Online Commentary to *Creating Contexts: Writing Introductions across Genres*

Christine B. Feak, John Swales, and Vera Irwin

Before we get to the actual commentaries on the tasks, a few preliminary remarks would seem to be in order.

General Comments and Teaching Suggestions

1. Regular users of the textbook (whether teachers, tutors, or independent scholars) may find it more convenient to print out this commentary.
2. As always, we urge selective use of the material in the book because many will find that not all tasks and activities are directly relevant to their working situations; instructors, in particular, may wish to opt for a different order of the material and may well find it helpful on occasion to bring in supplementary texts.
3. This commentary provides answers to the tasks where possible as well as some general remarks on using the material based on our experiences. As you look over our proposed answers as well as those of our assistant, Vera, you may at times disagree with or question our responses. If your research is situated outside the field of applied linguistics, such as on the border between medicine and engineering, your own perspective will often be different from ours or that of our students. This is to be expected when we consider that our views reflect our academic culture as well as the cultures represented in our classrooms—culture here not necessarily country of origin but mainly academic disciplines. As described by Becher and Trowler (2001), these different disciplines can be viewed in terms of "academic tribes and territories," each with its

own traditions and idiosyncratic practices. Different disciplinary perspectives sometimes lead to more questions than answers in relation to the tasks; they may also predictably lead to disagreement and debate, but also to an increased understanding of language, discourse, and rhetoric. We hope that different traditions will be acknowledged and the lack of clear-cut answers seen as an opportunity for discussion and learning. In the end, this commentary should, therefore, be viewed more as a guide than a set of absolute answers or source of hard and fast rules.

4. This Online Commentary on the University of Michigan Press website is obviously a more flexible document than a printed volume can be. We welcome your comments and suggestions, which we may be able to incorporate in occasional updates. We can be most easily reached at cfeak@umich.edu or jmswales@umich.edu.

Some Preliminary Considerations

Task One

Consider these statements about approaches to writing an introduction. With which do you agree (A) or disagree (D)? Mark those about which you are unsure with a question mark (?). Work with a partner if you have one.

In Task One we want to encourage authors to really think about the best time to write an introduction. Many students and new authors mistakenly believe that since the introduction comes first, it should be written first. These same writers are quite surprised to learn that Chris rarely starts her papers by writing the introduction first and rarely writes sections in order. She begins with whatever section is easy and has been known to write as many as a dozen different introductions for one paper; John, however, more typically begins by writing the introduction (having spent a good amount of time thinking about his paper before writing) and does only minimal rewriting once he has finished. Clearly, neither approach is inherently better than the other, although the latter would appear to be more efficient provided that an author can find the right starting point in his or her first attempt. We would suggest that authors begin writing any part of the paper first in order to at least have some sense of accomplishment. Instructors will find that some of their students will already be doing this; for those that are not, they will be relieved that many of us find introductions to be very challenging and that it is perfectly fine to delay writing them until students and new authors have a sense of what their paper has accomplished.

Answers to Task One are completely dependent on authors' own ideas and experience; we are, therefore, hesitant to provide any answers here. Instead, we offer a bit of commentary on a few of the points. For instructors using this material in a class or workshop, we suggest small group work for this task and allowing a lot of time for a larger class discussion. We also suggest that instructors share their own preferences in order to give students a look into their thinking that underlies the writing process.

_____ 1. I don't yet know what my findings and conclusions will be, so there's no point in writing the introduction first.

Many advisors, in fact, recommend that dissertation writers wait until some results are available. For journal articles, we think it also makes sense to look at the data first to get a sense of how to shape the paper. Writing up the results first can really help authors see what they have to work with.

_____ 2. Drafting the introduction gets me thinking about the shape of the paper as a whole, so that's why I write it first.

Whether a writer can do this may depend on the type of paper. This can work well for course papers that are based on the work of others—as long as the writer does not get stuck trying to find that perfect starting point. If, however, the paper requires some data collection, consider our comment on the first point.

_____ 3. The introduction is so challenging, so it's best to leave it till later.

Chris would wholeheartedly agree. Writing is hard enough, so why not start with the easier sections?

_____ 4. The introduction is the hardest part. If I can do that, I can do the rest. So, it's best to begin with it.

Authors can feel quite a sense of accomplishment once the introduction is written. So, we applaud those who can do this. It is, however, important to not be too attached to an introduction written before all of the other parts, as discussed in Comment 8 (Commentary page 5).

_____ 5. Writing the introduction first forces me to carefully consider the previous literature on the topic, and that's valuable.

Yes, to a great extent this is true, but this may also depend on the type of paper being written. It's important to know the literature related to a topic so that new work can be appropriately situated or in a literature review to display familiarity. Introductions to case studies may require few, if any, references to prior literature.

_____ 6. The important parts are my own procedures and findings; I can always work on the introduction and previous literature later.

Yes. The methods and results are often more straightforward since authors know what they did and what they found.

_____ 7. I need to have an introduction before I write any other part. Even a bad introduction is better than none at all.

It is sometimes helpful to have just a few lines so it looks like there is a beginning. Even something as simple as *This paper discusses. . . .*

_____ 8. It's best for me to wait and write the introduction last. If I write it first, it's really hard for me to critically evaluate and/or delete what I have done. So, I might just be wasting time if I try to write the intro first.

It is often difficult to objectively look at one's own writing, particularly if the writing of the text involved a lot of time and effort. Authors are sometimes reluctant to delete or do major revision. However, often they cannot see what should be changed. Many of our students say that they may know something is not quite right, but they are not sure what it is.

The Captive Audience

A comment on our "captive audience" comment on page 2 in the main volume seems in order here. We are not suggesting that students should not be concerned about introductions written for course papers. But unlike papers written for a less highly specified audience who may pick and choose what to read (e.g., journal article readers), the person responsible for evaluating a course paper will read it. It will not be cast aside. Still, the stronger the introduction, the better the first impression and overall positive reaction to the work.

The Overall Shape of an Introduction

Writers sometimes have difficulty moving from more general statements to specific ones. In many of the student papers we look at, the ideas move from *specific* to *general* and then back to *specific* (or they move from *general* to *specific* and then back to *general)*. Such a progression of points or facts sometimes results because the writer simply does not know what to say. To get a good sense of the overall general to specific pattern, it is worth looking at many examples of well-written texts and note the progression of ideas.

As briefly mentioned in the main text, in some fields a specific to general pattern may be more typical. The specific information is often a type of scene setting that focuses on such things as a work of art, a building, or an event. For more detail, jump ahead to the discussion on this type of introduction on pages 96–98 in the main volume.

Task Two

We think the text in Task Two is a pretty good example of how the facts or points in a text can move from general to specific.

Consider this introduction to a Communications course paper entitled "Shaping Public Opinion in the Web 2.0 Era" and written by a first-year graduate student, Ping Yu. Answer the questions at the end. Sentence numbers have been added for ease of analysis.

1. Which sentence(s) would fit in the general to specific progression given in Figure 2?

   Most students categorize the sentences in the text as shown here, but sometimes there is disagreement as to where Sentence 4 belongs. In the end, it really does not matter since the point here is to recognize the overall progression of ideas.

	Sentence numbers
General statement(s):	1 and 2
Detail or commentary related to the general statement(s):	3
More specific detail or commentary:	4 and 5
Broader statement(s), purpose or aims:	6 and 7

2. What is your reaction to the quote before the start of the introduction? Do you think it serves a useful purpose?

Answers to this question vary a lot and seem to divide along disciplinary lines. Writers in the sciences typically say the quote is interesting, but is not something that would be used in their fields. Others in the social sciences and humanities think the quote is highly effective since it captures the reader's interest and encourages him or her to think about new media, such as the Internet, and the impact on old media, such as newspapers. They applaud the student for taking a risk and starting this way. Many of our students say that they would like to use epigraphs but, unfortunately, lack the confidence to do so.

Epigraphs have not received a lot of attention in the research on writing and so not much is known about why and how authors choose them. Possible reasons to use them include

- generating interest
- invoking an authority (well-known individuals are generally the sources of epigraphs—as in the case of Marshall McLuhan and Plato)
- indicating the direction of a text
- creating a lens through which the text should be understood
- showing that the author has read widely.

