would have asked, what do you want me to look at in this manual? Who's going to read it, who's going to receive it, what tone and style do you want? I might also have asked questions about the kind of credit I was going to get for the work. In your case, Ghost, you were trying to get your writing out there, to make some money, and then you're being taken advantage of. And then when you realize it's happening, someone tries to blame you instead of accepting responsibility, even though they're doing something they're not supposed to.

Ghost: Well, and even when you are the one making the full amount, you only make a penny per word, which is the lowest that I, or at least I assume that's the lowest that you can make so it's a lot less than other freelancers.

Everybody's a Creative Writer

A term the ISU Writing Program uses in relation to writing is trajectory—which involves thinking specifically where a text will "go" in the world. What a text's history is and who will use it or re-purpose it or transform it. In the

Trajectory: In the Writing Program, trajectory is used to understand what texts do and how they move around 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.

case of the examples we both offered above, texts can have trajectories that don't make us very happy (or even get us fired). But as we looked back at these writing experiences, we both also realized that we now see the practice of doing the research for a piece of writing as part of the creative process of representing and producing texts that will go places and do things in the world. It can also be the scary part—the part where we have to admit that we don't know what we're doing (which can be especially challenging when it's in a workplace situation where we're being paid). But in some ways, that process of "finding out about" can also feel really creative: a way of sliding into a particular author-role and trying to envision a text that will do the work we want it to do. It's definitely a kind of making—even when it's just figuring out how to write a hotel front office manual, or doing the research on how to apply for and manage "writing-for-hire" work so that you don't get ripped off.

Ghost: I think that your example of the manual is a good chance to bring up something I wanted to ask you. As a rhetorician and scholar working in your field, I always see rhetoric and composition as very creative. This comes back to your discussion of intuition. I don't quite know what to call it, and it's not always going to be framed as "rhetoric" or "creative writing" because these aren't static instances of writing. It's that feeling of inquisitiveness, curiosity, and humor.

Joyce: So, for me, there is a kind of creativity in trying to produce something that matches up with the genre, the goals, the people who are going to get it. For example, for the manual (if I were writing something like that now), I'd try to argue that, as a writing researcher, I can see that the lexical level of a text like that should be, well . . . simple, and yes, friendly and not intimidating. That the desire to make it ***professional***-sounding shouldn't outweigh the need to make it useful to the people who are going to use it. But I'm also interested in how you would compare this kind of writing-for-hire work that you do to what you would call your more [literary] creative writing. I feel like, in the case of your writing-for-hire, we're talking about something that a lot of people would call creative writing or fiction writing, but instead of it being some kind of really original creative process, you're using very specific scripts and client-based instructions. What does that feel like, and could you talk about the first experiences, or any of them, and how creative do you feel these texts are? How would you compare them to other writing you do?

Ghost: I would say that ghostwriting can be really dangerous because it makes me so creative. I have to write really fast, which can lead to burnout across all projects, both personal and professional. In this case, I only earn a penny per word . . . and I remember when I first told other freelancers, they either laughed at me or told me this was wrong, and I was like, well I don't have enough experience to get properly paid, so unfortunately this is what we've got.

Joyce: As things add up in terms of word count, you're getting paid a penny per word—what is the length of these projects?

Ghost: The shortest piece I wrote was a 5,000-word novella, which paid fifty dollars. Right now I'm working on a 110,000-word project. I've completed 60,000 words and I send them off in increments. In order to not get paid less than minimum wage per hour, I have to be speed-writing. The most I've written in a day would be 30,000 words. I guess I call it dangerous because my own creativity gets burnt out, and it can also get stolen, essentially. I'll always ghostwrite with two documents open, one for the project and another for sentences that I think are really good that I don't want to sell for less than ten dollars to somebody—I save them for my novel. So the writing I'm doing as a ghostwriter must be creative, because it generates a lot of new creativity, even if I don't want to use it in that particular space.

Joyce: So have you ever seen your stuff in print? And it doesn't go under your name, correct, it goes under the "author's" name?

Ghost: Yeah. It's actually always cisgender heterosexual men publishing under female names and bios. They've had me write their newsletters under their pen names before selling bundles of books.

Joyce: That's wild. So this project that's 110,000 words, is this an actual novel?

Ghost: Actually it's a series, and it's a really specific genre, and romance is just the umbrella term beneath which there are subgenres.

Happily-Ever-After is a Genre?

