WRITE FREE OR DIE

Going With the Flow: Easier Said than Done

Ed Mueller, Director, University Writing Programs

At the recent Conference on College Composition and Communication, I attended a panel that was presenting preliminary findings on a study investigating approaches to teaching "flow" in student writing. In their research, members of the Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program from the University of Rochester had studied student and faculty experience over the course of one semester at two private, four-year colleges. Although the sample is small, one-hundred fifty-seven students and eleven faculty, the study provides some interesting insights.

Although often-invoked by students and faculty, the term "flow" is a vernacular catch-all referring to the collective effect of multiple writing components. Technically speaking, "flow" consists primarily of coherence (how the units--sentences--work together) and cohesion (how units internal to the

Future Tense: Upcoming Writing Across the Curriculum Events, Spring 2019

April 11: Effective Feedback Workshop: Guest Presenter Nancy Sommers (12:45-2:00, Hamilton Smith 201) This year's guest presenter will be Nancy Sommers, a prominent researcher and educator in the field of student writing specializing in feedback. She led Harvard's Expository Writing Program for 20 years, established and directed the Harvard Writing Project, a cross-disciplinary writing program, and conducted a series of studies on the culture of undergraduate writing. At UNH, she will be leading a faculty workshop on managing and giving feedback to student writers. All workshop attendees will be given a copy of Nancy's *Responding to Student Writers*, a foundational text in the field. Please register by April 5th on the CEITL website: https://www.unh.edu/cetl/unh-writing-program

June 3-5, 2019: 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, equip them with practices to enhance their work with student writing, and to promote connections among writing-invested faculty. Contact Ed Mueller: **edward.mueller@unh.edu**

WAC(ky) People

UNH Writing Program

Ed Mueller, Director

Lauren Short, Associate Director

Danielle Lavendier, Associate Director

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sentence work together). The range of factors impacting both are myriad and overlapping, things like pronoun use, tense sequence, transitions, repetition, source integration, information sequencing, unity, sentence variety, the list goes on. These are the things that can cause writing as a whole to be problematic even if the units are technically error free. In short, flow is how well writing conforms the ways that readers expect to process texts. It is holistic and shifts with context: we know it when we see it (and most certainly when we don't). Rather than trying to parse these bits, the study focused on this level of discourse and used the term "flow."

Often, the elements of flow are covered under other contexts. The study looked at two different ways of explicitly addressing flow as its own category: voice and rhetorical-grammar. Briefly stated, the voice approach is performative: students reading out loud. This approach might be called intuitive, relying on the inherent conversational qualities of language to identify and address issues. The rhetorical-grammar approach is more didactic, incorporating lessons on mechanics and structures in writing, with an emphasis on ordering information--new coming after old. This approach might be thought of as reader-centric.

Each mode was effective in its own way. Both were successful in engaging students in ways of thinking and talking about writing, recognizing the need to elaborate on "drive by" quotes, for instance. The voice approach was less discipline-dependent and thus more versatile. It was felt to be more familiar, albeit deceptively easy, but was challenging for some students given the performance requirement (reading out loud). It was most effective at catching surface dysfluencies at the passage level but less effective over more sustained structures. The rhetorical-grammar approach was perceived as more difficult since it required an up front investment in teaching/learning mechanical and stylistic terms and forms, which could seem foreign. However, it was also found to be less difficult in practice than anticipated. It produced positive results in organization and logic, and was more effective across longer passages than the voice approach.

These preliminary conclusions are encouraging. They indicate that these two methods are worthwhile, which supports faculty preference. Looking ahead, the study suggests that faculty and students could use more practice discussing these tenets. Future efforts would need to entail ways to make attention to "flow" more sustained and integrated in course and assignment design. We look forward to more on this topic as the team continues to develop its findings.

Ask Spence

Your teaching concerns addressed by our very own Spence Lavendier

As Transposed from Purrs to Person by Danielle Lavendier, UNH Writing Programs

Dear Spence,

I've seen that Dimond Library is switching from Refworks to Zotero. I've never used either of these programs. Could you tell me what they're about?

-*Ruffled by References*

Dear Ruffled,

I'd be happy to help you with this! I just took a 14 hour nap, so I'm feeling refreshed and ready to delve into the world of Bibliographic Management Tools.

Bibliographic Management Tools (a.k.a Reference Management Software, a.k.a. citation machines) are programs designed to help keep your research in one place. There are many programs to choose from and they range in price and in access form (web-based vs. software). You probably have heard of some of these programs, such as EndNote, Mendeley, RefWorks, and Zotero. Which program is right for you and your research? Let's dig in. Here are a couple of things to consider when choosing a Bibliographic Management Tool (BMT).

