

Feedback File: Project 1

ENC 3310 Section 4

Expository Writing: Bodily Discourse Communities

Mr. Spencer Bennington

What am I looking for in Project 1?

1. Have you structured a piece of writing in a clear, well-organized way?
 - a. Do you have a clear outline you are following?
 - b. Does one major idea connect to another?
 - c. Does each paragraph contain one main topic forecasted by a clear topic sentence?
2. Does this essay demonstrate that you understand the fundamental concepts of rhetoric, discourse, and embodiment as we have discussed them in class and read about them in various sources?
 - a. Are you communicating your ideas clearly and simply?
 - b. Is your essay written in such a way that an audience of your peers might be able to learn something about rhetoric, discourse, or embodiment if they weren't taking this class?
 - c. If you quote or paraphrase readings, are you adequately
 - i. Identifying the source of the quote
 - ii. Explaining the necessary original context of the material
 - iii. Evaluating how this source material works as evidence toward your own arguments/conclusions?
3. Can you apply your understanding of these theoretical concepts to a specific bodily discourse community?
 - a. Have you identified a specific bodily discourse community that exists in the world?
 - b. Can you map this discourse community onto the 8 criteria Swales provides?
 - c. In your early research, have you noticed ways that this community behaves rhetorically?
 - d. Do you see any specific connections between how your discourse communities approaches the topic of "the body" and how other texts we have read do so?

Feedback File: Student Examples for Review

Issue 1: Avoid the “since the dawn of time” cliché

Student Example: Discourse communities are integrated within our society. These communities are everywhere, established by ordinary individuals who all believe strongly in one thing to come together and take some sort of action. Our civilization was built on discourse, whether it is noted or not. Discourse has paved the way since communication among humans began. Since then, it has evolved into what we know to be discourse today.

Explanation of issue: this is a common example of how hard it can be to know where to start an essay like this and it’s fine as part of a draft (though I expect to see more concrete introductions in all final essays). After these lines, the student goes on to explain more specifically their chosen discourse community and how it slots into the Swales definition. To avoid the overly generalized opening paragraph, start with a brief description of your specific discourse community. From there you can explain that it fits the definition because of x, y, and z and that it exhibits particular rhetorical tendencies.

Note: Many submissions didn’t just have a “since the dawn of time” cliché in their introduction, they had a full “data dump” of information throughout the majority of their paragraphs. This means that their text was primarily a summary of the readings we’ve completed thus far. In short, this is no bueno. You can avoid this by starting from a more specific point about your chosen discourse community and then including only relevant claims or evidence from these readings.

Example of how to improve: In the world of martial arts, there are many active and volatile discourse communities centered around discussions around the body. One specific community of note includes b-boys (breakdancers) who trace their athletic roots to the “Kung Fu craze” of the early seventies. This b-boy culture follows the eight criteria Swales (1990, 2017) outlines in his definition of “discourse community” and operates rhetorically when communicating with members both inside and outside the group.

Practice Exercise: Write a new first line for your essay in the format described above. Start with the specific discourse community, make a claim about why it counts as a bodily DC, and preview the way you plan to discuss it rhetorically.

Issue 2: Transitioning from one paragraph to the next

Student Example:

The college women community is, in the same fashion, very related to the process of communication and is considered specifically a discourse community because it has its own set of objectives and its own ways of discussing its interests like the Her Campus online publication.

As previously mentioned, rhetoric is one of the concepts that influenced how communication is understood. As T. Zarlengo explains in "Rhetoric: What Is Rhetoric and Why Should You Care?": "rhetoric, the art of effective communication, dates back to ancient Greece" (2).

Explanation of Issue: The first paragraph ends by narrowing the essay's focus on the student's selected discourse community--this is good and what I recommended in issue #1. The problem is that the very next paragraph strays away from this thread entirely. Now the student starts writing about the concept of "rhetoric" generally instead of in relation to their community. This creates a jarring reading experience and might make your audience lose focus. To improve, consider a way to transition into a discussion of rhetoric as it applies to your specific topic.

Example of how to improve:

...like the Her Campus online publication.

Her Campus is a contemporary discourse community, but it utilizes many Classical communication concepts familiar to the ancient scholars of rhetoric. Rhetoric has been defined as...and Her Campus exemplifies this definition by...