In ghostwriting, there are hundreds of different subgenres. Currently, the Ghost writes in the genre called **insta-love**, where two characters meet and immediately fall in love (within the first two chapters).

Ghost: My clients for these kinds of romances have specific requirements, such as the books must be capped off at a certain number, they must contain

a **HEA**, or, happily-ever-after. Each novella introduction features the lead character in some sort of danger, and her love interest needs to intervene to save her. There are key points in relationship building that must be met before the first kiss, leading all the way to an engagement around chapter eight or nine. The ending of each novella always features a honeymoon, and an incentive to buy the other books in the series (which benefits the publishers). Anyone can go to these sites to work freelance, and there are other types of jobs involving editing, and other genres of writing.

Joyce: That is just amazing. I don't know, it's just . . . I can see how it's so formulaic, but obviously readers (some readers) really like that pattern being always the same. And there are specific sites you go to where people will pay you to create these texts?

Ghost: UpWork is a lot more reliable; I had trouble with Guru because of all these clients who get you to write for free. Sometimes they'll go so far as to hire you, commission an outline, then never pay you because they claim they have a boss who doesn't like the outline. Immediately after they request a refund, and you never see any of that money.

Joyce: And then it's published?

Ghost: Yeah.

Joyce: Is there a way to find these published pieces?

Ghost: I've only found a few books with titles that didn't change. I always have to use a thesaurus for synonyms because I can't repeat the same titles other ghostwriters have used (though we all draw from the same pool of terms). I did find a few of the ghostwritten books in print. Sometimes I think I'm going to buy them and put them on my shelf, even though they're published under someone else's name. But UpWork is a more reliable site—it's great for freelancing, and they have multiple types of jobs, including editorial work.

Joyce: And these editorial jobs pay a little more?

Ghost: They do, it's awesome. It's like a flat rate to edit for a small bundle of pages.

Editorial Writing as a Collaborative Literate Activity

When we began talking about editorial work, we immediately started talking about genre and trajectory. For example, in order to get the editorial jobs, the Ghost had to turn in a resume. Her other editorial jobs at literary magazines

and journals helped her get hired. The concept of trajectory—not just looking at texts as they go out in the world, but understanding that all kinds of literate activities also have trajectories—makes us realize that these aren't just texts. A resume is actually a **representation** of a person's body of work. It collects and displays all of the learning and knowledge about writing and editing that the Ghost has accumulated. And it's also the **tool/genre** being used to get future work because it goes out into the world and represents her as a candidate for new jobs.

Ghost: Yeah, I've also been hired to edit a novel. There's also two different trajectories for the editing I do when I freelance. The first involves editing for grammar, and sometimes for content. For the client who hired me to edit the novel, they're more concerned that I look at the grammar and punctuation (though I've had other clients who've given me specific writing glossaries for the time period their pieces are set in). And at other times I edit other ghostwriter's projects—which they're not aware of, at all. My job is to clean up the entire project to make it more engaging, structurally sound, while still existing in all the genre conventions we've discussed.

Joyce: It's not the same as editing for the *Grassroots Journal*, but these different types of editorial work can web together. For the journal, we call some of the work we do **developmental editing**, and that kind of editing is more like entering into a conversation with the author—not just making suggestions and small changes, but actually offering samples of text they might want to include to expand an idea or talk about a concept. In a way, I guess, you could call that a kind of ghostwriting, but we think of it as editing because we're just trying to help the author shape their ideas in ways that will work for the journal, yet also make the author feel like the article expresses their ideas in a way they're happy with.

Ghost: There is also a large community involved in all of these examples of editorial work. For both genres I work on, what I would call literary fiction and romance, I get hired because of both experiences on my resume. I actually got hired by a couple—two people on UpWork who are married. I worked for the husband for years, and then he told his partner I was a good writer, and he thought I would like the projects she's working with. We've been working together since 2016. So she hired me to do developmental editing, without the ghostwriter's permission, because they've already been paid a flat fee and signed the NDA relinquishing rights, among other things. You only get paid once for these projects, and you have no idea what trajectory the text enters. So, someone else wrote it, and now I'm revising it, and all of that is ghostwritten—the first ghostwriter has no idea that I'm editing their work, and neither of us will be named as authors in the final

work. And you can't trace where it goes because it has multiple stops, and only one is with you.