First think about what functions are needed from a BMT? Is it needed for a long-term or short-term project? Do you need a place to store all of your sources? Are you looking for help with citations or creating a reference list? It may be that different programs will be appropriate for different projects. For example, if the need is to capture information for a reference list or works cited page for a short term project, easybib.com might be the quickest solution. **Easybib** may have a troubled reputation among faculty who too often see students incorrectly using it as a shortcut, but with guided use as a supplemental tool, it can quickly and efficiently generate a useful starting reference list. In addition, it has comprehensive guides for MLA, APA, and Chicago styles.

ZoteroBib, which debuted in 2018, is a free citation generator, which is entirely web-based and offers citations for all major citation styles. ZoteroBib prides itself on having fewer advertisements than its competitors (read, Easybib). One can also export a bibliography created in ZoteroBib into the Zotero library, if also using that program. If all that is needed is to create a reference list, ZoteroBib might be a good option.

A long-term research project involving gathering sources from multiple locations over an extended period and keeping track of them in one place calls for a comprehensive BMT that can be used and synchronized across devices. Zotero, Mendeley, and EndNote are the most popular examples of this kind of program.

This brings us to **Zotero.** It allows up to 300MB of storage, after which there are options for purchasing 2GB, 6GB, or unlimited storage. A few functions of Zotero:

- Web browser extension for one-click adding of sources to your personal library.
- Import PDFs to your Zotero library
- Make references and bibliographies within Microsoft Word, using Word's Zotero add-on
- Sync your library across devices

At https://libraryguides.unh.edu/zotero-durham one can find information on using and maximizing Zotero. In addition, the following workshops are being offered:

Zotero workshops (Dimond 235).
Please bring your laptop:
Tuesday, March 26, 3-4pm.
Tuesday, April 2, 2-3p.
Monday, April 15, 4-6pm.
Wednesday, April 24. 12-1pm.
Friday, May 3, 2-4pm

Mendeley is another popular BMT that operates like Zotero. Mendeley also has a web browser extension to facilitate adding sources to the research library. Mendeley is likewise compatible with Microsoft Word for PC and Mac. Additionally, Mendeley allows one to annotate documents and has a sharing function so multiple people can annotate the same document. Zotero does not currently support document annotation, although though one can use Adobe Acrobat Reader to annotate PDFs. Mendeley provides 2GB of free space (about 6 times more free storage than Zotero) but pricing after that is more expensive than Zotero's.

EndNote is a subscription-free software purchase, which means the upfront cost may seem prohibitive. However, for long term projects EndNote might fit the bill. EndNote's features are similar to Zotero's and Mendeley's, but it has more citation styles and customizable options.

I hope this helps answer your question, Ruffled. It's about that time I retire for a 8-12 hour nap. Doesn't that sound purrfect?

For more information, please email Spence at dml2002@wildcats.unh.edu

Workshop: Giving Effective Feedback to Student Writing
Guest Presenter Nancy Sommers
April 11, 12:45-2:00, Hamilton-Smith Hall, Room 201
(Please see "Future Tense" on page 1 for registration information)

The Grammar Box: Lay vs Lie

Lauren Short, Associate Director, UNH Writing Programs

As it turns out, classic rock can teach us a lot about grammar. Think of the songs "*Lay* Down Sally" by Eric Clapton and "*Lay*, Lady, *Lay*" by Bob Dylan. By grammatical standards, Clapton and Dylan get it wrong.

The key distinction between *lay* and *lie* is that *lay* requires a direct object and *lie* does not. For instance, you *lie* on a sofa (no direct object), but you *lay* your book down on the counter (the book is the direct object).

To further clarify, the definitions of *lay* and *lie* may help:
Lay: to set something in a resting position
Lie: to recline or rest in a flat position

Because Clapton's "Sally" and Dylan's "Lady" aren't direct objects, the grammatically correct song titles would read: "Lie Down Sally" and "Lie, Lady, Lie," respectively. They don't quite have the same ring to them, do they, though?

If you'd like to talk about *lay* vs. *lie* usage with your classes, Grammar Bytes has some easily-printable lessons, exercises, and quizzes you can use. I've included a couple to get you started below.

Grammar Bytes "Rules for Using the Irregular Verbs Lay and Lie" www.chompchomp.com/handouts/irregularrules02.pdf
Grammar Bytes "Irregular Verbs—Exercise 6: Lay and Lie" www.chompchomp.com/handouts/irregular06.pdf

Allen, Shundalyn. "Laying vs. Lying (Lay vs. Lie)—What's the Difference?" *Grammarly.*
https://www.grammarly.com/blog/lay-lie

For more information, contact ls2010@wildcats.unh.edu

Dangling Modifier: Attention Economy and Student Writing

Lauren Short, Associate Director, University Writing Programs

A recent article in *Inside Higher Ed* by librarian Barbara Fister considered information literacy in the age of abundant source material:

> Access to information in abundance so you can find "evidence" for whatever you want isn't what's needed, it's access to good information and some sense of what you can trust—and that's where things get complicated.