Indeed, an epigraph can transform what might otherwise be a somewhat bland paper into one that is thought-provoking and interesting to read. The use of an epigraph is not risk free, however. Some problems with epigraphs that we have seen in papers include the following:

- The epigraph may be more interesting than the paper it precedes.
- The epigraph might be too long and lessen, rather than heighten, a reader's interest.
- The epigraph may not be clearly connected to the paper.
- An epigraph from an unknown person may not carry any weight.
- The epigraph may actually contradict a central point in the paper, causing some confusion.

Despite the potential dangers, we encourage our students to experiment with epigraphs in their papers where possible.

3. How good is the fit between the first and second paragraphs? In Sentence 6, what would be the effect of eliminating the phrase ***To explore this issue?***

   It seems like a good fit since the expression establishes a content bridge between the two paragraphs—*this issue* here is whether traditional news media still have the power to strongly shape public opinion. Summary phrases such as this can be quite effective. If the expression were omitted, the start of the second paragraph might seem somewhat abrupt, despite, perhaps, being somewhat expected.

4. What is the purpose of the second paragraph? What term is used to describe such paragraphs? Do you think such paragraphs are helpful?

   The second paragraph outlines the aims of the paper and can be described as an overview. Note the metadiscourse (guiding language) in the paragraph: *this paper examines* and *this paper begins.* Take a look at the Language Focus on guiding readers on pages 86–87 in the main volume for more on this important topic.

5. What would be the effect of simply starting with the second paragraph?

   Some of our students think that the paper would be perfectly fine without the first paragraph. Again, there seem to be some disciplinary preferences here. Many, but not all, in the hard sciences tend to argue the first paragraph is unnecessary. The social scientists for the most part tend to think the first paragraph is essential. They argue that the paper would lack a context and would not reveal the importance of looking at the topic. Thus, a critical reader might wonder what has motivated the discussion. A "captive reader" may have a less positive initial reaction to the paper since without the first paragraph the relevance of the topic is not clear. Coming from a social science perspective ourselves, we would agree.

6. Does the introduction suggest that the student is engaged in the topic and will possibly have something relevant to say about it? Why or why not?

   As outsiders to the field of communications, this is hard to judge. However, the student, Ping Yu, took time to find a quote that she thought would prompt the reader to think about the broader issue of old and new media. She highlights the fact that there is ongoing debate, indicating that the issue is not uncontroversial and therefore is worthy of interest. At the same time, we do not get a sense of where she stands, so it remains open whether she will have something interesting to say or whether her investigation will merely confirm what is perhaps already known. That said, the topic itself seems really promising to us and perhaps we may reasonably anticipate something significant will emerge.

If this task is being used in a workshop or a class, participants could be asked to try to include some stance markers (discussed later in the volume; see page 73) to give the impression of greater engagement with the topic. Alternatively, participants could be given partial sentences that could potentially be added to the text; they could then be asked to evaluate whether these improve the text, and then where a sentence might be advantageously added.

This paper argues that . . .

In this paper I argue that . . .

These media outlets were chosen because . . .

Thus, this paper offers a direct comparison of old and new media that . . .

Language Focus: Old to New Flow of Ideas

Of all the topics we deal with in our writing classes, this one by far opens the most eyes and produces what Chris describes as an **Aha-Erlebnis,** a concept from German that refers to a kind of revelation or insight that suddenly appears and offers a solution to a problem that one is facing. The notion of old to new information flow is both simple and challenging. Despite possibly being able to see what is going on in terms of the old to new link between sentences, writers often find this strategy very difficult to put into practice. At the same time, being aware of this paradigm, writers can at the very least attempt to apply it when they sense something is wrong with a nearly finished text and are not sure what to do. For practice, we suggest that writers take a text that has been criticized as being unclear or poorly written and mark the beginnings and ends of the sentences to see whether they are following old to new information flow. For some writers it is quite a revelation that each of their sentences introduces a new topic at the beginning or that they consistently place the old information at the ends of the sentences. A concerted effort to establish an old to new flow of ideas can often lead to a dramatic improvement in a text. We have worked with students who have been told that their writing was incomprehensible, often by their advisors (one actually saying the student's writing was like a mess of stir-fried food). After several months of work on old to new connections, the students were then able to produce texts that flowed well and clearly conveyed their ideas. Advisors notice the difference.

A focus on old to new also gives insights into the use of passive voice (which many advisors tell students should never be used) and how passive constructions can help maintain a good flow of ideas. The choice of using active or passive voice should not be based on the mistaken notion that passive must be avoided. Rather, the choice should rest on whether active or passive voice would preserve a good flow of ideas. Take this excerpt from a paper, for example.

Old-New Connection Established Using Passive Voice

> Malicious programs that send out information over the Internet are a major threat on the Internet today. These programs, which include spyware and Trojans, have been identified by most businesses as their number one security issue [21], especially when remote access is given to an attacker via a botnet.

Note how the use of active voice would weaken the old-new connection since ***most businesses*** seems to come from nowhere.

> Malicious programs that send out information over the Internet are a major threat on the Internet today. Most businesses have identified these programs, which include spyware and Trojans, as their number one security issue [21], especially when remote access is given to an attacker via a botnet.

While one might argue that the connection between the two sentences is still there because of ***these programs,*** the tighter connection offered by the passive construction is apparent to us.

Task Three

Work though this exercise, which focuses on using old to new information flow to establish a clear connection of ideas. Compare your answers with those of a partner if you can.

Students and workshop participants really like this task and consistently comment on how valuable it was for them to see how writing is not just a matter of producing grammatically correct sentences, but rather involves careful thinking about how to present information so that the reader can easily grasp the message that an author wants to convey. In doing this task they see how the flow of ideas can be unclear even when the grammar is fine.

1. Let's imagine that you are going to write about why people often misjudge how much time it takes to complete a task. You begin with this first sentence.

   What information should the next sentence begin with to meet the reader's expectation? Think about the old to new pattern of organizing information. List the possibilities here.

   When we need to complete a task, we often have a rather unrealistic idea of how long it will take to finish it. One might expect the next sentence to

   - talk about why we have unrealistic ideas
   - give an example of a task that required far more time to complete than one expected, such as writing a paper
   - talk about the consequences of poorly judging one's time.

2. Which of these possibilities for Sentence 2 seems best? Why?

   [2a]The planning fallacy (Bueler et al., 2002) is something we all have had to face.

   [2b]We all have had to deal with the planning fallacy (Bueler et al., 2002).

   [2c]This phenomenon is known as the planning fallacy (Bueler et al., 2002).

   [2d]According to Bueler et al. (2002), the planning fallacy is faced by everyone.

Most students choose 2c because *this phenomenon* refers to misjudging the amount of time needed—information that is familiar. Sentences 2a and 2d abruptly introduce new information (the planning fallacy) that seems to come from nowhere. Although Sentence 2b starts with *We,* which is old information, it is not a strong enough connection to comfortably lead the reader to the planning fallacy. In 2b readers still have to figure out what the planning fallacy is, so in the end there is no clear information link to the previous sentence.

3. Which of these two would you prefer for Sentence 3? Why?

   [3a]We often underestimate the time needed for a number of reasons.

   [3b]The planning fallacy exists for a number of reasons.

   The continuation with *we* does not help focus on the topic. While Sentence 3a is grammatically correct, it does not provide the best connection of ideas. And notice that the connection to *we* is in the first sentence, assuming that 2c is the prereading sentence. Old to new connections should be established in sequential sentences; in other words, there should not be a sentence between the old connections. We suggest 3b as the better alternative. Some students argue that it is bad style to repeat *the planning fallacy*, but in our experience such deliberate back-to-back repetition is common enough and very likely readers will not even notice it, if done for a good reason.

4. What would be a logical content focus for Sentence 4?

   This sentence should offer some reasons for why the planning fallacy exists.

