WRITE FREE ⬧ OR DIE

IN THIS ISSUE

Writers As Designers

Ed Mueller, Director, University Writing Programs

When Stanley Fish posed the provocative question, "Is there a text in this class?" in 1980, he was challenging the concept of intrinsic textual meaning, claiming that interpretive communities, rather than texts or readers, produced meaning. However contested this philosophical assertion may have been (and may still be), the general understanding of what was being examined—the reading of a print text conforming to a canonical alphabetic literacy form--was not. Reframing this question in 2019 would add an existential component. Given the multi-modal, intertwined nature of print and other media, we might first need to ask, "What is a text?" in order to establish if one existed, and then by extension, "What is writing, and how do we value it?"

Recent developments foreground these points. This summer, textbook publishing giant Pearson announced its "digital first" initiative. All of its titles will be going digital. Although print versions will still be available, primarily

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Future Tense: *Upcoming Writing Across the Curriculum Events*

January 14 Workshop: Peer Review, Practices, and Pitfalls (9:00-12:00, Memorial Union Building 164) Although peer review would seem to offer an ideal solution to the workload issue of giving feedback to student writing, it is often abandoned as ineffective when results don't meet expectations. In this workshop, we will talk about aligning peer review goals with effective approaches to advance student learning and writing practice. The Director of the Writing Program will present on concepts and frameworks, and a cross-disciplinary faculty panel will share their peer review practices. After presentations, there will be time for attendees to exchange ideas and workshop incorporating peer review into their assignments. Faculty Panel: Nick Mian (Psych), Leslie Curren (Bio), Janet Anderson (Bio), Cris Beemer (Comp). Register on the CEITL Website (Worth 1 CEITL Participation Point).

April 14 Presentation & Workshop on Online Writing Instruction: Guest Presenter Scott Warnock (12:45-2:00, Location TBA) This year's guest presenter will be Scott Warnock, Professor of English and Director of the Writing Program at Drexel University. He is Co-Chair of the College Conference on Composition and Communication Committee on Best Practices for Online Writing Instruction and author of the signpost text, *Teaching Writing Online.* He will be presenting and leading a faculty workshop on best practices for online writing instruction. Registration and a more detailed abstract for this event will be posted online under Writing Program Events on the CEITL website in the Spring Semester. Watch for it!

June 8-10, 2020: Writing-Invested (WI) Faculty Retreat, Mount Washington Hotel: The UNH Writing Program will reprise the WI (Writing-Invested) Faculty retreat experience. Priority will go to faculty teaching or planning to teach WI courses, but all faculty who are invested in writing in pedagogy are welcome to apply. The experience consists of a three-day offsite at the Mount Washington Hotel followed by three sessions at UNH in the following year. The salient goals of the retreat are to give faculty a more full awareness of the principles underlying writing in pedagogy and WI courses, to equip them with practices to enhance their work with student writing, and to promote connections among writing-invested faculty. Watch for an announcement in early spring. Contact Ed Mueller: edward.mueller@unh.edu

WAC(ky) People

UNH Writing Program

Ed Mueller, Director

Scott Lasley, Associate Director

Lauren Short, Associate Director

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for rent, they will be priced to discourage use compared to e-books. Along with this shift to digital, the norm of e-texts following from their authoritative print versions will be reversed. Pearson's e-texts will be kept current and print versions will follow, updated only periodically.

Pearson's e-texts will be offered as "integrated" products along with course modules and platforms, like MyLab™. Of course, this print:online combination is neither new nor limited to Pearson. For some time print textbooks have included access to online modules, many with multi-modal content (audio, visual, graphic, etc.). Given this growing integration, the long-standing dichotomy between a central, authoritative "textbook" and other "course material" seems to be fading, perhaps to disappear entirely as everything merges into "content."

Turning from textuality to reading and writing, scholars Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis, prominent researchers on the impact of multi-modality and technology on teaching and learning, offer useful insights to help frame these contemporary realities. Although discussions of academic literacy skills still conjure facility with handling the written word on the page, Cope and Kalantzis suggest that written language has become "intertwined with other modes, and in some respects [is] itself becoming more like them"(15). Reading a news page online, for instance, is a non-linear activity that engages multiple literacies, a meaning-making process that Cope and Kalantzis describe as "weaving" between modes and representations. Navigating course material in a learning management system could present a similar model, particularly if it includes multi-modal content.