A 2016 Pew poll indicated that nearly a quarter of Americans shared a news story they knew to be false. MIT cognitive scientist David Rand found that the general population is inclined to believe false news stories at least 20% of the time (Steinmetz*)*. Given these trends, we have to recognize the habits that our students may be coming into our classrooms with.

While appropriate source material may seem obvious to us, it is likely less so to students, particularly as they are faced with negotiating information in multiple disciplines. So what does this have to do with "attention economy"?

Texts like Ed Shane's *Disconnected America* (2001), Jonathan Schroeder's *Visual Consumption* (2002), and Lankshear & Knobel in 2002's *Adolescents and Literacies in a Digital World* address the "economy of attention." In this phrase "economy" is the key term. The supply of information far exceeds the ability to pay attention. We can become fatigued by sorting through information, some of which is unnecessary and/or false. This can wear down seasoned researchers, but can be debilitating for novice students.

On top of all of this, the age of digital information brings the connotation of speed. It's an American trait to value speed and efficiency; admitting that one is slow can feel pejorative.

Scholars like UNH professor emeritus Tom Newkirk have addressed this notion in favor of a more slow and intentional reading and research process. In *The Art of Slow Reading*, Newkirk writes:

> We can fantasize that we are in a new information age that makes all that came before outdated, that our brains are being wired differently, that our brains move faster. That in having access to so much information, we have transcended limitations of previous generations. But I suspect we only fool ourselves when we do. (13)

Newkirk proposes six practices for engagement: performing, memorizing, centering, problem finding, reading like a writer, and elaborating. These strategies are designed to help students slow down their reading in the hopes that they will be more engaged and in turn spend more time determining the quality of sources. While we don't have space to discuss these strategies here, I encourage you to check out Newkirk's book.

Even if slow reading isn't for you, I think the takeaway of slowing down in general is applicable. Using process to slow students down and build towards their written product can help them manage information much more effectively—and economically.

Fister, Barbara. "It's the Attention Economy, and It's Stupid." *Inside Higher Ed.* 4 July 2018. https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/library-babel-fish/its-attention-economy-and-its-stupid

Newkirk, Thomas. *The Art of Slow Reading.* Heinemann, 2012.

Steinmetz, Katy. "How Your Brain Tricks You Into Believing Fake News." *Time.* 9 August 2019. http://time.com/5362183/the-real-fake-news-crisis/

For more, contact ls2010@wildcats.unh.edu

Do not accustom yourself to use big words for little matters. –Samuel Johnson

I believe that composing on the typewriter has probably done more than anything else to deteriorate English prose.

–Edmund Wilson

Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants
Excerpted From *Bad Ideas About Writing*

In some small ways, this concept is rooted in reality. The cliché is out there. A quick search reveals over 1,000 articles with the phrase "digital native" in the titles, many claiming they will help the non-native to understand how the digital native thinks and works, treating those labeled as native as if they are alien to the norm, or more frightening still, that the digital native has become the norm and those who are not natives are now an outmoded minority.

…

Such a statement reveals the ultimate folly of the digital native as a construct: It too easily leads to a sense of conflict or resignation. What we have to realize is that while it is indeed useful to think about the differences in the ways that people born in an age of digital computing and those born prior to these digital technologies use these tools, to assert that the mere presence of digital technologies so dramatically changes a skill like writing is simply misplaced.

The presence of digital technology has changed the way we think about writing. There are new tools at our disposal, and those digital tools are at times quite intimidating to those who learned to write before computers were an available or viable technology. There is a significant need to understand the way these technologies have changed our composing practices, but at the same time, the computer (or tablet or smartphone) is just another step in the evolution of a writing process that has always depended on technologies (paper, pencils, ink, etc.)

The most common methods of communication are changing, and that does matter, but it's not due to anything other than people using the best available means to convey their messages to each other. They can use pictures and video, but that's because the means to use Instagram and YouTube and SnapChat exist now. It doesn't mean that other people cannot, or that technology is the domain of a specific generation. Indeed, multiple research studies (such as those from the Pew Research Center) confirm that the uptake of digital technologies isn't strictly tied to generational groups—it's tied to socio-economic status, race and ethnicity, and access to broadband and smartphones. Digital technology is now accessible in ways it wasn't previously, and those with access and without pre-existing habits of using a specific format choose what they judge to be the best mode of writing, while those who do have pre-existing habits can either be curious about new modes of writing, or not.

We have always written, and we will always write. To assert that whole generations either own or are alienated from the technologies used for writing is a needless limiter that attributes false mastery and fosters a sense of futility. It doesn't represent any reality on the ground. It's a myth.