Joyce: That's fascinating because we have that sort of understanding of the concept of **trajectory** that involves this activity of tracing. But in this case it's like, these words are out in the world and different people are getting involved. I get a fascinating map in my head of people getting paid for their words, and their words go out to other people, who get paid on a different timeline for the same product. And it's not really a linear timeline of an author producing a specific piece of work—instead it's a timeline of a text with multiple authors. As an academic, you make your artifact [a scholarly article or something similar] and they [the editors] approve or send you some notes, and you do a revision, and then a copyeditor gets involved, but you get to approve those copyedits also. So it's really a timeline that centers on the author or authors. We tend to see that writing as "our" (the author's) work. But in fact, there is really a lot of "ghost-writing" that goes on in that trajectory also. The "life of the text" involves so many people.

Ghost: This reminds me that we can maybe draw in another ISU Writing Program P-CHAT term, **socialization**, or "the interactions of people and institutions as they produce, distribute and use texts." For example, in creative writing, or in other majors, we often teach each other's work. Joyce, as someone who teaches in this Writing Program and creates at this school, we cite you all the time, and then we talk about your articles that help us understand P-CHAT, and other key terms. It's always helpful and generative, these discussions. You have materials that won't rest in these final forms; it's not just about head-nodding at scholars. In freelance, we don't use works cited—it's public knowledge, these genres that are rooted in fairytales.

Joyce: And there seems to be a super solid formula for the genres you are producing. Sometimes people talk about genres as never stable, and I was thinking, in these writing-for-hire scenarios, you are supposed to be creating something kind of original within a really specific format and storyline. A very stable genre base, but flexible still in its execution.

Ghost: Yeah, I think part of me also wants to disrupt that. I'm always worried I'll get in trouble because I try to put a little symbol in each project, so that readers (if they buy the box set of text) start wondering, why do these specific birds keep showing up? Sometimes it's a phrase, or a type of flower, sometimes it's a fruit. It depends on how long I've been writing for the client, but I'll try to disrupt that by connecting these universes with one image.

Joyce: One thing.

Ghost: Yeah.

Don't Go Not Changing: Building a Flexible Writing Research Identity

When we looked at this next excerpt of our original interview, which is about how we feel about writing "rules," we realized that doing writing research isn't necessarily about breaking the rules, or about learning to follow them. For us, it's more about using research to understand where we are and what we want to do next, in terms of how we use literate activities in the world.

Joyce: When it comes to re-using themes, especially in creative writing, I think we can do it without even knowing we're doing it. I think a lot of us don't know, actually, how many tropes or ideas or ways of phrasing things that we repeat over time. But in the situation you're talking about, [putting one kind of object or symbol into texts you write as a ghostwriter], you have to know you're using it, right? And that's also part of writing research. You learn to know, to see your patterns, and I think it even helps some of us to know ***why*** we're doing it. Like in your case of putting in the symbols across different texts, that's an effort to make the piece a little better because readers might catch that, and it will form a pattern. And even if readers don't notice, it gives you a way to make the text interesting to yourself.

Ghost: I'm thinking about the concept of permission and **antecedent knowledge**. Like knowing that you can use what you know, that you have permission to use it, and you get to the Writing Program at ISU and it's like, you're in charge as a writer researcher, and I don't think I knew that. I don't think I knew that I could do that. I'm wondering if that comfort, or trusting yourself as the researcher, has always been there, but I just couldn't access it?

Joyce: Yeah, well, I think it is there, but we can't always access it. I mean for me, it's similar in a lot of ways to you. There's always that hesitancy, and I often don't feel comfortable. I can be really afraid to try to write things that are new to me, because I don't know the rules. But I'm also not a good rule follower. My problem, I think, comes in another way, which is that I get an assignment or something I'm supposed to do, I kind of automatically assume that someone "out there" is telling me what to do, and if someone's going to tell me what to do, I'm not going to like that. I have a real resistance to it. And so, a lot of times my problem is that I don't feel the freedom to experiment, so I'll just refuse to do the work because it feels constraining but I don't feel able to break that constraint. Or I'll just create a different genre entirely, like, "Screw you I'm doing this ***other*** genre." But in a way, that kind of thinking ignores the ideas of trajectory and antecedent knowledge. Like, I'm trying too hard to **not** be part of something bigger than myself. So, let me ask, do you find this kind of [creative-writing-for-hire] writing enjoyable, or do you mostly see it as work?

Beta Readers: Not all ghostwriting clients hire beta readers. A beta reader is responsible for reading the text for clarity and plot. If there are big-picture changes, or grammatical issues, these are usually delegated to an editor (so there are four or more people working on the same story).