5. Read Versions A and B of the beginning of the introduction. Which do you prefer? Why?

   Students and workshop participants overwhelmingly prefer B because their expectations of what the sentences will discuss are met. The old to new connections are clear.

6. For both Versions A and B, try to guess where the paper might be headed? What would you envision as a Sentence 5 for each version?

   For Version A, if we assume the writer will follow old to new information flow, then Sentence 5 should focus on why people need to overcome this problem, but we have no reason to anticipate this, given what we have read in Sentences 1–4. Thus, in A it is difficult to anticipate what Sentence 5 will discuss. While A is grammatically correct, it does not seem to have a sense of direction; each sentence seems to be introducing new information and so there does not appear to be movement from a *general* point to more *specific* detail related to that point. Sentence 5 is likely to begin with *we* but then could introduce any point connected with the planning fallacy.

   Readers can reasonably anticipate that Sentence 5 of Version B will focus on how a lack of experience causes people to misjudge how much time they need to complete a task.

Task Four

If Task Four is being used in a class or a workshop, time may be an issue. In our classes, students often are not able to finish in less than 45 minutes. One way to successfully use this task is to have students begin working on it in class and then finish it as a homework assignment. In actually writing up a revision, students see that it is sometimes relatively easy to identify problems with the flow of information, but that actually revising the text is quite difficult. We like to share in class several examples of how the text was revised. We do this by having a few students present their revisions of the text to the class and discuss their rationale for the changes made. This can, of course, take up a lot of class time, but it is often well worth the effort. This can also be done in small groups to allow more students to share their work.

This task presents the first two paragraphs of a draft of an introduction from a course paper focusing on the protection of biodiversity. You may notice that the second paragraph reads a bit more smoothly than the first. This underscores the fact that opening paragraphs are particularly challenging to write because there are so many possible starting points. Using what you have learned so far about old to new information flow, revise the first paragraph so that the information connection from one sentence to the next is clear. Make any small changes you *like to the second paragraph as well.*

Here is how one student revised the text. The new information is in italics, and the old or bridging information is in bold.

> ① National parks and reserves are *protected areas (PAs) that play a vital role in conserving biodiversity worldwide*. ② Today **PAs** are defined as "areas of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means" (Dudley and Philips, 2006). ③ Over 100,000 **PAs** (11.5% of the Earth's land surface) are listed in the World Database on Protected Areas (World Resource Institute, 2004) compiled by *the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)*. ④ Founded in 1948, **the IUCN** was not initially concerned with conserving biodiversity. ⑤ However, given the growing threat of habitat loss, in the 1990s **the IUCN** began focusing heavily on *conserving and protecting biodiversity.* ⑥ Early approaches to **protection** consisted mainly of *discouraging human encroachment.* ⑦ **This strategy** mainly followed a "fences and fines" approach in which people are excluded from protected areas by drawing boundaries and penalized if a boundary is crossed.
>
> ⑧ Unfortunately, **traditional approaches such as "fences and fines"** *fail to balance the conservation objective with the livelihoods of local communities denied access to the natural resources in the protected areas.* ⑨ To address **this issue**, beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, the conservation community increasingly realized that protected area management needs to include *support for impoverished people who live in or adjacent to PAs and are dependent on the local natural resources within these areas.* ⑩ **This focus on local needs** led to *the concept of Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs)* (Brandon and Wells, 1992; Mogelgaard, 2003).

Points of Departure: Starting the Introduction

Regardless of whether authors begin writing a paper by writing an introduction or not, at some point, consideration will have to be given to that all-important first sentence. The Hartley (2009) research provides interesting food for thought since most of us tend to adhere to one or only a few kinds of opening strategies.

Task Five

Here are some possible types of first sentences or openings to an introduction. Mark with a check (✓) those that you think would be appropriate in your field for a course paper and/or for a research article for publication or a proposal (consider either a dissertation proposal or a small grant proposal to fund travel to a conference, or another research proposal).

	Course Paper or Project Report	Proposal	Publication
1. surprising idea or statistics, particularly those highlighting a problem or unusual finding	_____	_____	_____
2. a comment on the scope or focus of past or current research	_____	_____	_____
3. a story about real people and their experience (or even one focusing on yourself)	_____	_____	_____
4. common knowledge in your field	_____	_____	_____
5. a definition	_____	_____	_____
6. a question that engages the reader	_____	_____	_____
7. an opinion regarding research findings	_____	_____	_____
8. a reference to a single study, a quote, or a leading scholar	_____	_____	_____
9. a comment on research directions or orientations	_____	_____	_____
10. a statement indicating the purpose of the paper	_____	_____	_____

We have in fact seen all of these openers for course papers, course projects, published papers, and proposals. However, some openers are a little less likely than others. For instance, for a major grant proposal, word and character limitations are so strict that stories are rather unlikely. For course papers, stories may be somewhat more common. We encourage writers to look at 10–20 first sentences in journals in their fields to get a sense of how articles "introduce the introduction." An analysis of first sentences of student papers can also be carried out using MICUSP. And if proposals are available, a similar kind of analysis would be fruitful.

Can you think of any other ways to open?

Here are a few other possibilities: a fictional/hypothetical scenario; a quote from the media or a person not in academia; a reference to popular culture.

Now look at these openings from published papers. Working from this list, label the opening according to the ten types given. Do any of these make you curious about the paper content? Which, if any, suggest that the student author is engaged in the topic?

1. The video game industry has grown at a tremendous rate. <u>Common knowledge in the field</u>
2. In recent years, human-computer interaction researchers have given considerable attention to digital photographic practice as a central feature of contemporary home life in Anglo-American societies. Focus on <u>current research</u>
3. This study has two purposes: (a) to describe the mental health status of frail elders living at home in Michigan and (b) to identify subgroups of individuals, by sociodemographic and clinical characteristics, who are more likely to experience mental health problems. <u>Purpose of the paper</u>
4. When modeling the dynamics of a complex structure, it is often impractical to perform a finite element analysis of the entire structure. <u>Common knowledge in the field</u>
5. Perspectives on the extent of bacterial diversity have expanded sub-

stantially in the past decade. Common knowledge in the field

6. The bamboo fire cycle hypothesis proposed by Keeley and Bond (1999) argues that lightning-ignited wildfire has synchronized flowering and recruitment of bamboos throughout Asia. Reference to a single study
7. The problem of autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) control continues to pose considerable challenges to system designers, especially when the vehicles are underactuated and exhibit large parameter uncertainty. Common knowledge in the field or possibly a comment on research orientation
8. Plastic shrinkage is the dimensional change that occurs in all fresh cement-based materials within the first few hours after placement when the mixture is still plastic and has not yet achieved any significant strength. Definition
9. At first sight the hypothesis that television viewing could be related to the cycles of the moon might appear to be far-fetched, not to say preposterous. Surprising idea
10. It is probably not news to anyone in academia that the experience of submitting one's work for publication—a high stakes game upon which hiring, promotion, and continued employment can depend—is often fraught with frustration and disappointment. Common knowledge

As far as displaying engagement this is really hard to tell on the basis of one sentence. However, one of the openings stands out as revealing a confident writer who seems to have something to say: Number 10. In this opening, the writer is clearly talking to the readers and expresses an awareness of what the audience knows. This opening also suggests the potential for an interesting paper that both of us would like to read. Chris is also quite curious about Number 9. The possibility that the paper will actually argue and maybe even demonstrate that the moon can influence TV viewing behavior makes her want to read that paper.

The task does not provide an example of questions used as openers. So, here we provide one such example from "Sweet future: Fluctuating blood glucose levels affect future discounting," which was published in *Psychological Science* in 2010. Note the interesting use of an epigraph at the beginning. We think it is safe to say that this is not a typical opening, but it does generate interest in the paper.

Sweet Future: Fluctuating Blood Glucose Levels Affect Future Discounting

These high wild hills and rough uneven ways,

Draw out our miles and make them wearisome;

But yet your fair discourse hath been as sugar,

Making the hard way sweet and delectable.

