Project 2: Genre Analysis
Above B Version

Background: Complete this version of Project 2 if you are attempting to earn a course grade higher than B. Besides asking you to write a longer essay, the above-B version of this assignment requires you to engage more deeply with genre analysis by examining not only how published research in your field uses a particular academic writing convention, but how student writing in the discipline uses this convention as well. Students who successfully complete this assignment will demonstrate that they have exceeded the following course goals:

- Students analyze a source’s rhetorical situation
- Students substantiate claims with evidence
- Students construct an effective argument using appropriate evidence
- Understand how a text is shaped according to the requirements of purpose, genre, occasion and audience

Assignment: A professor in your discipline has created an advice blog for undergraduates new to the field. Typical posts offer students help choosing the most appropriate courses, getting an internship, seeking out research opportunities, and similar topics. This professor has asked you to write a guest post offering undergraduates advice about how to approach research writing.

You’ve decided you want your post to show students how both student and published writers in your field use one specific academic writing convention we’ve discussed in this unit (i.e., the CARS model of introductions, personal pronouns, hedges, etc.). Your goal, you’ve told yourself, isn’t to tell students how they should write a research paper. Instead, you want to do something more modest: to break down for students a specific writing convention that could come in handy for the research writing they might be expected to do in the major.

You have found three peer-reviewed research articles that appeared in three different academic journals in the discipline within the last 18 months. Along with this sample, you’ve collected two examples of student research papers (which could come from your own writing or writing by other undergraduates). You have carefully analyzed how the writers of these articles use the convention you’ve decided to focus on, and you’ve even read previous research about this genre convention (i.e., the relevant article assigned in class) you want to use in your post.

Write a blog post of at least 1800 words that offers a fitting response to this rhetorical situation.

Submit with the final version of your blog post a “Dear Reader” letter, address to the class, that answers the following questions:
- What are 2-3 specific writerly choices you made that you think helped you respond effectively to your rhetorical situation?

---

1 Remember that students must complete all required assignments for an Above B assignment to go into effect. In the case of a student who does not complete all required assignments but does complete an Above B assignment, the complete Above B assignment will make up an incomplete assignment.
What are 2-3 aspects of your blog post that would benefit from further revision if you had the
time? What specific changes would you make and why?

Length & Format:
- At least 1800 words
- Formatted in a style readable on a screen
- Sources cited using the blog's documentation style (the professor who created the blog pointed
  you to the Explorations of Style blog for an example of the citation style they want you to use)

Due Dates:
- Draft 1 (of at least 900 words, not counting Works Cited) due Sunday, October 28th for Peer
  Review Post 3
- Final draft (of at least 1800 words, not counting Works Cited) due Thursday, November 8th in
  the Project 3 OAKS dropbox

Grading: To earn a “complete” grade, students must submit both drafts, and the final version must meet
all of the following specifications:

The blog post
- Analyzes how both published and student writers in the discipline use one of the academic writing
  conventions discussed in class
- Meets the needs of its audience (i.e., undergraduates new to the discipline)
- Substantiates its analysis with convincing evidence from 3 peer-reviewed research articles
  published within the last 18 months in 3 different disciplinary journals
- Substantiates its analysis with convincing evidence from 2 student research papers in the
  discipline
- Substantiates its analysis by incorporating persuasive information from previous research on this
  writing convention (i.e., the relevant course reading)
- Demonstrates an accurate understanding of previous research on this writing convention (i.e., the
  relevant course reading)
- Integrates quotes in a manner that avoid Stedman’s quote annoyances
- Displays grammatical and stylistic choices that enhance (rather than interfere with) readers’
  understanding
- Documents sources using the blog’s citation conventions
- Includes a Dear Reader letter answering the two posed questions
- Is at least 1800 words
Visualizing Evidence Across the Page

Evidence is...?

If you’re reading this, then I can almost guarantee you have written a research paper for a class at least one time in your life. Now, you’ve come here to give yourself a bit of a refresher on some of the writing conventions necessary for creating such a paper. Let’s step back and remember one of those older papers, shall we? You were probably nervous, your teacher was giving you a long list of things to have in the paper, and most likely she told you to include evidence in your writing. That word usually strikes fear into the core of any student, because it means research, explaining, and citing. That is because they only see it as just that, rather than a chance to include information that is meant to enhance the minds of others. However, for those of you reading who have managed to make it this far without writing using evidence, evidence is better known as data that supports or substantiates the claim that a writer is making. Evidence can be presented in a numerous of ways, but one of the more popular arising methods is through the presentation of visuals. Through this blog we will be looking at a break down of how to use evidence and visuals in research writing, which you can then take and apply in your discipline as you please.