Ghost: Well, right now, because I'm stuck in a specific story, I'm bored. I'm writing sheriff romances, and we were supposed to switch to mafia, which involves nuance, secrecy, privacy, and architecture, and then the client told me I was doing so well with these sheriff stories, so I have to keep writing them. The problem is, there's only so many sheriffs in one town. So you get bored. But you have to be careful, also, because getting flagged happens—there's **beta readers**, who are also hired by my clients, and they can be really frustrating.

Joyce: What does that mean, to **get flagged**?

Ghost: They'll flag my writing and tell me I need to rewrite whole sections because they're not believable, and I don't get paid for those edits. They also won't pay me at all for the whole story unless I make changes. I get these kind of "breakup messages" that say, "We need to talk," and all I can think is, talk about the contract? And then I get nervous and start answering these emails in the middle of class. And the message will be something like, "You know this doesn't make sense, somebody said it didn't make sense, that they [the character] had soup [first], and then they had dinner."

Joyce: In some ways it's kind of like a panic response because you're getting paid for all this hard work that is dependent on making people happy, but you don't know ahead of time that what you're doing is going to make them happy, and that's got to be really scary.

Ghost: I think it just really seeps into who I am as a person and how my mind operates. I think ghostwriting has started affecting my habits and the ways in which I write and complete assignments. And I'm trying to always do the opposite, like, these are restrictions but they're also generative. For instance, how do I tell creative writing students they can lean into their anxiety without having full-on panic in class? And I'm panicking all the time at my job, but I have to use it to pay the bills. It's all very knitted together. Going back to what we discussed before, about trajectory, even the emotional trajectory tied to the text is not always positive. It's a lot of questioning that can be very stressful, and the text is always changing, so there are always new questions.

Joyce: I like that (not that I like that you're feeling so stressed!), but because it is, in my opinion, closer to the way writing sometimes works in the world when there are really high stakes. In school, it's like, "Yes, let's talk about the stakes in writing, that writing matters," but the stakes mostly seem to be

about fitting into the teacher's ideas about what writing should look like. So you don't really get to figure out what matters to you, and I don't like that; but then, on the other hand, it's not like there aren't situations in the world where figuring out what someone wants in a text doesn't matter, a lot. Which is a lot of what we've been talking about! But it's complicated. **Writing research identity** isn't always about being in charge, but it is about learning to act [with writing] in purposeful ways.

Ghost: It influences how I make texts, too, because I'm learning to work with such different genres—such as email, because right now I'm learning to write these personified emails, as a ghostwriter, which is a genre convention of almost every contract I receive. And thinking of new genres, I had to learn to write this sort of **call to action**, which tells readers that if they liked the story, they can purchase the next book and so on. That's influenced how I learn, especially in the pandemic, all these digital genres are linked, and I'm calling on engagement from readers. How can I make these texts appealing? It takes time to create and learn, and it's not always perfect, but I'm not used to failing in freelance. I've sometimes had texts sent back to me telling me to change all sorts of nuanced details that are part of the formula—but if I mess up the formula, I have to rewrite. It can be difficult to keep track of all the plot points I need to feature in each text. And a lot of that can be my OCD because I'll trick myself with fabricated memories into believing I didn't complete a specific aspect of a task. So I can get stuck here, opening documents then closing them, triple and sometimes quadruple (or more) checking emails, and finally I close my laptop after more than an hour of unpaid labor has gone by.

Joyce: It's interesting to think about how those patterns get messed up, especially because it's piecework, so you're getting paid minute by minute, word by word, and if you have to go back through things over and over again, you're literally losing money. I think this is also interesting, and related to studenting, and thinking about practical writing research vs. being a theorist. Somebody who writes about people's writing practices vs. being someone who is in a situation, making decisions about writing in the moment.

Joyce: I think I have a final kind of overall question for you, and that is, thinking about your writing experiences, would you call yourself a writing researcher now? And, do you think the writing researcher that you are as a scholar is different from the writing researcher you are as a romance writer? Are they different kinds of writing researchers, or do you see that as the same identity?