—William Shakespeare (from *Richard II*, Act II, Scene III)

Would a grain of sugar itself, instead of a Shakespearean metaphor, make one's expected future sweeter? Would the mind read fluctuating blood glucose levels? Would a person's daily body-energy budget affect his or her evaluation of future rewards?

Surprisingly little is known about how fluctuating blood glucose levels affect cognitive functions. From a perspective of body-energy regulation, we examined how the daily fluctuation of blood glucose levels regulates evaluation and choice of present versus future rewards, as measured by future, or delay, discount rate.

Wang, X.T., & Dvorak, R.B. (2010). Sweet future: Fluctuating blood glucose levels affect future discounting. *Psychological Science, 21*, 183–188.

Introductions to Course Papers

Quite a lot has been written on this topic, most of which has centered on undergraduate writing. Writers who have had a U.S.-style first-year composition course will probably recall the emphasis on hooking the reader in the introduction or other similar advice. However, what might have been successful in an undergraduate context may not be equally successful in a graduate/professional writing context.

Table 1 gives an idea of how course papers tend to begin at the graduate and upper-level undergraduate level, but should not be interpreted to mean that papers *should* begin this way. Many factors contribute to the content and type of introduction, such as whether a topic was assigned or not, the writer's familiarity and comfort with the material, past experience with the current instructor and other instructors, and the amount of time available to complete the paper. We offer the table simply to give an idea of what has been done in successful papers.

Note that in the third column some introductions are also designated as having an *I* perspective. This means that the writer used *I*. Whether to use *I* or not is a common question among writers. Some of our students have learned that they should never use *I*, but *we* is okay. We think the decision whether or not to use *I* should depend on a number or factors: the genre, journal and discipline preferences, advisor's wishes in the case of graduate students, and the writer's comfort with inserting him- or herself into the text. There are no absolute rules, just preferences and tendencies.

Table 1 can also be sorted according to field to give a sense of the tendencies in the fields represented. The re-sorted table is given here.

Table 1a. Openings in Student Papers (N = 51) Sorted According to Field

Paper Type	Field	Introduction Opening
Argument	Biology	Hypothetical scenario
Argument	Biology	Definition
Argument	Biology	Question
Argument	Biology	Reference to single studies
Proposal	Biology	Evaluation of research finding
Proposal	Biology	Scope of past research
Argument	Civil and Environmental Engineering	Definition
Critique	Civil and Environmental Engineering	Common knowledge

Critique	Civil and Environmental Engineering	Statement of purpose
Other	Civil and Environmental Engineering	Story about a real situation
Report	Civil and Environmental Engineering	Statement of purpose
Report	Civil and Environmental Engineering	Statement of what was done in student's research
Critique	Economics	Reference to single study
Critique	Economics	Reference to single study
Essay	Economics	Scope of past research
Report	Economics	Common knowledge
Report	Economics	Common knowledge
Report	Economics	Reference to single study
Research	Economics	Common knowledge
Research	Economics	Reference to single study
Research	Economics	Scope of past research
Research	Economics	Statement of fact
Research	Economics	Statement of purpose
Report	Mechanical Engineering	Common knowledge
Research	Mechanical Engineering	Comment on research direction
Research	Mechanical Engineering	Common knowledge
Research	Mechanical Engineering	Definition
Research	Mechanical Engineering	Definition
Research	Mechanical Engineering	Hypothetical scenario
Research	Mechanical Engineering	Hypothetical scenario (*I* perspective)
Research	Mechanical Engineering	Reference to popular culture
Research	Mechanical Engineering	Statement of purpose
Critique	Physics	Definition
Prop	Physics	Definition
Report	Physics	Comment on research direction
Report	Physics	Comment on research direction
Report	Physics	Common knowledge
Report	Physics	Common knowledge
Report	Physics	Definition
Report	Physics	Definition
Report	Physics	Statement of purpose (*I* perspective)
Research	Physics	Definition
Research	Physics	Scope of past research
Research	Physics	Statement of what was done in student's research (*I* perspective)
Report	Psychology	Common knowledge/surprising statistics
Report	Psychology	Definition
Report	Psychology	Definition
Report	Psychology	Reference to single study
Research	Psychology	Common knowledge
Research	Psychology	Question

Task Six

Look at Table 1, and consider whether there are any trends or tendencies in terms of the field or type of paper and the type of introduction. To help you do this, complete the chart, which reorganizes the information in the table. The first row has been done for you. After completing the chart, choose four or five papers that you have recently written and look at how you started. Do you think your openings were effective? Why did you choose the openings of those papers?

Type of Opening	Number of Examples	Papers with at Least Two of the Opening Types	Fields with at Least Two of the Opening Types
Comment on research direction	3	Report	Physics
Common knowledge	10	Report Research	Economics Mechanical Engineering Psychology
Definition	11	Argument Critique Report Research	Physics Psychology Mechanical Engineering
Hypothetical scenario	3	Research	Mechanical Engineering
Question	2		
Reference to single study	6	Critique Report	Economics
Scope of past research	4	Research	Economics
Statement of purpose	5	Research Report	Civil Engineering
Story about a real situation	1		

The strong trend here is that our sample of papers displays a noticeable preference for starting with some kind of factual information, common knowledge, or a definition. This is understandable since such openings are low-risk and allow the reader to begin with something that may be familiar—again the old/familiar to new information paradigm is at work here. We can also see that papers in economics, engineering, and psychology have in common certain opening types, namely definitions and common knowledge, but some economics papers also begin with a more narrow focus on research in the field. It is interesting that the one paper that began with a story is from civil engineering. This introduction was very effective at drawing the reader into the paper by connecting the topic to a real-world experience Here is the introduction from that paper.

> I live in a loosely arranged cooperative house of seven people. We have formal arrangements for sharing chores, costs, and cooking, but the individual act of dishwashing is harder to police and thus is not formally shared. There is no dishwashing machine, and the dish policy is that no one is to leave dirty dishes in the sink. If one accepts that the welfare of house residents is affected by the state of the sink—a dirty sink may be smelly, unhealthy, and in the extreme, unusable—then the dishes at this house met the criteria for a collective action problem (CAP): each of the residents has a binary choice about washing the dishes in the sink, is inclined not to do so, and these choices affect other residents of the house.
>
> MICUSP CEE.G3.04.3, Dish-Washing as a Multi-Actor Prisoner's Dilemma

Such personal, real-world focused openings, while not extremely common in academic writing, can be found in a variety of fields, as demonstrated later in the volume (see page 45).

Task Seven

Consider this prompt for a course paper in information science. If you were to respond to this prompt for a course, how would the prompt factor in your introduction?

Option 1 (restating) and Option 4 (beginning with one's purpose) are certainly safe and would serve as adequate openers. However, they could suggest that the writer is not particularly engaged or making any effort to take ownership of the topic. Option 3, challenging the prompt, is a risky strategy, depending on whether the writer is agreeing with the instructor of the course or essentially dismissing what the instructor might view as a highly important matter. Characterizing the relationship between blogging and intellectual property rights as a non-issue may be bold, but in a well-written paper, this boldness may be rewarded. The second option, redefining the prompt, does not mention blogs, which are central to the given topic. This might cause a reader to be curious and interested in how the student will proceed, making a good first impression, and risk-taking here may also be rewarded. Alternatively, if an instructor merely wants to see what the student will argue, Option 2 might give a fast (or less careful) reader the impression that the paper is off topic. In the end, we cannot say that one approach is inherently better than another; it is more a matter of considering the advantages and disadvantages of each and being aware of how these might affect the reader's opinion of the paper. MICUSP has a lot of papers that fall into the Option 1 and 4 categories, as well as many that fall into the Option 2 and 3 categories. Even so, students should think about how the different options contribute to impression management as well as positioning themselves as knowledgeable and capable.

Task Eight

This task is based on a paper from MICUSP. First, read the writing prompt, which was given as an assignment in a graduate psychology class. Then read the introduction to the student's response, and answer the question at the end.