What bearing does this multi-modality have on student reading and writing practice? Observing that written language can't be isolated as a mode unto itself (13), Cope and Kalantzis suggest that today's "literacy teaching is not about skills and competence; it is aimed at creating a kind of person, an active designer of meaning" (10). This concept of the reader/author as "designer" represents a fundamental shift in approach, recasting discussions of reading and writing in a more integrative way. While still leaving room for traditional hardcopy papers and reading practice, it more accurately characterizes the activity involved in "paperless" authorship--the weaving of multi-modal components and sources into an artifact--and the ever-widening range of student:student and student:faculty discourse that is happening in technology-mediated learning environments.

Cope, Bill, and Mary Kalantzis. "'Multiliteracies': New literacies, New Learning."
   Pedagogies: An International Journal 4.3 (2009): 164-195.
Fish, Stanley Eugene. *Is there a text in this class?: The Authority of Interpretive
   Communities*. Harvard University Press, 1980.

Can You See Yourself Here?

The Sixth Annual Writing-Invested (WI) Faculty Retreat at the Mount Washington Hotel

June 8-10, 2020

See "Future Tense" for Details

Texting Ruins Students' Grammar Skills
Excerpted From *Bad Ideas About Writing*
https://textbooks.lib.wvu.edu/badideas/badideasaboutwriting-book.pdf (Open Source Text)

The idea that digital tools harm writing requires not just a misunderstanding about grammar, but a belief that one form of writing, such as texting, would influence or transfer, perhaps inexorably, to another form, such as an argument paper in school. Numerous studies have found this not to be the case.

…

The idea that digital technology is destroying grammar is founded in new misunderstandings about digital writing and age-old, generationally tinged misunderstandings about language and grammar. Children today are creating texts at a greater rate than any other generation in history. Indeed, the digital writing they do can often appear unfamiliar to those who did not grow up with such technologies. Historically, a default reaction has been to view such unfamiliarity as a problem, to see the writing as lesser—with the accompanying claim that the "grammar" is bad (perhaps an articulation of "my generation is better than yours!").

Quelling this bad idea might raise bigger-picture definitional challenges—and not just about grammar. It may call into question, now that digital communications are so ubiquitous, just what people mean when they say "writing." As Zeff notes, even back in 2007, students were seeing a difference between digital writing and school writing: "They write constantly. Only they do not see that format of communicating as writing." She says, "My students tell me that writing is something you do in class for a grade. All the other modes are talking." Redefining what we mean by writing could help clarify some of these critiques.

Regardless, as it stands now, screenagers, digital natives—or whatever people choose to call them—may be the most literate generation ever, yet some stubbornly persist in criticizing their grammar and even claiming that they cannot switch from texting shortcuts to other forms of writing. Instead of viewing e-communications as a cause of worry or harm, perhaps we might instead see the use of digital writing as yet another example of how humans find ingenious ways to make language, in all its systems and nuances, work in new contexts.

Warnock, Scott. "Texting Ruins Students' Grammar Skills." *Bad Ideas About Writing.* Edited by Cheryl E Ball and Drew M Lowe. West Virginia University Libraries. 2017, p301-307

English usage is sometimes more than mere taste, judgment, and education—sometimes it's sheer luck, like getting across a street.   *–E.B. White*

Write for a scientist in another field. Don't underestimate your readers' intelligence, but don't overestimate their knowledge of a particular field. When writing about science, don't simplify the science; simplify the writing.

—Julie Ann Miller, Editor of <u>Science News</u>

Ask Spence:

Your teaching concerns addressed by our very own Spence Lavendier

As Transposed from Purrs to Person by Lauren Short, UNH Writing Programs

What is the best way to teach citation? Do you have any practical resources for instructors?
--Citation-Silly Sally

Hi Citation-Silly Sally,

As you may well know, cats are excellent at keeping track of things. I'll take a rest from mouse-chasing to share some knowledge of keeping tabs on sources.