Ghost: That's so interesting. I actually think I see them as the same in a really positive, influential way, because constantly having to write in multiple

genres puts me in a creative habit. When I was younger I used to get writer's block—when I got older, I was like, I don't think that's a thing, and I don't have time for it, but also, I should find out how and why I don't think writer's block is real. Part of that could be scheduled, like when your brain is creative at the same time every day, it starts turning to that switch. And so last year, I amassed over a million written words, and that wasn't only romance, that was my own creative writing. I think that was a result of all the freelance, and it's also affected the way I write my academic papers. I've started to plan and brainstorm more (digitally) and then when I return to revise, I realize I really enjoy my writing, and I start cleaning up the work in a different kind of way.

Joyce: So all these habits of writing have sort of influenced the way you edit, as well? Not just that you are better able to do it, but that you've changed how you're looking at work as well. How would you describe that?

Ghost: I think that it somehow opens me up for the fact that writing doesn't necessarily need to be super lofty. I actually think that that's, like, a very restrictive, systematic writing practice that I had to unlearn.

Joyce: Yeah, and, for example, looking at different *Grassroots* articles, we have to think about what's valuable in flexible ways—to try to keep the author's individual focus and personality, but also tie everything together for the readers in a way that connects.

Ghost: Yes, you have to ask how you can keep the author's authentic voice, and for *Grassroots* articles, that really matters. But that kind of thinking can also influence other kinds of editorial work.

Joyce: This is a good way to talk about editing beyond word structure or correcting grammar. We think about the issue of language *quality*, and how this shows up in suggestions for revision, and we try to move away from what is considered standard language practice to prioritize the fact that there are multiple Englishes, both in this journal and in the world. Something I think the journal does really well is that when we work with authors, is realize they're sharing their experiences with the journal, and we keep an awareness of that as part of the editorial process.

Ghost: I think that's something that is so fantastic about the journal, that it publishes authors who explain terminology in their own words. That changes the text, and as the journal expands to include terms outside of the ISU Writing Program, it has to, even more carefully, consider both the author and the audience—how to keep the author's voices clear and authentic when what they write is something that is going to be used (at least by some people) as a teaching text, at different schools and in different kinds of situations.

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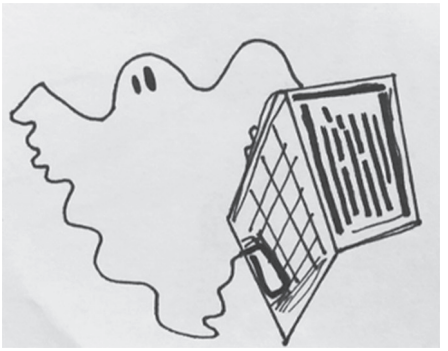

The Ghostwriter writes and edits fiction, along with lots of other literate activities she can't describe if she wants to remain anonymous.

Publishing with the *Grassroots Writing Research Journal*

GWRJ Editors

Our Mission Statement

The *GWRJ* is dedicated to publishing articles **and other compositions** by writers and scholars whose work investigates the practices of people writing (and acting) in different writing situations using a variety of different genres. **As we enter our second decade of publication, we expect to develop and put out calls for new genres for the journal that are multimodal in nature or shorter than an average article. If you have a genre or project you'd like to propose, please email us with your suggestion.** We encourage both individuals and groups to submit work that studies and explores the different ways that writers learn how to write in different genres and settings—not just within the boundaries of academia, but in all kinds of settings in which writing happens.

We identify "writing research" as any type of composition that endeavors to uncover new information about how people work with writing or how writing works, which means a wide range of techniques and styles of writing might be applicable. For example, a first-person narrative, an informal conversation about writing, a formal study of writing, or even an artistic production could all be useful techniques for developing a *GWRJ* article. Accepted articles will be informed by either primary research into writing behaviors and activities and/or scholarship in the field of writing studies that addresses theories of how people learn to compose in different situations.

General Information

Submissions

Articles can be submitted to the *GWRJ* at any time. However, it may take time and a couple of rounds of revision before an article is ready to be published. Please contact the Managing Editor at grassrootswriting@gmail.com with queries about possible submissions.

Queries and Drafts

The *GWRJ* has a strong commitment to working with interested authors to help them prepare for publication, so if you think you have a good idea but are not sure how to proceed, please contact us. One of our editorial staff will be happy to work with you one-on-one to develop your idea and/or article.

Honoraria

The *GWRJ* offers an honorarium of $50.00 for each article published in a print issue of the *GWRJ*.

