**Academic Article**

Hailey Marin

Professor Green

ENGL 165-51

April 22nd , 2020

**Introduction**

Within writing you are going to stumble across many disciplines including the social sciences, humanities, natural science, and applied fields. All of these fields are different as each one focuses on different aspects of human life. Ask yourself what does Nursing, chemistry and psychology all have in common? Thinking off the top of the head there seems to be nothing distinct that stands out but when it comes to writing there are a lot of similarities and differences. Each of these fields are categorized differently as Nursing is an applied field, chemistry falls into natural sciences, and psychology is a social science as it focuses on human behavior. Within these fields to communicate there has to be some sort of structure, language, and reference all of those support these fields. Structure is how the paper or article is laid out, what format is it in; Language is the types of words used, are they field specific or do they focus on reaching a broader audience; and Reference is how the paper is cited, are the authors getting their ideas from someone else, are there others that contributed. These are just basic definitions but throughout the article you will find that there is more to it than just something that seems insignificant. Overall throughout this paper I will demonstrate the similarities and differences in language structure and reference in writing in three Academic Fields. To diverge into this first there needs to be the addressing of what Writing Across the Curriculum is and its importance in all of this.

**Literature Review**

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) is a movement designed to teach students and teachers that every discipline has a specific set of writing styles but there are more commonalities amongst each discipline. Students need to come to the realization that writing for a grade or just how the professor may like it is becoming obsolete. Writing Across the Curriculum is being taught more and is becoming a common practice amongst the highest of scholars. Writing Across the Curriculum incorporates all aspects of each division not just discipline specific. In this literature review I will discuss why we write, influences and misjudgments of WAC, and the future of Writing Across the Curriculum.

**Writing to Learn as a Focus in WAC**

A woman by the name of Janet Emig once discussed the issue of teaching students who are not yet prepared for the intellectual demands of the courses they enter. At the time what Emig did not realize is she left a gap open in her research, which Anne J. Herrington put herself into this gap and goes on to explain how students need to get prepared right when they enter into the primary schools. Herrington pulls examples from observations made throughout time and gives insight on it as well. Herrington finishes off with talking about that no matter what our discipline we should be using writing in our courses not for improvement but for focusing on our course’s material. Herrington 1981, states that “writing has an integral role to play in any course as it is both a medium for learning as well as teaching people how to learn.” Herrington goes on to say that teachers must first come to believe in the value of writing as a discovery process and be willing to commit the process to teach their students. In connection to this piece Anson 2010 writes about the intradisciplinary influence of composition and WAC. Overall both Emig and Herrington believe it is important for other teachers to understand the struggles that they are facing with their students about WAC. The study gives off the data about the increase in the number of teaching journals increasing and almost every single one included a reference from a WAC scholar. The author also speculates about a broader shift in educational philosophy and methodology that took place in parallel with the increase in attention to writing. Learning-based orientations toward writing that gradually emerged did not push out a focus on skills but rather what the students would need to take away from each discipline. This connects to the overall idea of ‘why do we write’, because the author wants teachers to help their students as well as themselves understand the importance of WAC and the potential life changing things that can happen in result of this.

**Influences and Misjudgments**

When it comes to Writing Across the Curriculum there are many changes that have happened since this first was brought into light. There have also been, just like any piece of new information, things that go against what WAC really is. McCarthy in 1987 discusses “A Stranger in Strange Lands” which describes the challenges college students faces as they tackle transitioning from discipline to discipline as they take on their general education courses. McCarthy follows Dave Garrison, as he moves from classes regarding poetry to Cell Biology to Freshman Composition. The study overall asks about the nature of writing in different classrooms. Every student is expected to change and adapt while working with the different disciplines during their studies at college. Overall four research methods were used observation, interviews, composing-aloud protocols, and text analysis. In the end McCarthy poses questions about how teachers can best help student ‘strangers’ to become users of new language in their academic territories. This piece tackles the overall misconceptions that some may have about students not wanting to learn WAC but rather the idea that they have never been shown anything different. In connection to this, Mcleod and Maimon in 2000 discuss in their piece titled “Cleaning the Air: WAC Myths and Realities”, how WAC misjudgments are flourishing in larger communities and the struggles that Dave has faced during his time at school. They are able to debunk several myths by using research done by themselves as well as other WAC contributors. Towards the end of the article they go into WAC realities which is them just stating what WAC really is all about. The authors discuss faculty development, curricular components, student supports, assessment, and administrative structure and budget. They give three examples of WAC program directors who they believe are the ones supporting their research and invite the reader if they are interested to find out more. Both of these sources add to the knowledge of WAC and help debunk some of the misconceptions many faces when first coming across the idea of Writing Across the Curriculum.