What are visuals?

Visuals are a way for a writer to present evidence or simply include additional materials to highlight a point or claim made in their writing. This can be done in a variety of ways, so the choice is overall left to the writer! Visuals can be included as easily as a graph, table, or image. When visuals are incorporated into writing, it can enhance the overall writing as long as it is done so properly. Often times, students are scared to include visuals in their writing, as it could be seen as informal. However, that is not always the case. Research papers often include visuals in order to support their claims, and their visuals tend to represent or mirror the evidence provided. When this is done effectively, it provides an alternative method of receiving important information that a reader may have skimmed over or missed in the written portion of the paper. By now I’m sure you’re going “Ok, I get it, how can I use visuals and evidence in my academic
writing?”. Don’t worry, we’re about to look at a break down of six different pieces of writing in order to provide examples for you. These writings will vary in content across the education discipline, and will also vary in for whom the examples are written for. There will be three that are from published magazines, and three that are pulled from students currently in the discipline. So, buckle in, grab some paper and a writing utensil, and get ready to be fully prepared to know how to incorporate evidence and visuals into your own writing.

**Identifying Evidence Part 1: Textual Evidence**

In order to be able to identify evidence, you must be aware for what KIND of evidence you’re looking for. We will start with focusing on **Textual Evidence**. In order to see how textual evidence can play out in an article, we’re going to jump right into the first article, *Cultivating Classroom Spaces as Homes for Learning* by Laura Flynn and Sherri Colby. This is based on an action research assignment that was completed in a sixth grade classroom to explore “sixth grade students’ perceptions of their classroom space as conducive or distracting to their learning experiences” by looking at aspects such as physical environment, student self-governance, and disciplinary management (Flynn and Colby, 2017).

The textual evidence presented in the article is done through the presentation of quotes from outside sources, in order to further explain or support the claim of the article. As evidence is meant to support an author’s claim(s), this was an effective choice on Flynn and Colby’s part. In order to set their action research project up, they base their study off of a previous study completed by Carl Rogers. They include a citation, as shown in Fig. 1 above. One aspect I found that was well done in the textual evidence presentation, was the way the author's were able to include outside information back-to-back. This is often a daunting task for writers, as people are always concerned they are including “too much” of the outside information in their piece. However as shown in Figure 2, the author's brilliantly show a way of including a plethora of information, but still making sure it fits well with the piece. Here, they showed an excellent form of quote integration where the outside information was introduced, and then followed by a paraphrase from the cited article, to further support the quote included. As a writer, you may chose to not use the article to explain the quote, you may choose to use your own explanation -- which is always encouraged!
By including outside information such as this, the evidence presented not only supports but also helps to continuously frame the researchers’ entire project throughout the written piece.

In order to help you get a better perspective on how this looks for those who are writing as a student in the discipline, I have collected a few volunteered papers from colleagues of mine that I believe show exactly what we are analyzing here. In Should We Celebrate Columbus Day?: The Truth of Christopher Columbus, the author cites multiple outside sources in her research. However, she takes an alternative approach to including outside information rather than directly quoting the source, she chooses to paraphrase the information instead. By paraphrasing, author's are able to take information and word it in a way that allows the readers to better understand the information being presented. This also allows the author's to be able to incorporate separate sources back to back, as it gives the author a chance to reword and organize the information in a way that can be easily understood by the readers. In order to give you a better visual (hey hey -- more visual usage!), I’ve included a snippet from one of her paragraphs, shown in Figure 3 above. Notice, although she was paraphrasing information, she still cited her sources at the end of the sentence. Although you are using your own words, you still need to cite where you are pulling your information from. An important reminder for those of you who are new (or seasoned) at evidence inclusion, always remember to cite outside evidence, because it provides the proper accreditation to those it was taken from.

**Identifying Evidence Part 2: Authority versus Anecdotal**

To begin with, it’s important for you to understand what authority and anecdotal mean in the terms of using evidence in writing. When using an authority as evidence, a writer is summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting someone deemed an expert in the field of study. When a writer opts to include anecdotal evidence in their writing, they are using evidence found from personal observations, interviews, ethnography, etc. Both of these are common forms of evidence inclusion in our discipline, as we are often completing our own research or implementing new practices to observe and collect data, yet we are also basing a lot of what we do off of professionals or experts in the field.