1. How well has the student positioned herself as a knowledgeable member of the discipline?

   It seems to us that the student is largely giving a reaction to the topic and not really giving the appearance of being an expert or having expertise. A student more concerned about positioning him- or herself as having knowledge or expertise might try to do something more than restate portions of the prompt and talk about how he or she feels. It may be more advantageous to problematize, perhaps by indicating how in some countries those with mental illness may not receive the care that they need and that there is a need to address this issue. The *here is why* phrase at the end seems rather odd. However, keep in mind that this example comes from MICUSP, and the paper did receive an A, the highest score.

2. What assumptions has the student made about her audience?

   If you took away the prompt, one main assumption becomes apparent. The writer assumes the reader is familiar with the topic as well as with issues related to the study and treatment of psychopathology.

3. This introduction seems rather conversational in tone. Would you agree? And if so, do you think this is a good strategy for a graduate student?

   This introduction does strike us as rather informal in style, especially *here is why* at the end. The use of contractions, the repeated sentence structure (two sentences begin with *While I think . . . I . . .),* and the rather undemanding vocabulary may contribute to this impression, as well, although in the case of contractions these are increasingly more common in academic writing. Whether or not adopting a conversational style is a good strategy is hard to answer. On the one hand, such a style may allow the writer to get across his or her ideas quite clearly. On the other hand, there may be an expectation that the level of sophistication of the writing should be on par with that of the ideas.

4. What is your reaction to the use of *I* here?

   I does allow the student to take ownership of the ideas, but notice that *I* could be removed with only a negligible effect, as demonstrated here.

   While international research can be useful for psychological researchers in the United States and other countries, researchers in the United States or any other country cannot or should not "require" the study of psychology in adults all over the world. Similarly, there may be a greater demand for the treatment of psychopathology worldwide, but we cannot or should not implement a universal "requirement" to treat psychopathology in adults all over the world. Here is why.

Task Nine

An international student has asked several friends for some feedback on this introduction to an information science course paper that focuses on email overload.

We think each of the reactions to the paper has some merit. As Student 1 points out, some information seems irrelevant. Student 2's suggestion that the first paragraph be eliminated seems a bit harsh, but not completely unwarranted; perhaps a better strategy would be to shorten the first paragraph so that the reader could see the focus more quickly. Taking Student 1's recommendation might do the trick. Student 3 is looking for the good, which can give the writer confidence but does not offer a lot of constructive suggestions for improving the introduction. We like the observation that the connection to the real world may be effective. Finally, Student 4 does direct the student to consider eliminating unnecessary information and more effectively building off the quotes. Perhaps having information prominent (non-integral) rather than author prominent citations would help here?

We would also suggest that Tze-Hsiang try to indicate at the end of the introduction what he will do in the paper. As it stands, it is not clear what he will discuss. Here is how Tze-Hsiang revised his introduction to his paper, which received an A.

1.Introduction

① As a product of information technology, electronic mail (e-mail) is a widely used communication medium for task cooperation and personal interaction. ② Nowadays, it's safe to say that e-mail has become extremely important in both our personal and professional lives. ③ Moreover, e-mail has improved the lives of those who use it. ④ According to Mano and Mesch (2009), "e-mail, as a technological means to improve the lives of individuals and employees, has proved beneficial in many areas, providing better use of time, and fluidity in correspondence"(p. 68). ⑤ However, while people experience many advantages in communicating via e-mail, many disadvantages exist in this technology. ⑥ For instance, Pliskin (1989) found that "when E-mail works well it is a user's dream, i.e. a tool that help cope with geographical and temporal boundaries. ⑦ Unfortunately, E-mail can also be a user's nightmare." (p. 271) ⑧ This suggests that e-mail has it own limitations and drawbacks.

⑨ The broader study of the impacts of contemporary information technologies reveals that e-mail is now more than just a communication tool for users. ⑩ According to Whittaker and Sidner (1996), "empirical data show however, that although email was originally designed as a communications applications, it is now being used for additional functions that is was not designed for, such as task management and personal archiving. ⑪ These additional functions lead to what we call e-mail overload" (p. 276). ⑫ E-mail overload is prevalent among current e-mail users who use it for task management, personal archiving and asynchronous communication. ⑬ E-mail overload is a serious issue because it can lead to problems with personal information management. ⑭ Too many kinds of e-mail, such as conversational threads, outstanding tasks and unread documents, create clutter in a user's inbox (Whittaker and Sidner, 1996, p. 276). ⑮ This clutter causes users a great deal of stress and sometimes even leads to the loss of information or missed information. ⑯ In this paper, I will document the causes of e-mail overload at the University of Michigan School of Information Science and introduce a case study of three students who are dealing with this phenomenon. ⑰ This case study will categorize user strategies for dealing with e-mail overload and argue that approaches can be taken to address the volume of e-mail that students receive each week.

Creating Contexts: Writing Introductions across Genres
Christine B. Feak & John M. Swales
http://www.press.umich.edu/titleDetailDesc.do?id=3367288
Michigan ELT, 2011

Introductions to Book Reviews

Book reviews are written both as course papers and as texts for publication, and so they serve as a nice bridge between pedagogical (classroom) genres and research genres. Book reviews are more common in some fields as course assignments than in others and more likely to be a first publication for individuals in certain fields, such as the social sciences, than for others in the harder sciences. Thus, this section of the volume may not initially appear to be relevant for writers in all disciplines. We believe, however, that this section can help authors see how evaluative texts begin and can suggest openers that may be useful for, say, manuscript or other reviews in a variety of fields.

We think it is noteworthy that student writers of book reviews display a much narrower range of openings than the published authors, a point that is well-worth discussing in a class or workshop.

Task Ten

As identified by Motta-Roth (1998) and others, different kinds of information can provide the backdrop for published book reviews, some examples of which are given here. The different kinds of information can be used alone or in combination with each other. Which of these would you likely choose for a book review for publication in a journal in your field? Which do you think could also be used in a book review for a course in your field? Why?

Answers here will vary depending on one's discipline and experience. For instance, we have learned over the years that in engineering, book reviews are not lengthy texts and are not highly evaluative. They are more like summaries that may also provide information on price. We have also found that most graduate students in our classes (regardless of the discipline) never or rarely read book reviews, and so do not know how to respond. A small number of our students do read book reviews and these same students have often written at least one book review for a class.

Before working with this task in class, Chris asks students to bring one or two book reviews to class (or download them while in class) and then asks them to discuss issues of content, evaluation, style, length, and any other features that seem relevant. She also shares reviews of her and John's textbooks and discusses her reactions to the comments. This is particularly interesting for students who can see how a review is received by a book author and then think about the need to consider the book author when writing the review. Students are also surprised that Chris in particular is quite interested in negative, but fair, criticisms of her work, her reasoning being that often there is much more to learn from the negative than the positive—as long as the negative is reasonable and well-supported.

Here are our responses to the task.

1. Summarizing the focus

   This is very common among all book reviews.

2. Describing potential readership or talking about "the reader"

   This is often hard for junior scholars since it requires a fairly good awareness of one's field and a bit of confidence to even suggest that the reviewer knows what typical readers are like or would expect.

3. Providing information about the author(s)

   This would work if the writer's goal is to display familiarity with other scholars in the field. By giving information about the book author, which is predictably positive, the writer may be setting the stage for praise.

4. Making generalizations about the topic

   This can be effective for all book reviews since generalizations can create a context for the review.

5. Establishing the place of the book in the field

   This requires that the writer be very familiar with the field and have a good grasp of its history. Such an opening may be quite challenging for a junior scholar.

6. Evaluating the book

   As the example indicates, providing an evaluation in the opening sentence clearly sets the tone for the remainder of the review. Readers have little doubt about the writer's overall impression of the book.

Offering an evaluation before anything is known about the book or the area of research may not be the best strategy, however. Notice that the example first focuses on the author of the book, which likely conveys relevant content information to others in the field.

