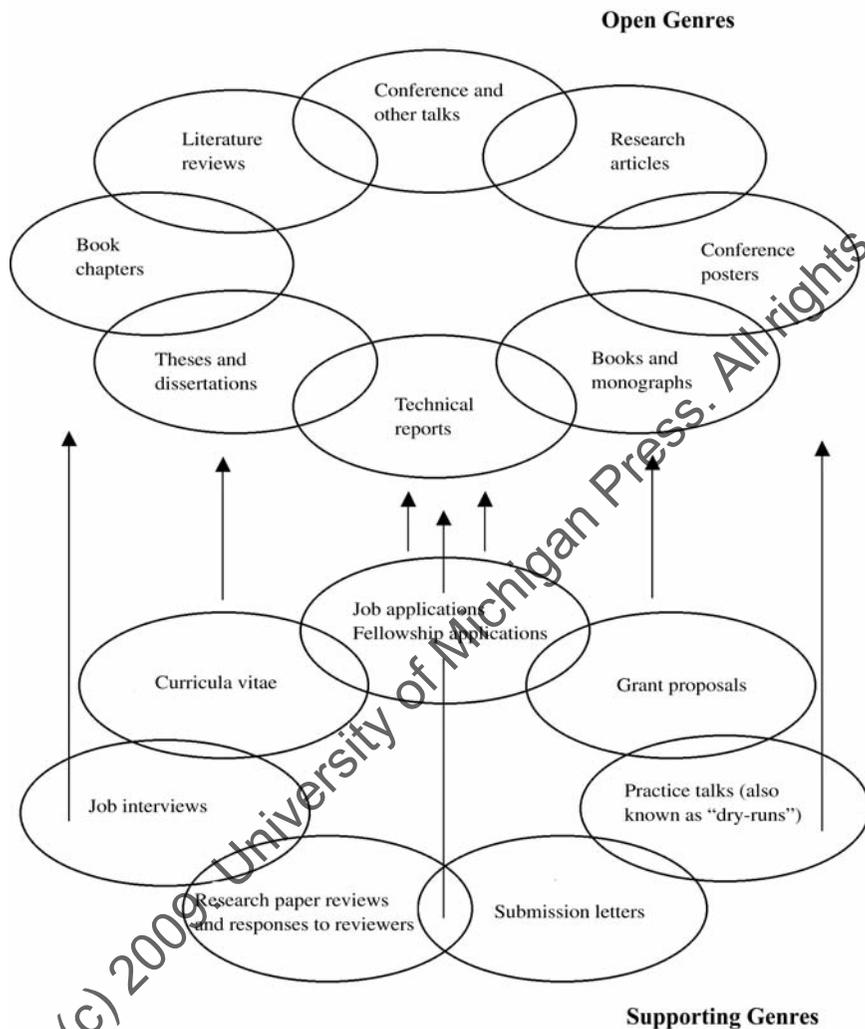


General Introduction to the Volumes

John and Chris first started putting together the book that became *English in Today's Research World: A Writing Guide* (henceforth *ETRW*) in early 1998. The book was largely based on teaching materials we had been developing through the 1990s for our advanced courses in dissertation writing and writing for publication at the University of Michigan. Ten years later, that “research world” and our understanding of its texts and discourses have both changed considerably. This revised and expanded series of volumes is an attempt to respond to those changes. It also attempts to respond to reactions to *ETRW* that have come from instructors and users and that have reached us directly, or through Kelly Sippell, ESL Editor at the University of Michigan Press. One consistent feature of these comments has been that *ETRW* is somewhat unwieldy because it contains too many disparate topics. In thinking about a second edition, therefore, we have made the radical decision to break the original book into several small volumes; in addition, we offer a volume principally designed for instructors and tutors of research English and for those who wish to enter this growing field of specialization. We hope in this way that instructors or independent researcher-users can choose those volumes that are most directly relevant to their own situations at any particular time.

However, we do need to stress that many of the genres we separately deal with are inter-connected. Even if a literature review is originally conceived as a freestanding object, later it is typically reshaped as part of a research project or part of a grant application. Abstracts are always abstracts of some larger text. A conference talk may be based on a dissertation chapter and may end up as an article. Grant proposals lead to technical reports, to dissertations, and to further grant proposals. To indicate these inter-connected networks, the genre network diagram (see Figure 1) we used in *ETRW* is appropriate and even more relevant to this multivolume series.

Figure 1. Academic Genre Network



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One continuing development in the research world has been the increasing predominance of English as the vehicle for communicating research findings. Of late, this trend has been reinforced by policy decisions made by ministries of higher education, universities, and research centers that researchers and scholars will primarily receive credit for publications appearing in English-medium international journals, especially those that are included in the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) database. Indeed, in recent years, the range of “acceptable” publication outlets has often been further narrowed to those ISI journals that have a high impact factor (in other words, those with numerous citations to articles published over the previous three years). Selected countries around the world that have apparently adopted this kind of policy include Spain, the United Kingdom, China, Brazil, Malaysia, Chile, and Sri Lanka. Competition to publish in these high-status restricted outlets is obviously increasingly tough, and the pressures on academics to publish therein are often unreasonable. A further complicating development has been the rise and spread of the so-called “article-compilation” PhD thesis or dissertation in which the candidate is expected to have an article or two published in international journals *before* graduation.

The increasing number of people in today’s Anglophone research world who do not have English as their first language has meant that the traditional distinction between native speakers and non-native speakers (NNS) of English is collapsing. A number of scholars have rightly argued that we need to get rid of this discriminatory division and replace NNS with speakers of English as a lingua franca (ELF) or speakers of English as an additional language (EAL). Today, the more valid and valuable distinctions are between senior researchers and junior researchers, on the one hand, and between those who have a broad proficiency in research English across the four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking and those with a narrow proficiency largely restricted to the written mode, on the other.

There have also been important developments in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and allied fields. The relevant journals have been full of articles analyzing research English, often discussing as well the pedagogical consequences of such studies. This has been particularly true of studies emanating from Spain. Indeed, the first international conference on “Publishing

and presenting research internationally” was held in January 2007 at La Laguna University in the Canary Islands.

The use of corpus linguistic techniques applied to specialized electronic databases or corpora has been on the rise. The number of specialized courses and workshops has greatly expanded, partly as a way of utilizing this new knowledge but more significantly as a response to the increasing demand. Finally, information is much more widely available on the Internet about academic and research English, particularly via search engines such as Google Scholar. As is our custom, we have made much use of relevant research findings in this and our other volumes, and we—and our occasional research assistants—have undertaken discorsal studies when we found gaps in the research literature. In this process, we have also made use of a number of specialized corpora, including Ken Hyland’s corpus of 240 research articles spread across eight disciplines and two others we have constructed at Michigan (one of dental research articles and the other of research articles from perinatology and ultrasound research).

In this new venture, we have revised—often extensively—material from the original textbook, deleting texts and activities that we feel do not work so well and adding new material, at least partly in response to the developments mentioned earlier in this introduction. One concept, however, that we have retained from our previous textbooks is in-depth examinations of specific language options at what seem particularly appropriate points.

As this and other volumes begin to appear, we are always interested in user response, and so we welcome comments at either or both cfeak@umich.edu or jmswales@umich.edu.