To switch things up a bit, we’ll start with looking at the non-professional side. We’ll begin with a focus on using authority as evidence, and to do so we will be looking at an argumentative essay titled Traditional School versus Year-Round School by Alexis N’ganga. Her
argument is for the implementation of year-round schooling, and she chooses to cite an interview from an article as one of her main points of evidence. The person being interviewed was the head of the department of educational organization and leadership at Illinois, and spent 15 years studying the different types of school calendars and their effects, therefore could be considered an expert in the field/subject of focus. She takes a bit of a different approach to introducing her information, because she opts to begin her sentence and this particular discussion area with the quote and explain its context afterwards, as shown in Figure 4. This particular way of presenting evidence from an interview with an expert, is very effective when a writer wants to clearly make a point without any distractions. This makes what is being said, stand out in contrast to explanations and further summarizations because it provides a direct link from the reader to the interview.

Stepping back over into the professional domain of the written word, we’ll be taking a look at Cooperative learning in middle school: A means to improve peer relations and reduce victimization, bullying, and related outcomes by Mark J. Van Ryzin and Cary J. Roseth. This article focuses on the breakdown of bullying, and the creation of a process in which victimized or isolated students can create and foster lasting friendships. I picked this article (aside from the fact that it’s a good read) because since it is based off of a personal experiment, it provides a lot of personal observations that help the author's draw conclusions and provide evidence needed for the study itself (which is a key point in anecdotal evidence!). The author's begin by introducing the purpose of their study, and draw connections between their study and previous studies done on similar topics in the past. The article allows the reader to easily navigate to find the evidence located in the results and discussion sections. The evidence that is found and presented in the results section, is further elaborated on in detail, in the discussion section as shown in Figure 5. This is standard for presenting your own findings, as it tends to be an easy way of laying out the information and making it easier for the readers to understand. If you’re ever unsure as a reader, what the evidence may be in a piece of writing, look for some key words such as: findings, results, or data, as these tend to signal the presentation of hard information that has been found through experiments. I also chose to include this section because it does something a little different by including the word “we”. Most authors choose to not include personal pronouns in their piece, as it can make it seem informal. However, it should not
be frowned upon as it helps the reader to make the clear connection that the authors were the ones in control of the experiment.

Statistical and Experimental evidence will be the last two evidence categories we will cover in this post. We’ll be going through these two simultaneously, as they tend to go hand in hand with the type of information they present. As with before, it’s important for you to know exactly what each type of evidence is.

**Statistical Evidence** tends to be numerical data that can come from an array of different methods, whereas **Experimental Evidence**, is observational data that is derived directly from controlled experiments. By including one or both of these methods in writing, it provides readers with facts found from extensive research, which gives the author a more logical approach to their writing. Many pieces of published writing that include outside research tend to include at least one or the other, as it is one of the most effective ways to directly present readers with factual information.  

The article *Implementation of Research-Based ESL Strategies with Lower Grade Middle School ELLs in the Science Classroom: Findings from an Experimental Study* by Beverly J. Irby, Rafael Lara-Alecio, Fuhui Tong, Cindy Guerrero, Kara L. Sutton-Jones, and Nahed Abdelrahman, is written based entirely off of an experimental study completed. To give you a brief overview, this study looked at two groups of teachers, a control group and a treatment group. The treatment group worked with including different ESL strategies during a science class, whereas the control group did not. The focus was to see if the implementation of these strategies would enhance the ELLs science and literacy growth. When the viewer is introduced to the entirety of the experiment, the author's provide readers with insight to the experiment which leads to their results, as shown above in Figure 6. This is a great example of experimental data, because the author's build up to their results of the experiments and their implications, all while discussing the importance and usefulness of the methods that were used to achieve these results. Most importantly, however, is that they are presenting data found through their own experiment rather than someone else’s. This can also be deemed as an example of statistical evidence, as it does provide numerical data derived from an experiment.
Figure 7 above is another way the author’s chose to include statistical evidence. Here, they chose to present it in a graph form (note: visual usage!) and then follow up with a clear explanation of the percentages that are presented. By incorporating the hard factual evidence of their experiment, the authors are able to give the audience reasoning to support and agree with their findings, and in turn use said findings to push for or create change in classrooms.