Language Focus: *As*

This first language focus delves into a small word that initially may seem hardly worthy of attention. Looking closer, however, we have found this focus to be quite useful for students and other writers. It is clear that *as* has many functions, not all of which may be familiar to writers. Although some of our students are familiar with many of the uses of ***as,*** most tend to use it primarily as a synonym for ***because*** or perhaps in linking clauses, for example, ***as shown in Figure 1.*** While we were selecting book review excerpts for the volume, we were struck by how *as* was used and decided some intensive treatment at this point in the text might be worthwhile. Students find the third example of *as* usage very helpful since this offers them a way to position themselves as having (or perhaps strategically lacking) some authority in relation to a topic; for example, ***as a graduate student, I find this book very challenging to understand.*** Our experience working on *as* was a good reminder that even something so small can be of interest to students. We encourage teachers to find other vocabulary that is vexing students and create some materials to help them deal with it. In this regard, Chris has had a lot of success developing tasks on vocabulary that students say they would like to use, but are really unsure of *how* to use them.

Task Eleven

Write two short introductions to a review of Creating Contexts: Writing Introductions across Genres *for two different audiences: (1) readers of a journal in your field and (2) your instructor or students at your institution.*

We would have a hard time writing a review of our own work and so we asked our assistant, Vera, to try her hand at writing two reviews. Needless to say, as our assistant, she is not unbiased, but we thought it would be interesting to see how she would approach the task.

An introduction to a book review written for students

> *Creating Contexts: Writing Introductions across Genres* by Christine B. Feak and John M. Swales will be particularly valued by authors just starting their academic journey. The volume, just one in a series of publications on academic writing, is intended to guide the reader through the ins and outs of writing introductions across academic genres and disciplines. This small but insightful volume is full of practical writing advice, real-life examples, and hands-on tasks that are designed to raise the reader's awareness of various aspects of writing introductions in their own disciplines. As such, the volume can be used both for self-study and as a text in a course on academic writing, suitable both for native and non-native speaker audiences.

An introduction to a book review written for publication

> Christine B. Feak and John M. Swales have long established themselves as leading authors of textbooks and materials on English in academia. *Creating Contexts: Writing Introductions across Genres* is the third in a series of publications on academic writing, following earlier volumes on writing of academic abstracts and literature reviews. The present volume takes the readers through ins and outs of writing introductions across academic genres and disciplines and can be used as a resource both for individual scholars searching for advice on writing and for instructors teaching courses on academic English to graduate students and junior researchers.

Introductions to Critiques and Reviews of Journal Articles and Book Chapters

Apart from book reviews, students and scholars may also be involved in reviewing shorter works such as book chapters, journal articles, or manuscripts submitted for publication. There are some similarities between reviews of the latter group and book reviews in terms of the evaluation that is done. However, published book reviews are reviews of both a product and someone's intellectual work that are easily accessed via journal websites and other electronic journal databases. The other kinds of reviews can be a bit more difficult to find and hence we refer to them as occluded. We encourage writers to ask colleagues, advisors, and friends to share their reviews of their work, both good and bad, along with reviews they have written.

Chris usually brings to classes and workshops manuscript reviews that she has written in order to discuss her rationale for what she said and how. As with book reviews, she also shares those that she has received. She also strongly suggests that students and workshop participants gain other perspectives on the writing of reviews by asking others to share and discuss their reviews with them.

Task Twelve

Read this introduction to a manuscript review for a business journal. Answer the questions at the end.

1. Does the reviewer seem to be addressing the manuscript author in a respectful manner? Why or why not?

   We think the review is respectful. In the introductory paragraphs we first see a summary and then some positive commentary. The writer is careful not to be strongly negative, while indicating that the paper has some shortcomings. Notice that the writer did not say that the manuscript author failed, but keeps the focus on the study.

2. Has the reviewer adequately prepared the manuscript author for the negative comments? What is your reaction to the phrase *having said this?*

   It is always nice to hear something good about one's work before reading the negative, and this strategy is often used to ease the "pain" of the criticism and to try to save the face of the recipient. So, we think the writer has reasonably prepared the author of the manuscript. *Having said* this does mark the start of the negative commentary and a reader should know that this is coming. The use of that expression seems a bit more gentle than beginning with *however* or *unfortunately.*

3. Underline the instances of evaluative statements (positive or negative).

   Positive

   - several strengths in this study
   - the research questions that the study raises are quite interesting
   - this study tackles a fresh issue that has not been fully studied in our field, and the author(s) seem to have made a conscious effort to obtain quality data to confirm the hypotheses
   - the empirical investigations have been fairly well conducted
   - this study has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to the literature

   Negative

   - this study is not sufficiently developed
   - there are several issues, which are not necessarily serious, but which must be addressed

4. What verb tense is primarily used in the introduction?

   Present tense

5. What verbs does the reviewer use to introduce the content of the manuscript? What verbs does the reviewer use to introduce his opinion?

Verbs Introducing Manuscript Content	*Verbs Introducing Author's Opinion*
poses	pleased to find
asks	believe
provides	suggest

6. In Sentence 9, the reviewer states that *there are several issues, which are not necessarily serious, but which must be addressed.* How strong is the statement? Do you view it as very negative, somewhat negative, or neutral? Why did the reviewer include *which are not necessarily serious?*

   The reviewer is trying to not be overly negative in stating that the manuscript still needs work and wants to mitigate the comment by using *not necessarily serious.* We think this expression could serve to prevent the manuscript author from having an initial strong negative reaction, which could cloud the reading of the remaining commentary. For more on how writers react to criticism, look at the interview on pages 106–108 of the main volume.

7. Would your opinion of Sentence 9 be different, if it used the phrase *there are several problems?*

   Somehow *problems* seem more serious than *issues.* Even more serious would be *flaws.*

   John thinks that *weaknesses* would be rather negative.

8. Note the use of *I* in the second and third paragraphs. Does this seem appropriate? What is the effect of using *I*?

   We regularly use *I* in our reviews since the whole point of a review is to give one's personal assessment. Chris, in particular, uses *I* because she thinks this makes her review a bit more friendly and helps the manuscript author to see that her comments are intended to be helpful. So, she prefers *I think the manuscript needs to be shortened* as opposed to *The manuscript needs to be shortened.* The use of *I* also makes clear that the reviewer takes ownership and responsibility for the commentary.

9. What do you think Paragraph 4 will focus on?

   Paragraph 4 discusses the major concern the reviewer had with the study. Here is how it begins. Note how he first indicates the perspective is one of someone who is not an IPR expert and how this explains his criticism. He states his concern, the reason it is important, and then goes on to suggest how the perceived problem could be addressed.

First, I have a serious doubt as to whether trademark is a good surrogate for downstream capabilities. I am no expert in IPR, and thus I was not convinced that acquiring a trademark signals a vendor's downstream capabilities. I believe most readers, who have little background knowledge in IPR like me, will have similar doubts. Therefore, I would like to suggest that the author(s) do two things. First, . . .

10. How do reviewers in your field start their manuscript reviews? Ask an experienced reviewer for some input, if you do not know.

Answers here are completely dependent on the field and the individual. Chris always starts by summarizing the aims of the paper and the major conclusions. She does this to indicate to the manuscript authors and the editor what she has understood and that this understanding has shaped her evaluation. Many reviewers do the same.

Task Thirteen

Some statements from the introductions of manuscript reviews indicate the overall direction of the review follow. Evaluate the statements as very negative (—), *negative* (–), *neutral* (+/–), *positive* (+), *or very positive* (++).

++ 1. Despite its minor shortcomings this is a superb study.

– 2. I believe this paper is flawed, perhaps fatally flawed, because. . . .

+/– 3. Overall, this is a useful paper as there is a paucity of information in the literature on this topic.

– 4. As with most surveys, this article has its weaknesses.

– 5. The research described in this paper is limited in that it has sacrificed breadth for depth of analysis.

– 6. This article suffers from a number of limitations that need to be addressed.

+ 7. This is a great paper that is well worth publishing as soon as possible provided the authors can submit further supporting data.

+/– 8. This is a nicely designed study with interesting implications.

_+/–_ 9. This is a carefully done study; the data are clean and the conclusions are supported.

_+_ 10. This is a very well-written paper, and recommended for publication with a few edits and additions.

_–_ 11. Although this is a carefully conducted study, the results and conclusions need to be interpreted with extreme caution.

_++_ 12. This paper is a welcome contribution to a growing awareness of the need for more research in this area.