**The Future of WAC**

When looking into the future of Writing Across the Curriculum it is also important to realize how far it has truly come. Walvoord 1996, follows the discussion in her piece “The Future of WAC” by examining the past, present, and ultimate future of writing across the curriculum. She first starts off by identifying that WAC has come from societal factors as well as faculty being faced by challenging questions about the meaning of education, equality, literacy, democracy, diversity, knowledge, power, and liberation. Walvoord gives examples of the WAC movement including Rosa Parks and James Britton. Overall, Walvoord makes the point that if we understand where WAC came from, we will understand the ever-changing future. It is said that WAC must act now as a mature reform organization to discover the changes throughout the disciplines. From Walvoord piece we are able to identify that WAC is ever changing and will continue to grow and adapt as our world does the same.

**Conclusion**

The question that is among most students today is why do we write? Why go through the painstaking process of putting our own ideas on to a page just for some professor to glance them over and give a random grade. That paper will never be thought of again after and information that you claimed as yours thought of as pointless. Many people throughout history have thought the same exact way and asked what the purpose of writing is. Most will give you the answers along the lines that it is to deliver information and take notes of what happens so History has a record. What people do not realize is the impact writing has on the human mind as well as society. Teaching a person to write starts when they are young, but it is developed into individual disciplines, there needs to be a connection and that is where the topic of Writing Across the Curriculum comes into play. Throughout this review it has been made clear what Writing Across the Curriculum is, what influences it and misjudges against it, as well as where it is going in the future. Students and scholars of all ages are able to understand one another after fully diverging themselves in the essence of Writing Across the Curriculum. Writing Across the Curriculum is important for all students to learn and diverge into their own work throughout their lifetime.

**Method**

Writing the literature Review has helped me gain knowledge about what Writing Across the Curriculum truly means and how I can apply it to my daily College Experience! The disciplines I chose to focus on was social science, applied fields, and natural science. The reason why I chose those was because I personally am involved in the applied fields as my major here at school and I wanted to use that as a background for me to help advance my own writing in this field as well as expand it to others. I read all my sources online, as at this point in time there is a pandemic going on and I was not able to get hard copies of sources. I think that this is important to note that sometimes options can be limited as we are all stuck at home. To take notes on my pieces I used my notebook and took notes about the structure, language, and reference as I read through them ensuring that I took notes of the important topics and ideas amongst structure, language, and reference. While analyzing for these three things, I looked for what types of references were used whether they were intext or endnotes, I took note on the type of structure used for example IMRaD, then when it came to language I took note on field specific words that were common among each field!

**Results and Analysis**

*Reference:*

When examining all six pieces of work regarding reference, all of the articles had some sort of reference page giving credit to those who contributed to the work as well as the data that they included in their studies. Most of the pieces in all three fields, when looking at citing their sources through intext as well as in the reference page used the APA citation method. APA is normally used for academic documents such as scholarly journal articles and books. It is commonly used in the fields of behavioral and social sciences. An example of the APA citation throughout the pieces would be the authors last name followed by the year the piece was published. This was congruent throughout almost all 6 pieces of text that was viewed and really demonstrated the similarities between the fields. As for the differences, when looking at the references, there was some variance between how they were organized. For example, the chemistry article about Chocolate Production, the author listed the references as the way they appeared in the article; Meaning the number one was the very first source used to support his experimental design and the number two was the second one used and so forth. This is an effective way to display your references because it is easy for the reader to understand and they are able to go back into the piece and view where the source was used. Another difference that occurred throughout the text pieces was again in the reference page where the psychology Article, regarding risk were all put in alphabetical order and did not have any way of being put in a specific order in which they were used in the article (Assailly, 2010). Overall, reference helps the reader and writer give credit to those who have contributed to the piece as well as prevent plagiarism from occurring.