First and foremost, unlike cats, students aren't experts at citation. Additionally, as they move through the curriculum they may be dealing with multiple styles. This may mean that not only will they tend to be less practiced in one style over another, but it could also be that your class might represent their first time working within a particular citation style.

That being said, the most meaningful lessons on citation are those that reinforce the idea of citation practice that is organic and integrated into course material and assignments as opposed to as an isolated mechanical step that is deferred until everything else is done.

Luckily, there are a number of resources out there to aid instructors in teaching students to accurately attribute credit to their sources. Here are two:

AASCU's Four Moves and a Habit From Web Literacy for Student Fact Checkers:

This helpful PDF document is a colorful guide that shows students how to move through a 4-step process. It starts with the habit of checking one's emotions. If we feel a strong emotional reaction, that may mean our critical senses are diminished, and we should slow down, using the following 4 steps.

1. Check for Previous Work
2. Go Upstream to the Source
3. Read Laterally
4. Circle Back

Check, Please! Starter Course:

This resource is a mini-course with 5 lessons on source-checking. Like the above guide, it utilizes 4 steps to verify a source's credibility with the helpful acronym "SIFT." SIFT stands for:

Stop
Investigate the Source
Find Trusted Coverage
Trace Claims, Quotes, and Media Back to the Original Context

Links to these resources are *purr*vided below.

AASCU's Four Moves and a Habit from Web Literacy for Student Fact Checkers:
https://www.aascu.org/ADP/DigiPoInfographic.pdf

Check, Please! Starter Course:
https://www.notion.so/Check-Please-Starter-Course-ae34d043575e42828dc2964437ea4eed

For more information, please email Spence at ls2010@wildcats.unh

Dangling Modifier: Major APA Changes Highlighted

Scott Lasley, Associate Director, University Writing Programs

APA has recently realeased an update to its style guide, moving to its 7th edition. While the changes in this edition are not as ground-shattering as the changes made to MLA a few years back, there are some important revisions and additions. This version of APA is defined by an emphasis on practicality, accessibility, and inclusivity (xviii). Several changes are intended to streamline and simplify APA style and update guidelines to better aid students and professionals in presenting their work in a clear, ethical, and straightforward manner. I will highlight three areas where some of the major changes are happening: page formatting, bias-free language, and in-text and reference list entries. If you are interested in checking out the new additions and changes, please refer to the introductory PDF available at: https://apastyle.apa.org/products/publication-manual-7th-edition-introduction.pdf.

Page Format

Perhaps one of the most discussed changes in the 7th edition is the rule for spacing at the end of a sentence. APA recommends a single space be used after a period rather than two. Two spaces would be still be acceptable if an instructor or publisher specified this usage was preferred.

The running header has also been revised. In the past, the top of the title page was formatted much along these lines: "RUNNING HEAD: SHORTENED TITLE OF PAPER." The "RUNNING HEAD" has been removed to leave only the shortened title as the running header across each page, making it consistent on every page. For student papers, APA suggests that the running head is optional--instructor discretion.

Font type requirements have been made more varied to make APA writing more accessible to readers with disabilities. Specifically, APA suggests writers use san serif fonts like 11-point Calibri or Arial, or serif fonts like 12-point Times New Roman or 11-point Georgia.

With these changes, it will be important for instructors to be clear regarding expectations for student APA papers, particularly if they would prefer students use specific fonts or follow particular guidelines, such as APA's guidelines for professionals rather than for students.

Bias-Free Language

While APA has updated their style guide to provide more guidance on bias-free language, the major change is the endorsement of the use of the plural form of the non-gendered pronoun "they" in reference to individuals. For example, this would be considered correct usage in APA: "Ryan, a marketing student who identifies as non-binary, describes *themselves* as passionate for changing the way companies advertise to LGBTQ peoples" (italics added).

APA also provides suggestions for citing historical texts with problematic or pejorative language. Writers may use an asterisk after the particular word or phrase in question and follow up with a corresponding footnote to explain the context of the usage. As an example, APA presents this cited passage: "In forming the elite scientific society called the Experimentalists, Titchener 'wanted above all to have free, informal interchange between older and younger men* in the area of experimental psychology, with the goal of socializing the next generation into the profession' (Furumoto, 1988, p. 105)[1]." The asterisk corresponds with this footnote: "[1] In this example, the term "men" conveys Titchener's intention to exclude women from the society." This approach allows writers to both correctly cite passages and to acknowledge and contextualize any issues with the language within them.