Mark with a check (✓) the adjectives that would strongly suggest *the paper be published.*

The point of this task is to help writers think about using evaluative adjectives to reveal their stance (more on this can be found later on pages 73–75 in the main volume). Many of our students are really reluctant to indicate their stance, and so this task can help initiate some discussion on this aspect of academic writing.

Here are our choices for modifiers that would strongly suggest the paper be published. The adjectives we did not select do not clearly indicate to us that a reviewer will recommend publication, but neither do they suggest that a paper *should not* be published. When using this task in a workshop or class, Chris asks students to expand the list and then asks them to come up with adjectives that may hint at rejection.

_✓_ impressive	____ informative	____ nice
____ useful	_✓_ worthwhile	_✓_ outstanding
____ interesting	____ respectable	____ unusual
____ painstaking	_✓_ laudable	____ practical

Introductions to Journal Articles

Those of us who have been involved in English for Academic Purposes are quite familiar with the research on article introductions, much of which can be traced back to John's Create a Research Space (CaRS) model, first elaborated in *Aspects of Article Introductions* and published (or perhaps one should say issued) by the Language Studies Unit at the University of Aston in Birmingham, England. The material in this section is offered as a starting point for considering how a research article (RA) introduction can be prepared. We have tried to stress in the volume that the CaRS model is not the "way" nor should it be considered a template for how to write an introduction; instead, if used at all, it should be adjusted in light of disciplinary traditions, the potential readership—e.g., mono- or interdisciplinary), the nature of the study presented, and the aims of author(s). These and other elements contribute to all of the variations of the CaRS model that have been reported in the literature. In regard to the many versions of the CaRS model proposed, John and Chris have been known to poke a bit of fun at the acronyms that have been or could be proposed—the MaRS, BaRS, or SCaRS model anyone? Or how about the STaRS model? More seriously, however, the CaRS model has proven to be invaluable to new graduate students, junior scholars, and even advisors attempting to guide their students' writing. We always ask students to have available three or four introductions from RAs in their fields during class discussion since it is important that they evaluate our conclusions and claims with what they see in their respective disciplines. (Again, given that many classrooms have wireless internet connections, having a sample to look at often requires very little effort.) Some students bring to class their own published RAs or RAs in progress as well as RAs written by their research group. When it comes to choosing sample RAs, it should be stressed that the RAs do not need to be written by native speakers. A good sample of RA introductions should include those written by *experienced* members of the field, regardless of whether English is their first or an additional language.

On the point of how readers actually read, we know from published research and comments in our workshops and classes that readers will often look at the title, jump to the references, and then go to the discussion. As one

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http://www.press.umich.edu/titleDetailDesc.do?id=3367288
Michigan ELT, 2011

professor in a writing for publication workshop indicated, "The references help me see whether the author has read the right stuff, which then allows me to judge whether the paper is credible or not." A couple of others in this same workshop said that they look for their names. Another indicated that he looks only at the figures and the tables. Thus, as we write, we need to take into account that in general readers do not read linearly and so we cannot rely on information given in one section being available to the reader in another.

Figure 3 reflects a perspective that Chris repeatedly heard at a Council of Science Editors meeting a few years ago. We think the figure really highlights the need to think about which sections are most important in an RA (and hence often difficult to write). The figure also shows that one may usefully begin writing a paper by focusing on the connected results and discussion sections. Finally, some authors actually do write as if their discussion does emerge from the introduction, as shown in this example from consumer economics.

End of the Introduction

Within this paper, we attempt to take a fresh look at the demand side of counterfeiting. Specifically, we aim to consolidate existing findings and to develop a comprehensive, yet parsimonious model of the antecedents and drivers of volitional purchase of fake products. Using the theory of planned behavior as theoretical framework, we develop a conceptual model that explains the purchase intention for counterfeits and uses a sample of 1040 Austrian consumers to test its explanatory power.

Beginning of the Discussion

The model, which was based on past research and our theoretical considerations, was confirmed. Moreover, the Theory of Planned Behavior makes a strong contribution towards explaining the demand for fake products. The strongest influence on the intention to buy fake products comes from perceived behavioral control. The fewer the obstacles to purchase counterfeits in terms of time needed to find them, geographic barriers, etc., the more likely consumers will intend to buy them. Another strong effect was observed, when looking at the perception of being a smart shopper. Given these two results, it appears more useful to address the consumer using affective measures rather than cognitive.

Penz, E., Stöttinger, B. (2005), "Forget the real thing—take the copy! An explanatory model for the volitional purchase of counterfeit products," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 32, 568–575.

We cannot stress enough how important it is to anticipate how readers will actually read a text and incorporate this understanding into the writing process.

Task Fourteen

What are some advantages of envisioning a connection between the introduction and the discussion section of your RA? Can you think of any disadvantages? Have you noticed this connection in published RA introductions? If you are not sure, look at a few published RAs in your field.

One advantage of considering the connection is that if you write the introduction before the discussion, you have a possible starting point when you begin writing the latter. Some of our students have also said that if they are having trouble with both parts, to start they initially write a thin introduction consisting only of something like, "This paper describes. . . . " They then would begin their discussion with "In this paper we presented. . . . " Essentially, they are saying that they repeat the same basic sentence. And with the results and discussion in the middle, no one would notice the repetition. This makes sense to some extent.

The disadvantage is that we know readers do not necessarily go through a text linearly and may read nothing but the abstract and the discussion, so a direct line from the introduction to the discussion may not contribute to the reading of the paper. In fact, by beginning the discussion with a description of what the paper investigated, a writer would then have to assume that the motivation for doing the work would be clear to the reader.

Task Fifteen

Put together a small reference collection (i.e., a corpus) of 5–15 examples of introductions from one or more journals in your area.

We cannot give answers to this task, but we can say this is a good homework assignment. Students who have time will often examine more than the maximum 15 suggested.

The criticisms of introductions presented after Task Fifteen seem to cut across fields and are directed at junior scholars and seasoned experts alike. The fact that very few authors are spared these criticisms may seem somewhat surprising. It would be easy to assume that it is only inexperienced authors or English as an international language authors who struggle, since the final published papers often look very good. No doubt, the more experience an author has, the more likely he or she will meet the reviewers' expectations, but even veterans sometimes fail to suitably contextualize their work.

Task Sixteen

Read these five short introductions from the fields of assessment, electrical engineering, education, medicine, and visual culture.

Task Sixteen takes a long time to complete, at least an hour, but it is well worth the effort. We have used this task in all levels of our writing courses at the University of Michigan and have used it in workshops for graduate students and professionals outside our university. Students and workshop participants like reading all of the introductions; some instructors who have trialed the material and reviewers have, unfortunately, been less enthusiastic about our choices here. At issue here are Examples 3 and 5, which we will discuss in more detail later. These two examples are challenging for students, but they really appreciate the insights that each offers. Of course, if time is an issue, it is possible to work with only two or three of the introductions.

1. Kleitman, S. and Stankov, L. (2007). Self-confidence and metacognitive processes. *Learning and Individual Differences, 17*(2), 161–173.

   Organization:
   1. Statements of purpose
   2. How the aims/purpose will be met and some expected outcomes (Sentence 7)

Notes: The introduction is completely lacking a context that explains the motivation for the study or the importance of the topic. Readers need to assume or should already know why this topic is worthy of investigation. No references to prior work are given to demonstrate how the study extends the knowledge of the field or addresses a need. There are a lot of instances of *shall*, which do not seem necessary. It is not hard to find papers that begin as this paper does, but we question whether this strategy results in a successful introduction. Keep in mind, however, that the paper was published. Some of our students think the introduction is fine, but most agree with us.

2. Nayak. J. and Sahu, S.N. (2006). Electrical characteristics of GaAs nanocrystalline thin film. *Solid-State Electronics*, *50*(2), 164–169.