*Structure:*

When it came to structures all six pieces had some sort of variance, but all had similar messages when it came to prove their point. They wanted the readers to understand how they came to their results and if it ever came to it, their reader would be able to reciprocate their experiments or observations and get the same results that they did. A similarity amongst some of the articles was the use of the IMRaD format to display their findings. IMRaD is the way the article is arranged into introduction, methods, results and analysis, and discussion. This method of structure is most commonly found amongst primary research and found in the Applied Fields significantly. For example, in both chemistry articles IMRaD was used to display the findings regarding the production of chocolate and the organic molecules. IMRaD is very helpful in the scientific fields because it allows for the reader to see where the authors thought they were going to where they actually ended up and the reader is able to replicate the experiment if needed. A difference among the fields was within the structure of one of Nursing articles, the one regarding senior living facilities acquired pneumonia, there was no use of headings but rather just a discussion piece about their findings of the study they did. This is significant because unlike most of the articles it did not follow an IMRaD structure but rather was just one portion of the structure. The article was still compelling even though it was just the discussion of their results. Overall, the structure is very important when it comes to displaying the data that an author is trying to prove as well as convey to the reader.

*Language:*

Amongst all six pieces of work there was significant use of third person point of view. This contributes to getting the authors points across in all pieces of work. Whether a person is discussing the impacts of risks on people or viewing the chemistry behind chocolate production they all seemed to be trying to prove a point. Third person point of view helps the authors not put their personal ideas on things but rather helps allow for facts to be stated and it gives the author credibility. In the article discussing undergraduate Nursing student’s compatibility with the nursing profession, the use of the article was an experiment to display the data found in regard to the question Are students appropriate for the Nursing field and treatment of patient care? Dianti, the author of the study, writes “The results also indicated that most participants did not know the requirements of the profession very well at the time of applying” (Dianti, 2005). From this piece of text, the reader can recognize the third person point of view as the author does not use I or any indication of a we thus making it objective and able to be repeated by others. Another similarity amongst the language throughout the articles was there was a significant use of using words specific related to that field. For example, on the psychology articles discussing risk there was specific use of words like ‘perception’ and ‘psychometric paradigm’, (Assailly, 2010) these words are consistently used when discussing psychology because there is always a look at what others are doing and looking at the human behavior. The use of words specific to the field helps the audience of the piece understand the work better. The author’s primary audience can be other psychologists, or other nurses, or other chemists. The reason for this being is that they all together are the future of their fields and it should be directed at those who are also contributing so the ideas are overall recognized. On the other hand, there are significant differences between the types of academic fields when it comes to writing. A big difference between the articles was the use of hedging that was consistent in the psychology articles but not the Nursing and chemistry articles. It is important to note this because psychologist can never be 100% when it comes to predicting human behavior because they are observing the behaviors rather than experimenting on it. Although there are sometimes when hedging is not used if they have data to support their claims. For example, hedging is used in the psychology article when talking about the possible implications of risk on human behavior (Assailly, 2010). The author is only speculating and can never indefinitely prove what is happening on one specific person or group of people is consistent with the population because everyone is different. Another difference amongst the language in the articles was whether or not the article used passive or active voice. Active voice means that the subject acts upon the verb in the sentence whereas passive voice is happening when the subject receives the verb. The use of passive voice tends to hide who is actually doing the actions which is important in research since results should be able to be reproduced by anyone. Overuse of the passive voice can sometimes lead to making the text drawn out which is congruent with the research articles in the chemistry field as well as Nursing. In the chemistry article the passive voice is immense and all over the work as they had already completed the experiment on how to determine the process of chocolate production through chemistry. Passive voice is used throughout the chemistry article to demonstrate an understanding that was found during the experiment, this is congruent with most articles done in the scientific field. The chemistry article in regard to chocolate production does a great job at presenting the passive voice whereas with the psychology article discussing risk there was a great speech with active voice in regard to what is happening in the now, rather than what was already discovered. All of these are great examples of how similar and different the language is amongst the fields of psychology, chemistry, and Nursing.