In a research paper written by a fellow colleague at College of Charleston, titled The Pros and Cons of Massive Open Online Courses: Sacrificing Quality for Accessibility?, the author Brynn Smith takes a dive into a popular issue on the rise -- the accessibility/usage of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). I chose this paper because I think it has a great usage of statistical evidence when supporting the theory that MOOCs are not beneficial in comparison to face-to-face lectures in higher level education. As shown in Figure 8, Smith chooses to pull from studies completed on students who have experienced MOOCs, and presents their findings in a way that is easy for readers to understand as well as clearly see the numerical values associated with the studies. From here, she moves on to further explain the implications of these numbers, and then addresses what could be done to alter the outcome. By including this bit of statistical evidence, it elevated her paper by highlighting important values associated with the negatives of MOOCs.
Instead of openly criticizing the program in this section, she chose to remain objective and simply state facts to support her claim.

**Visualizing Visuals... Visually!**

So now that we’ve gone through the different types of evidence and you’ve gotten some ideas from the examples as to how you could use them in your own writing, now let’s take a minute to look at how using visuals can enhance your writing. This will be the last bit we cover in this post, so just keep holding on because we’re almost done. Looking back, in most of the articles that were discussed in this post, the authors chose to include visuals to boost the appeal of their writing as well as provide another method of presenting information. As mentioned in the beginning of this post, visuals can come in a variety of different methods. Most commonly, these visuals tend to be in the forms of graphs, visual evidence, and tables. Each of these styles of visuals are all effective ways to present evidence, either for the first time or to reinforce a point made previously. If you noticed, through this post so far I’ve been introducing a few different types of visuals and how you can connect them to your writing. You don’t have to follow my lead, by all means — use the suggestions I’m about to give you and branch off to create your own!

To kick our visual journey off, we’re going to look back at our first article, Cultivating Classroom Spaces as Homes for Learning. While discussing their findings from their observations, they included images of the classroom that was being observed, as shown to the left. By including these images, it allowed the authors to further elaborate on their environment, as well as give the reader a better understanding of what the author’s were experiencing during their observation time. It’s important to remember that when you choose your images, you are picking ones that will enhance your writing rather than diminish it.

If you’re looking to include a table or graph in your writing and need some ideas, you can look back at figure 7 or at figures 9a & 9b below. Figure 7 features a graph that the authors chose to create in order to better visually represent their data. When including a graphs and tables, as with any other visual evidence, it is important to address the visual and discuss its relevance or importance to the overall experiment/observation/article. Figures 9a and 9b were pulled from the article Cooperative learning in middle school: A means to improve peer relations and reduce victimization, bullying, and related outcomes. These images are of tables and organizers that help to present and clarify the data found in the study that was being focused on.
A couple of the student essays incorporated visuals, however I wanted to highlight a visual found in Traditional School versus Year-Round School to make a note of. Visuals do not always have to be directly pulled from the research itself. Visuals can also be included in order to introduce other ideas into the writing. Here, N’ganga included this photo which helped to elaborate on her point of the achievement gap. She introduced the subject and then built her argument from this photo and included outside references to support it.

Visuals are a great way to enhance your writing, so don’t be afraid to use them! You’ve now seen a couple different ways to incorporate them, but now that you’ve read all about evidence and visuals, you’re now capable of using both of them in your own writing.

**In Conclusion**

I know that was a long read, and I’m sure you’re now sitting there questioning all of the papers you’ve written in the past. You might even be contemplating just tossing the current one you’re working on and just start over -- don’t do that. These are just some ideas and things you
can use for your papers, and they’re methods that can be used even if you decide this discipline isn’t for you. Including evidence isn’t and won’t be the death of you, and throwing some visuals in here and there isn’t always so bad either. Both of these aspects are only meant to enhance your paper, ad as long as you’re mindful of placement and citing your sources, you will be fine. Good luck on your paper!
Photo Sources from start to finish:
Beaker and test tubes: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gnome-applications-science.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gnome-applications-science.svg)
Smiley with thumbs up: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SMirC-thumbsup.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SMirC-thumbsup.svg)


Smith, B. (2017). The Pros and Cons of Massive Open Online Courses: Sacrificing Quality for Accessibility?

N’ganga A. (2018). Traditional School versus Year-Round School


Woytovich, M. (2018). Should We Celebrate Columbus Day?: The Truth of Christopher Columbus