In-Text Citations and Reference List Entries

Finally, APA 7th Edition introduces some adjustments to how in-text citations and reference list entries are designed. More specifically, how writers cite authors in their citations has seen some changes. For example, in-text citations have been simplified to avoid long lists of names. When citing a source with three or more authors, writers can provide the last name of the first author and then use "et al," something that was previously done with six or more authors or when three or more authors that had already been cited.

The only instances where additional authors would be included is when the simplified approach would create ambiguity, such as multiple sources by some of the same authors.

The handling of authors in a reference list entry has also changed slightly. In the previous edition, if there were more than seven authors for a source, writers would omit author names after the sixth with an ellipsis, and then provide the last author name. Now, author names are only omitted with sources that have over 20 authors.

Along with the listing of author names, there have also been changes to how particular sources are listed. Firstly, DOI labels are no longer required. Only the DOI hyperlink is necessary. Secondly, academic journal articles must always include an issue number. Lastly, publisher location is no longer required and should be omitted when citing a book. These changes are meant to help make citations clearer and easier to reference.

Additional Resources

Dimond Library Citation Guide Page:
https://www.library.unh.edu/research-support/citation-styles

APA's Supplemental Resources Page:
https://apastyle.apa.org/products/supplemental-resources

University of North Carolina Citation Builder :
https://library.unc.edu/citationbuilder/

Purdue Online Writing Lab APA Page:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html

For more information, contact sel2005@wildcats.unh.edu

The Grammar Box: Comma Splices *Scott Lasley, Associate Director, UNH Writing Programs*

Some people may not recognize a comma splice, what is it, and why does it matter? A comma splice is an instance where a comma is used to splice together two complete sentences, much like the first comma in the previous sentence.

Often perceived mainly as distracting mechanical issues, comma splices can be harmful to meaning:
Osmond et al. (2019) conclude that Australia's coral reefs are under threat due to global climate change, which suggests more attention must be turned toward curbing carbon emissions, Lyon and Weimer (2019) argue that the issue lies with Australia's fishing industry.

There are two sentences here conveying contrast. The contrast between the two subject studies, however, is unclear because the (second) comma splices the ideas together into a single unit and does not signal their differences.

There are several ways to revise comma splices:

•**Replace the comma with a period, restoring the delineation between ideas and grammatical units.**

•**If the two ideas are closely related or connected, replace the comma with a semicolon and possibly a transitional word or phrase to signal the relationship:**
Osmond et al. (2019) conclude that Australia's coral reefs are under threat due to global climate change, which suggests more attention should be turned toward curbing carbon emissions; however, Lyon and Weimer (2019) argue that the issue lies with Australia's fishing industry.

•**Insert a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or) after the comma. In our example, follow the comma with "but."**

•**Revise the passage containing the sentences:**
While Osmond et al. (2019) conclude that Australia's coral reefs are under threat due to global climate change and carbon emissions, Lyon and Weimer (2019) argue that the issue lies with Australia's fishing industry.

Punctuation marks are tools to help convey meaning. When addressing a comma splice, think first about what is being conveyed and then decide whether a mechanical fix might solve the problem or if a different kind of revision might be the better fix.

For more information, contact sel2005@wildcats.unh.edu

Faculty Profile: Michelle Leichtman, COLA

No matter the department, there's a citation style central to the discipline. While years of experience make citation style almost second nature to faculty, it can be challenging to convey the ins and outs of a citation style to students, especially in the context of communicating course material effectively and thoroughly. Just what exactly do students need to know to succeed, and what happens when citation styles update? Michelle Leichtman, while speaking specifically about teaching APA style, provides some teaching strategies that can be implemented in any writing intensive course.

As a professor in the departments of Justice Studies and Psychology, Michelle Leichtman teaches a number of courses that require her students to write and cite in APA format. In her classes, Michelle says she teaches citation style broadly and conveys the "spirit" of what APA teaches to her students; in her experience, that is clarity, concision, and cogency. In other words, she is less concerned about students utilizing APA style perfectly and more intent that students make an effort to understand that different styles of writing require different approaches.