Style and Tone

Because we encourage so many different kinds of textual production and research in the *GWRJ*, issues of appropriate style and tone can be complicated. However, we can offer the following basic style criteria for authors to consider:

1. The readership of the *GWRJ* is writers. It is not "students," even though the journal is used by writing instructors and students. (The *GWRJ* remains the primary text for Writing Program courses at Illinois State University, and it's also used by teachers and students in other programs as well.) *GWRJ* articles should attempt to provide valuable content to writers who are engaged in the activity of "learning how to learn about" genres.

2. "Teacher narratives" are not acceptable as *GWRJ* articles. We are interested in material that looks at literate activities from the position of a "writer" or a "researcher," but articles that discuss ways to "teach" people about writing are not appropriate for this journal.

3. Language and style that is overly formal or "academic" may be unappealing to our readers.

4. A tone that situates the author as a "master" writer is often problematic. (We call these "success narratives," which are often how-to type articles in which the focus is on the author's learned expertise.) Authors should remember that no one "learns" a genre completely or in a completely simple way. While writers (especially of first-person narratives) may write about successes, they need to complicate the genres with which they are working.

5. Tone or content that situates the reader as a certain kind of writer (whether as a master or novice) with shared experiences can be

problematic because the readership of the journal constitutes a wide variety of writers with different writing abilities and experiences.

6. Whenever possible, articles should make use of published research about writing practices, but the research should be incorporated into the text in a relevant and accessible way so that readers who are not used to reading scholarly research can still benefit from the references.

7. Articles should be as specific as possible about the genre or set of writing activities they are studying. Generalized studies or discussions of "writing" are not encouraged. Additionally, examples of "writing-in-progress" are always encouraged and are often necessary for articles to be useful to our readers.

Media, Mode, and Copyright Issues

The *GWRJ* can publish both visual and digital texts. We encourage multimodal texts, including still images, audio, video, and hypertexts. However, authors working with these technologies need to be careful about copyright issues as we cannot publish any kinds of materials that may result in copyright infringement. We can sometimes seek copyright permissions, but in the case of materials such as works of art or graphics/images owned by large companies, this is often not possible. This is true for print-based articles that use images as well. We can, however, include materials that are covered by fair use; see *https://www.copyright.gov/help/faq/faq-fairuse.html* for fair use guidelines.

Also, video/audio of research subjects can require special kinds of permission processes, so you should contact the *GWRJ* editors before beginning this kind of work. Research using subjects who are considered "protected" populations (people under eighteen and medical patients covered by HIPPA, among others) are not acceptable for *GWRJ* articles unless the author has received approval from Illinois State University or another institution to conduct research with human subjects.

Researching for *Grassroots*

What does it mean to "do writing research?" For the *GWRJ*, it means people observing, investigating, critiquing, and even participating in the activities that humans engage in that involve literate practice.

But what does it really mean? In more practical language, it means finding some situation where humans are doing things that involve language (which

can mean composing in genres that are oral, aural, visual, etc., not just writing on paper) and thinking, "Hey, that looks interesting," then taking the time to investigate that practice in some detail.

But this kind of research isn't just about people. It's really about what we call "activity systems," which just means that we want to learn about all kinds of complicated interactions, not just what a particular kind of text looks like or what a particular person does when they produce a text (although we're interested in those things too). We also want to know about the interactions between people as they produce texts, as well as the interactions between humans and their tools, practices, and different kinds of textual productions. And we're interested in how certain kinds of texts work to shape our interactions; for example, the ways the genre of resumes might shape how people interact when they engage in the activities of finding and offering work.

To help researchers who might be thinking about or engaging in literate practices that they'd like to investigate, we've created this list of research projects that might be interesting or appropriate for the *GWRJ*:

Investigating Genres

These kinds of research projects usually investigate the nuances of particular genres: how they are made and who makes them, the distinctive features they have, who uses them, how and where they are used, and how they do particular kinds of communicative work in the world. This research is often straightforward, and—as some of the articles in our early issues reveal—this kind of genre investigation might have a "how-to" feel because many of the authors creating these pieces are also trying to learn how to produce that genre. However, genre investigations can move far beyond these "how-to" pieces. There are countless ways that genres can be examined in relation to how they do work in the world, such as by investigating technological and social implications that our readers would be interested in. Following genres to see where they go and the kinds of work they are made to do can take an author well beyond simply describing the features of a particular kind of text. One issue of concern to the *GWRJ* editors is that genre investigations can problematically "fix" genres—that is, situate them as stable productions that are always the same. So we encourage researchers to consider the ways in which genres constantly move and shift over time and in different situations.