**Discussion**

From doing this project, I have learned about the different types of academic fields as well as what each field requires of the writer. Writing in the University now because of all of this will be changed because I have a better understanding of the requirements as well as the connection between the curriculum as a whole. It is important to remember how each field impacts one another to succeed in writing that intertwine is important. The value that my research study adds to the field of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) is the highlight of similarity between Nursing, chemistry, and psychology. These three fields seem to have little in common but in reality, there are a lot of similarities in their structure, language, and reference when it comes to writing. My research here has highlighted that just because some fields may be looking at different aspects of life, they all have the same goal to be the most forward in research and current in their findings. Future research that may be conducted to help people better understand the types of writing across the University could be the possibility of another case study done with students at different universities to examine how they transition from class to class. Research may also include the possibility to examine different groups on campus, one group who has had WAC training and another who hasn’t ever heard of it and see which group excels when it comes to writing. If this is conducted as a longitudinal study, then there is the opportunity to show accuracy as well as benefit of the program. By doing this the researcher can establish a control group as well as the overall concept of implementing a WAC training class of some sort actually is beneficial to students. This can really help define the importance of WAC within the University.

**References**

Herrington, A. (1981). Writing to Learn: Writing across the Disciplines. *College English: National Council of Teachers of English.*

Anson, C. (2010). The Intradisciplinary Influence of Composition and WAC. *North Carolina State University: The WAC Journal, Vol. 21.*

Parkinson McCarthy, L. (1987). A Stranger in Strange Lands: A College Student Writing Across the Curriculum. *Research in the Teaching of English: National Council of Teachers of English.*

Mcleod, S. & Maimon, E., (2000). Cleaning the Air: WAC Myths and Realities. *College English: National Council of Teachers of English.*

Walvoord, B. (1996). The Future of WAC. *College English: National Council of Teachers of English.*

Temming, M. (2020, March 3). Evaporating mixtures of two liquids create hypnotic designs. *Retrieved from* [*https://www.sciencenews.org/article/evaporating-mixtures-two-liquids-create-hypnotic-designs*](https://www.sciencenews.org/article/evaporating-mixtures-two-liquids-create-hypnotic-designs)

Robinson, P. (2020, February 28). Skills Versus Pills: Can Integrated Behavioral Health Services Benefit Depressed Patients In Primary Care? *Retrieved from https://www.apa.org/pubs/highlights/spotlight/issue-176*

Adib-Hajbaghery, M., Dianati, M. Undergraduate nursing students' compatibility with the nursing profession. *BMC Med Educ* **5,**25 (2005). https://doi-org.proxy.longwood.edu/10.1186/1472-6920-5-25

Miguel G. Madariaga, Anil Thomas, Preston B. Cannady, Jr., & Joseph M. Mylotte. (2003). Risk Factors for Nursing Home-Acquired Pneumonia [with Reply]. *Clinical Infectious Diseases,37*(1), 148-150. Retrieved April 14, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/4483581

Assailly, J. (2010). The psychology of risk (Psychology research progress). *Hauppauge, N.Y.: Nova Science. (2010)*

Barišić, V., Kopjar, M., Jozinović, A., Flanjak, I., Ačkar, Đ, Miličević, B., . . . Babić, J. (2019). The chemistry behind chocolate production. *Molecules (basel, Switzerland),* *24*(17). doi:10.3390/molecules24173163