Alexander, Phill."Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants." *Bad Ideas About Writing.* Edited by Cheryl E Ball and Drew M Lowe. West Virginia University Libraries. 2017, pp 325-329.

Spotlight on Ben Peck: First Year Experience and Student Success Librarian

Danielle Lavendier, Associate Director, UNH Writing Programs

You've probably seen Ben Peck in Dimond library, near his office behind the research center on the third floor or in an instructional room on the fourth floor, or out and about on campus visiting different colleges. As UNH's First Year Experience and Student Success Librarian, Ben has his hands full these days. As part of what can be seen as a paradigm shift, Ben started at UNH when many long-time librarians were retiring. In addition to his position, specialist librarians in multiple disciplines were hired, such as Megan Bresnahan (Life Sciences and Agriculture), Hannah Hamalainen (Geospatial and Earth Sciences), Eugenia Opuda (HHS), and Wendy Girven Pothier (Paul College). This move was a departure from the more traditional general reference model, where ENG 401 was also the main focus of library instructional classes. The new model allows for broader partnering with faculty and offers instruction in other disciplines beyond first year writing, while still leaving plenty of space and focus for ENG 401 and the all-important first-year experience.

Ben's outreach initiatives are part of his goal to reach as many students as possible. For example, he works with Paul College's FIRE (First-year innovation and Research Experience) program to help extend foundational literacy practices to Business students. Ben has also developed a "gamified badging system," which is integrated into Canvas and allows students to collect virtual badges upon completing different modules. In the UNH LibGuide, "Research Starter" (http://libraryguides.unh.edu/research), there are three interactive digital lessons. After watching these, students can log into their Canvas pages and complete a quiz to earn their Research Starter Badge. Paul College's FIRE program also awards virtual badges for two research modules. Students can link these badges to their LinkedIn pages and tell professors that they've completed these modules.

Ben spends less time as an instruction librarian now than when he first started as he tends to relationships across campus, fostering connections between colleges and the library. Ben also works with various student success groups. For example, he's engaged with training Connors Writing Center writing assistants, who may encourage students to consult librarians for the additional assistance that they can offer with content or research-related issues in their assignments. Ben has also worked with academic mentors in CFAR, who reach students all over campus. Ben also participates in the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, which strives to make the library a more inclusive and accessible space, both physically and digitally.

Ben feels "empowered to be creative in how [he] can work towards the objectives [he] has" while still considering stakeholders' needs. This creativity shows in the work Ben does with students and faculty across campus. Play and imagination are important parts of learning and Ben hopes his approach will encourage life-long learning practices for students in their first years, and beyond. Above all, Ben thinks that empathy is needed when working with first-year students. We can all remember how socially and academically difficult the first year of college was. Ben and his colleagues warmly welcome students in all years into the library for fun and imaginative ways of learning, creating, and establishing research habits that will last them through their time at UNH and beyond.

It no longer rains; we have precipitation activity or a thunderstorm probability situation. Please, let it rain.   *–William Zinser*

Past Perfect: *Director's Notes*

Ed Mueller, Director, University Writing Programs

In our ongoing efforts to search and sift available resources, we came upon the *MLA Style Center*. This website has teaching resources, learning modules, an extensive list of topical links, citation examples, and guides for formatting papers, among other things. Not only does it promise authoritative information, coming as it does from the source, but it is free. Faculty who work with the MLA style may find it helpful: https://style.mla.org/

We still have seats available for the White Mountain faculty retreat. I would encourage anyone who was thinking about applying to go ahead and submit. See below for details.

2019
White Mountain
Faculty Retreat

Open to All Writing-Invested Faculty
Tenure Track, Lecturer, Clinical

~Sponsored by the Writing Program~
made possible through the generosity of the
K.v. Dey Fund

~ Apply by April 5th~

Offsite, June 3-5, 2019
Omni Mount Washington Hotel

To Apply: Please send an email or hardcopy with the following information to Ed Mueller, Director, UNH Writing Program (edward.mueller@unh.edu), Dimond Library, Room 329, by April 5th:

1. Name, Department, email/phone
2. Class(es) with writing (WI or other) that you have taught or plan to teach
3. Class that you intend to develop or revise during the retreat
4. A brief statement outlining what you would hope to bring away from the experience
5. A brief statement of what you would hope to contribute to the experience of colleagues
6. A statement affirming that you are able and willing to attend both the June* offsite and the summer follow-on session at UNH (date to be arranged based on collective availability)

* Participants will be responsible for their own transportation to and from the Omni Mount Washington Hotel. Lodging and noon meals will be covered by the Writing Program; participants may be accompanied by spouse/family. Further details will be sent upon selection.

<u>Last Word</u>

The person who does not respect words and their proper relationships cannot have much respect for ideas—very possibly cannot have ideas at all.   *–John Simon*