Personal Explorations of Literate Practice

This kind of research is often closely connected to genre investigations. Authors examine their own practices in order to discover how they have

learned to produce certain kinds of writing in certain situations, or they investigate particular kinds of composing practices, such as different practices for engaging in research or revision. Like genre investigations, these kinds of projects sometimes have a "how-to" focus as authors learn to think about—and explain to others—the things they know (or are coming to know) about different literate practices.

Composing Practices

This kind of research looks at particular composing practices, including invention (coming up with ideas), research, revision, etc. It often overlaps with personal exploration research because authors are often investigating their own practices. However, this research could certainly involve interviews or observations of how other individuals or groups engage in these practices. One issue that concerns the *GWRJ* editors is that this kind of research can lead to assumptions that these composing practices are "universal"; that is, people might assume that composing practices work in similar ways across all kinds of genres and writing situations. While it is possible to trace similar kinds of literate activities or composing practices across different situations (and, in fact, it can be really interesting—see, for example, Kevin Roozen's writing research, "Tracing Trajectories of Practice: Repurposing in One Student's Developing Disciplinary Writing Processes"), it is important to remember that we really can't talk about an activity like "revising," for example, as if it's something that a person does the same way in every kind of situation.

Literate Activity in the Wild

While writing in classrooms or for school settings can often seem very cut-and-dried, these practices are more complicated than they seem. Part of the reason we don't see the complications of many kinds of literate practices is that once we become "embedded" in the activity, it no longer seems complicated to us! We know how to do it, but we don't really remember how we learned to do it. Another reason that we sometimes miss the complications of writing is that there are "tropes"—or particular ways of defining/understanding these practices—that make them look simple and straightforward. An example of this is the activity of "writing a paper," which can bring up very stylized and simplistic images of how a person just sits down, does some research, and then writes a paper for a particular class. But in fact, not only are the acts of researching and composing much more complicated than this limited view might offer, but also, this kind of literate practice is actually much more interactive than we might generally think. The *GWRJ* is interested in investigations that look at specific situations/locations

where all kinds of literate acts are happening. We want to see researchers "unpacking" what is actually happening when people try to compose particular kinds of texts in particular situations. We are also interested in research that looks at the ways that textual production is interactive—how it involves all kinds of interactions between different people and different objects, tools, and other entities over time. This kind of research can involve the interactions of people and genres as well as different cultural norms and practices.

Case Studies of Individual Literate Practices

This type of research focuses very closely on particular individuals and the kinds of literate practices they engage in in their daily lives. Some of our previously published articles that take this approach include research into the ways an individual learns to interact with a particular genre or particular literate situation. But we are also very interested in research that looks at literate practice more broadly and deeply. So, for example, how does an individual take composing practices from one situation and apply them to another? How does an individual learn to interact within a particular setting in which different types of genres are being produced (so, say, a new kind of work environment)? This kind of research can be constructed as a collaborative process in which one researcher acts as an observer while the other engages in an exploration of his/her personal practices.

Linguistics Writing Research

Previous work that exists in the journal in this area tended to focus specifically on grammar conventions or on the usage of particular kinds of stylistic or punctuation devices. However, we have noted our desire to encourage linguistic writing research that is more robust and complicated, including projects that explore corpus linguistics (using a collection of data to look at particular kinds of textual practice) or sociolinguistics (investigating the particular ways that humans use language within social systems). In the last several issues we have seen authors take up this call in interesting ways. Issues 7.1 and 7.2, for example, include articles featuring research into the role of language variation and its effects on both meaning-making and composing practices. See Agathe Lancrenon's article "Everything You Need to Know About Transferring Metaphorical Ducks" and Cristina Sánchez-Martín's article "Language Variation Across Genres: Translingualism Here and There" in issue 7.1. And, in issue 7.2, see Su Yin Khor's article "Multilingual Notes as a Tool to Understand Super Dense Readings." We look forward to continuing to publish additional studies that investigate these concepts in innovative ways.

Global or Intercultural Literate Practices

It is only within a few issues of the journal that the *GWRJ* has been able to publish research on literate practices as they move across cultural and/or geographical spaces. For examples, see Adriana Gradea's article in issue 3.2 ("The Little Genre that Could: CHAT Mapping the Slogan of the Big Communist Propaganda"), Summer Qabazard's article in issue 3.2 ("From Religion to Chicken Cannibalism: American Fast Food Ads in Kuwait"), Wesley Jacques' article in issue 7.1 ("The E-Cat's Meow: Exploring Activity in Translingual Mobile Gaming") or Sanam Shahmiri's article in issue 7.2 ("Translating the Untranslatable: Making Meaning of Idiomatic Expressions Across Languages"). We would like to encourage more of this kind of research in future issues as we are highly interested in research that studies the ways that people and textual practices move across these kinds of boundaries.