Michelle says the biggest challenge in teaching citation is that students have learned other styles first, and it can be hard for them to break old habits. Throughout her class, Michelle helps students adapt to working with APA by scaffolding assignments, giving students an opportunity to practice APA style in their homework and in the component sections of the larger final writing assignment. Critical to her teaching process is Michelle's use of instructions on writing in APA along with examples and samples. Since her students have multiple opportunities to practice throughout the semester, Michelle also provides feedback so that students have a chance to learn along the way.

Central to Michelle's writing feedback is attention to not only weaknesses, but also strengths. She says she doesn't find it useful to re-edit or correct a student's sentences. Instead, she will provide students with feedback like: "Your organization is strong. Could you pay more attention to transitions? For example, on page 3…" Michelle insists that an instructor need not correct every instance of a paper's weakness, but note it as part of a pattern or as something to work on: point to one specific example and suggest how to address it. Since most students in her courses are unlikely to go on to advanced coursework that will require a deep understanding of APA (and those who do will have more time to practice in graduate school), Michelle emphasizes broadly how information should be conveyed within her discipline as opposed to honing in on an absolute adherence to format and usage.

A new (seventh) edition of the *APA Style Publication Manual* came out in October 2019. While uncertain of all the changes this new edition will bring, Michelle anticipates that there will be an emphasis on unbiased language. She notes that it's important for students to have exposure to sources written in the citation style to get a clearer understanding of its use. By reading papers in the citation style they will learn, broadly, what the larger discipline as a whole values. Likely, this strategy will help guide the learning process of implementing the new APA style for instructors and students alike.

Lauren Short, Associate Dir UNH Writing Programs
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A man who uses a great many words to express his meaning is like a bad marksman who instead of aiming a single stone at an object takes up a handful and throws at it in hopes he may hit.

– Samuel Johnson

Facilitators and Participants in the Fifth Annual Writing-Invested Faculty Retreat at the Mount Washington Hotel, June 2019

Top Row, Left to right: Kate Gaudet, Catherine Moran, Melissa Rodgers, Lauren Short (facilitator), Sam DeFlitch (facilitator). *Front Row, Left to Right:* Ed Mueller (facilitator), Madhavi Devasher, Will Smiley, Chrissy O'Keefe, Elizabeth Harrison, Michelle Labbe, Rosemary Caron, Sue Hess.

Past Perfect: *Director's Notes*

Ed Mueller, Director, University Writing Programs

Recently, were were visited by Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope, prominent scholars and researchers in the field of multi-literacies from the University of Illinois, who presented a workshop to UNH faculty on Thursday, November 7th ("What Counts as Writing?"), and a well-attended mini-conference for K-12 teachers on Friday, November 8th ("How Multi-literacies Can Work for Teachers and Teaching"). The richness of these events and the body of their work is too extensive to review in this space. I suggest that anyone interested in finding out more about them and their work visit their website: https://newlearningonline.com/. Although experts on the uses and influence of technology on literacy, teaching, and learning, they eloquently articulate that their approach remains grounded in the human element: "The technologies themselves are not the point. It is the social affordances of these technologies that interest us…we can use these virtual learning spaces to make schools more congenial to learners, more manifestly contemporary and 'real' in the media they use, and more sensitively differentiated to address different identity motivations and skills levels"("Research and Writing")—an important takeaway to keep in mind.

Although advertised in part via the UNH Writing Program, their visit was sponsored with a grant from the Collaborative Research Excellence (CoRE) in support of the UNH C-WRET (Interdisciplinary Working Group for Writing Research, Engagement, and Teaching), a pilot consortium of stakeholders at UNH that includes the Writing Program. Watch for future events offered via this initiative.

"Research and Writing." *New Learning Online*, https://newlearningonline.com/kalantzis-and-cope/research-writing.

<u>Last Word</u>

In general, throughout the work, what is new is not good; and what is good is not new.

–Rev. Martin Sherlock (reviewing a popular collection of didactic letters collected in book form composed by Lord Chesterfield)