Practice Exercise: Make an outline from the draft of your essay. You can use the following template to help:

- I. Major section
 - A. Topic sentence
 1. Claim
 2. Evidence
 - a) Attribution

- b) Explanation
 - c) Evaluation, discussion, connection
 - 3. Transition?
- B. Topic sentence
 - 1. Claim
 - 2. Evidence
 - a) Attribution
 - b) Explanation
 - c) Evaluation, discussion, connection
 - 3. Transition?

Are you missing any of these components? Does it make sense to you why you have some sections or paragraphs where they are? Can you see ways that you might move some information around to make a better organizational design?

Issue 3: Understanding topic sentences

Student examples:

Bitzer defines a rhetorical situation as one that creates a rhetorical exigence—an imperative call for rhetoric resulting from a circumstance that can be changed through rhetoric (1968).

The organization uses social media as a platform for communication among its members as well as external promotion of club organized events, as well as a variety of events that celebrate or explore Cuban culture or heritage.

Explanation of Issue: One of the sentences listed above works as a topic sentence and one does not. Can you identify which is which? Can you tell me why? A good topic sentence works like a line item in an outline. For example, if I were writing about fans of Bruce Lee as a discourse community, I might make an outline of an essay that looks like this:

- I. Introduction--Fans of Bruce Lee as a DC
 - A. Describe the different media through which fans communicate
 - B. Describe the specific DC I'll be discussing
- II. How this group maps onto the 8 DC criteria
 - A. Briefly connect my DC to the Swales criteria

B. Focus on one or two criteria to discuss more fully.

The roman numerals let me know where the major sections of my essay are. The big letters (A, B) roughly represent the goals of paragraphs. These paragraphs need a topic sentence that communicates this goal clearly. The second sentence in the student example above does this pretty well by focusing on 2-3 ways the selected discourse community interacts. When I read that as a topic sentence, I have a pretty good idea of what to expect in the paragraph and even the kinds of evidence the writer will likely include.

The first sentence in the student example above is **not** a topic sentence because it does not provide an opening to a discussion. Instead, this sentence operates more as a kind of evidence. Evidence should only be included after the topic is defined and a claim is made.

Example of how to improve: if we revisit the outline above, I could plan to include evidence under my major topics like this:

III. How this group operates rhetorically

- A. “Fans of Bruce Lee communicate with each other differently with one another than they do with people who exist outside of their discourse community” (this is a topic sentence but it is also a claim I’m making. Therefore, it should be supported by evidence.)
1. The fact that this group utilizes different communications strategies based on their audience is an example of what Zarlengo (2019) describes in her discussion of rhetoric...
 2. Understood another way, members of the fans of Bruce Lee discourse community could be seen as responding to an “exigence” as Bitzer (1968) describes it in “The Rhetorical Situation.”

B. ...

The point here is to start recognizing the difference between what counts as a **topic sentence**, what counts as a **claim you are making**, and what counts as a **type of evidence to prove a point**.

Practice Exercise: Take a look back at the outline you made for Issue 2. Did you have difficulty selecting which sentences you wrote were topic sentences, which were claims, and which were evidence? Take another look at your essay and choose one strong example of each of these three. If you can’t find any, try to write some and share with a partner or your instructor to make sure you are on the right path for revision.

Topic sentence: “When individuals start engaging repetitively in a discourse that concerns itself with a specific topic, they naturally start creating communities around that discourse experience, which are described as discourse communities.”

(It previews I’m going to be talking about discourse communities)

Claim: “The example of college women is specifically a bodily discourse community because its discussions are about topics around an experience that is shaped by the sex/gender they belong to.”

Evidence: Swale’s eight criteria.

Issue 4: Incorporating evidence in your discussion

Student Example: The vegan discourse community uses rhetoric expertly, as people within this community firmly believe veganism benefits your health, the environment and animals. Their educated approach to rhetoric is effective in persuading others to join their community and in order to progress those ideas. For example, the vegan discourse community I have observed online relies heavily on pathos and rhetoric that is often shocking to get readers to better empathize with animals and get a glimpse of the horror of factory farming and industrial discussing the captivity of animals in regards to the food industry.