The Researcher's Process

According to one of our *GWRJ* authors, Lisa Phillips, it can be useful for authors to investigate and articulate a personal process that will be meaningful for them when developing ideas for research projects. She offered us her notes on the process that she followed to create her article for the journal, "Writing with Tattoo Ink: Composing that Gets Under the Skin." Her process is presented below in ten "steps" that *GWRJ* authors might find useful:

Step One

Come up with a general "topic" description. So the first question to answer is: "What is it about writing in the world that interests me?"

Step Two

As the process continues, think more specifically about the genre, setting, and/or specific practices under investigation. (Using the types of research we've listed above can be useful for focusing a topic.) So the second question an author might want to answer is: "How will I go about finding what I want to know?"

Step Three

Next, think about both the research practices that will be needed to gather data as well as the style of article that will be most appropriate. One excellent

way to do this is to read existing articles and examine the different ways that authors have approached different topics and different kinds of research.

Step Four

Because *Grassroots* articles are a fairly unique kind of writing, authors may find it useful to consider past writing experiences that they might be able to draw on as they write. We call these "antecedent genres," and they can be important to think about because these prior experiences always shape how an author writes, especially when he or she is writing in a new and unfamiliar genre. While these antecedent genres will certainly be useful, they can also cause problems because aspects of an author's past writing may not exactly fit with the style, tone, or content that is appropriate for *GWRJ* articles. Some questions to ask here are: "What kinds of writing do I already know how to do that I can use to help me? How are they similar and how are they different?"

Step Five

It can also be important to think about "target genres," or types of writing that might be used as examples during the research and writing process. Obviously previously published *GWRJ* articles can be useful in this way, but it can also be interesting to think of other kinds of writing that might serve as examples. Writing research in the field of rhetoric and composition can be useful (for example, books and articles found on the WAC Clearinghouse website at *http://wac.colostate.edu*), but other kinds of research into social practices or even different kinds of journalism can be used as interesting models.

Step Six

Consider what kinds of visuals a text might need. Visual examples of different kinds of writing can add interest and information to a text, but copyright issues will need to be considered. Charts, graphs, and other illustrations that highlight important aspects of the data you've collected can also be important.

Step Seven

Thinking carefully about what information (data) is needed to make the article credible and useful for readers is a critical step. Thus, once an author has made decisions about the type of research he or she wants to do, it will also be important for them to make a plan for how to do that research. Will it be necessary to visit sites where writing is happening? Interview people about

how they produce or use different kinds of writing? Find historical examples of types of writing?

Step Eight

If the article is going to include observations of people's writing activities, interviews, or surveys, you'll need to obtain the proper permission. The interview/image consent form for *GWRJ* articles can be found on our website: *http://isuwriting.com/research-and-release-forms/*.

Step Nine

Although the *GWRJ* doesn't require any particular style of citation, we do require that authors cite all of their information. The editors will help authors think about what needs to be cited and how it can be done, but authors will want to think about the best way to cite. This includes considering the different ways that citation works in different kinds of writing; for example, scholarly journal articles cite very differently than newspaper or magazine articles or blog posts. Sometimes the style of citation can really affect how a reader thinks about the information in an article, so it's important to think not only about what to cite but also how to cite it.

Step Ten

As the text is being produced, it is critical to keep in mind the needs and interests of *GWRJ* readers. They are interested in reading about a wide range of topics, and they enjoy articles written in a wide range of styles. Because our readers have such a wide range of interests, it is important not to take them for granted. Writing that is interesting, lively, and accessible is important, but perhaps the most important thing to remember is that your research, no matter how it's presented, represents your knowledge and thinking about a topic related to writing that is important to you. And since we're all writers and all of us are learning all the time about how to "do writing" in the world, sharing your knowledge is, ultimately, an act of community.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the journal or any of the articles, you can send queries to grassrootswriting@gmail.com. Part of our mission is to welcome and encourage all kinds of writing research, so if you have an idea that you want to develop, please don't hesitate to share it with us.

Works Cited

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