Explanation of Issue: This example starts off nicely by making a clear claim that the chosen discourse community “uses rhetoric expertly.” The example even provides a more specific way to measure that claim by describing how the vegan group uses “pathos” in a certain way. What’s missing here is evidence in the form of quoted/paraphrased material to help the reader understand how this fits into a larger discussion. The writer could provide this by offering a quote from the discourse community and/or a definitional quote about pathos and how the selected example fits in to a larger discussion of rhetoric.

Example of how to improve: “The vegan discourse community uses rhetoric expertly, especially when communicating with outsiders for the purpose of recruitment. For example, the vegan discourse community I have observed online relies heavily on pathos to help readers empathize with animals and feel a sense of disgust at their routine mistreatment (Web article name or author, year, page or paragraph). As explained in “What is rhetoric and why should you care” pathos is an appeal to emotions, one that does x and y (Zarlengo, year, page). Not only

does this use of rhetoric focus an audience's attention on the purpose of the vegan discourse community, it could even go as far as creating an exigency in the way that Vatz (1972) describes. (Then I explain Vatz's idea in a sentence or two. Then I evaluate Vatz's concept or apply it to my own claim or connect it in some way to my larger point.)

Practice Exercise: Take a look back at your own draft. Where do you use evidence to support your claims? Can you be more specific by offering examples that you can cite? Can you be more specific by defining terms according to the readings we have done as a class? Do you follow the three steps of **1. Attribution** (saying who produced the evidence you're quoting) **2. Explanation** (describing what this evidence means in your own words and any context we need to understand it if we haven't read it ourselves) **3. Connection** (describing why the evidence you offer is important to believing the claim you are making) ? If not, which ones are you missing? How can you fix it?

Issue 5: Being specific about your discourse community

Student Example: Going off of the definitions of rhetoric, discourse, and discourse communities, the bodily discourse community that I have chosen is the yoga community. Yoga is a community that is highly interesting in the body and how to reach a level where you can become in tune with your body and analyze the things needed to help your body feel the best it can.

Explanation of Issue: From this text, it looks as if the student has not selected a specific or localized discourse community and they are thinking that all people interested/who practice yoga belong to the same group. Further down in their essay, however, it becomes clear that they are discussing a specific yoga group with a studio, a website, and an upcoming festival. The issue, then, is not being specific enough for the reader to understand that there are many different discourse communities inside the larger world of yoga.

Example of how to improve: Just like you should be introducing or attributing your evidence before you discuss it, be sure to be specific about your discourse community's unique characteristics before describing how it fits into our larger discussion of rhetoric/discourse. For example:

“Yoga is a practice that encourages practitioners to become more attuned to their own embodied needs for improved posture, strength, balance, and flexibility. There are many yoga schools

worldwide and many forms of practice--some lending themselves to discussions that often become more spiritual in nature. Individual yoga studios like Nirvana Yoga in downtown Tampa FL, constitute local discourse communities inside of these larger networks. Specifically, Nirvana Yoga follows Swales 8 criteria by...and, as a community, does x, y, z.”

Practice Exercise: Take a look at the discourse community you identified in your paper. Sketch a simple flow chart that demonstrates how this community is connected to broader topics and how it contains smaller topics within it. For example, if I tried to write a paper about the “martial arts discourse community” I might find that there are MANY more specific smaller discussions and communities that exist under the umbrella of “martial arts” than there are larger topics above it. For example, my glow chart might look like this:/

Athletics→ martial arts→ specific styles and their histories or cultural impact→ groups that care about martial arts for specific purposes→ [The Cave of Addulam Transformational Training Academy](#)

You want to make sure that you are writing about a specific enough discourse community where you can narrow down the number of active participants and get a real sense of how they communicate. If I chose any of the first three items on my flow chart, I wouldn't be able to do that successfully.

Issue 1 rewrite: The NCET is an organization that began in 1911 with the purpose of bringing English teachers together to achieve the discourse of improving ELA skills across the country. A discourse is a conversation held in a group with similar goals — with this group focusing specifically on the goals of creating dialogue to increase literacy in students. The NCET is an example of a discourse community because it follows Swales 8 criteria.