Organization:
1. Establishing the topic together with some reference to prior literature
2. A gap in the research (Sentence 6)
3. Filling the gap and highlighting that this is the first published report

Notes: The introduction looks a lot like the CaRS model, which is discussed in more detail later. Experienced writers will likely recognize the organization, even if the content is unfamiliar. Surprisingly, less experienced writers do not immediately recognize the pattern, even though they may have been reading published RAs. Some of these less experienced writers have revealed that the content gets in the way, while others simply do not see an organizing scheme.

3. Meyer, K.A. (2006) When topics are controversial: is it better to discuss them face-to-face or online? *Innovative Higher Education*, *31*(3), 175–186.

Organization:
1. Scene setting story about the author's experience that led to the paper
2. The aims/purpose of the study

Notes: The introduction is couched in the author's personal experience. There is only one reference to a publication, *The Tipping*

Point, which, in fact, does not focus on higher education. The author, Malcolm Gladwell, is a highly respected journalist whose readers include academics and non-academics alike. Thus, *The Tipping Point* is not a typical kind of reference to a published RA or a scholarly book directed only at scholars. The introduction also seems rather conversational—as if the author were writing as she was thinking or chatting with someone about how she got the idea for her study.

Our students are very mixed in their reactions to this introduction. For some, especially those in the hard sciences and engineering, it is so different from what is done in their fields that they think it does not represent very serious scholarship. Students in the social sciences and the humanities indicate that they have seen this kind of introduction before, but these students disagree as to whether they can have such personal introductions or only very established scholars can do this. Chris usually asks her students which of the five introductions in the task likely represents the real story behind the research. Do the other four tell the real story or are they a work of fiction that suggests the authors read papers in the field, identified a gap or problem, and then conducted research to address the gap? In the end, the students conclude that this text probably tells readers how the research actually did come about. Some wish that they could write an introduction like this rather than spend time creating an introduction that gives no sense of the true origins of their work (e.g., an accident, a directive from an advisor, or just a wild idea).

4. Newman, A.W., Wright, S.W., Wrenn, K.D., Bernard, A. (2005). Should physicians have facial piercings? *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, *20*(3), 213–218.

Organization: 1. Paragraph 1: background detail including related research on physician appearance
2. Paragraph 2: background detail including research on body piercing trends

3. Paragraph 3: the link between topic 1 and topic 2 together with the aims and method of the study

Notes: The introduction seems somewhat forced in the sense that physician appearance is addressed in one paragraph and the broader trend of body piercing is discussed in the second. Thus, there appears to be a move from commentary on a specific group to commentary on a trend in the general population. The two are brought together in the third paragraph.

We are not sure if this is the most elegant way to handle the topic. Our students have suggested that the authors could have tried to integrate the topics. Discussion in one of Chris' classes produced this integration of Paragraphs 1 and 2—not bad for a class of relatively new graduate students in engineering and education. If you are using this material in a class, share this version with your students and see what they think.

Given the importance of physician appearance, the recent trend toward body piercing and the potential impact of this current fashion is worthy of investigation. This issue is especially relevant when we consider the prevalence of body piercing among the younger generation, which one estimate has suggested to be as much as 51 percent of the undergraduate student population, and the attitudes toward body piercing in the larger patient and visitor population.

5. Kissel, L. (2008). The terrain of the long take. *Journal of Visual Culture 7*(3), 349–361.

Organization: 1. Sentences 1–6: comments on creating a picture
2. Sentences 7–8: comments on the *long take* in documentaries
3. Sentences 9–10: a definition of the concept (the *long take*)
4. Sentences 11–12: the author situating herself in the text and establishing herself as an artist
5. Sentences 13–24: the author explicating her experience with the *long take*

This introduction is really different from the others. It is difficult to label the paragraphs or organization, but it does seem to move from the broader issue of creating a picture to the more specific *long take* in film and then even more specifically to the author's own experience.

Notes: How can a paper start with *but?* Opening a paper with *but* is really unusual since for *but* to make sense, something must have been stated before. Chris really likes this part of the introduction because the students themselves see how the text is hard to understand without a context, which is directly related to writing an introduction; a paper often does not make sense in the absence of a context. John, however, remains surprised it got published with the opening. This single sentence nicely reveals why building a context or backdrop for a paper is so important. Our students are so focused on the use of *but* and the discussion surrounding it that it does not matter that the rest of the introduction is hard to follow. It is worth pointing out, however, that this text is similar to Number 3 in the sense that the author is clearly present in the text and once the author inserts herself in Sentence 11, there are no references to other literature.

Unless readers are members of the target discipline of these papers, reader reactions here may reflect personal preference or interest more than anything else. That said, the first example did evoke a *so what* reaction since we cannot see the relevance of the study and the potential contribution to the body of existing literature. Neither of us was particularly keen on reading the paper, although the topic, self-confidence, is an interesting one. Overall, for both of us the introduction was off-putting. Example 4, focusing on body piercing, was just simply interesting to us because of the topic. So, we did not react with a *so what.* The introduction itself, however, was not particularly captivating. We really were curious about the paper presented in Example 3; the introduction suggested that there was a real person behind the paper who seems to have an interesting story to tell about difficult discussions. Example 2 simply struck us as a typical introduction focusing on a gap in the research in the field. Finally, in her first reading of Example 5, Chris was completely confused, but after subsequent readings, she began to appreciate the author's scene setting strategy. To her, the introduction itself seemed like a *long take* (also known as a cover shot in film studies) that facilitated the more detailed discussion. John, on the other hand, did not care for the introduction at all and did in fact say *so what.*

Task Seventeen

Consider each of these perspectives on citations. With which do you agree (A) or disagree (D)? Mark those about which you are unsure with a question mark (?).

We are aware that this task may seem out of place since there is a much longer treatment of citations on pages 59–66 in the main volume. But it makes sense to us to have a brief preview and discussion of citation in general before going into some of the detail regarding types of citations and other related matters. This task also leads nicely into Task Eighteen, which features an introduction from a paper on self-citation.

__A__ 1. Citations help authors to acknowledge the intellectual property of others and avoid the problem of plagiarism.

Yes, the issue of intellectual property is more important than ever. For a very thought-provoking discussion on this, we suggest reading an editorial by Richard Gallagher (2009) that discusses "bibliographic negligence," a problem noted by Gene Garfield in 1991. In this piece Gallagher reintroduces Garfield's contention that "authors sign a pledge or oath that they have done a minimal search of the literature and that to the best of their knowledge there is no other relevant work." Here are the references for the Gallagher and Garfield texts.

Gallagher, R. (2009). Citation Violations. *The Scientist,* 23(5), 13.

Garfield, E. (1991). Bibliographic Negligence: A Serious Transgression. *The Scientist,* 5(23), 14.

__A__ 2. Authors show respect to other scholars by including a citation to the previous work.

This is definitely true in our field of applied linguistics. Our students in the social sciences and the humanities report this as well. However, strict space limitations allocated to articles can prevent the inclusion of a citation intended as a sign of respect.

__A__ 3. There is homogeneity in the papers that are cited in published work on a particular topic. Authors tend to cite the same small percentage of papers in their field.

If you need proof of this, look at four or five recent published articles on article introductions in applied linguistics journals well as papers from philosophy or literary criticism.

__A__ 4. Citations add strength to an author's ideas and claims.

Yes. Not only do they provide strength, they also indicate how the new work fits with and extends the old. This is related to Point 9 in this task.

__A__ 5. Citations reflect social networks: Authors often refer to papers by authors with whom they are personally acquainted.

At this point in the task, it should be quite clear that the choice of citation is not neutral in all cases. We do often cite our friends, who generally agree with our work, and less likely our rivals. This may also account for Point 3.

__A__ 6. The choice of citations may be motivated by various kinds of pressure. For instance, graduate students may feel compelled to cite advisors, while other authors may avoid citations to the work of competing research groups.

Yes, citations can promote the work of one's research group, department, or institution. It makes sense that graduate students would cite the work of their advisors since the interests of each would likely overlap. Sometimes our students tell us that their advisors instruct them not to promote the work of rival groups, unless necessary.

__A__ 7. Citations help an author demonstrate that he or she is a well-informed member of a discipline or interdisciplinary field.

Yes, if an author appears to have read the right papers and included them in his or her paper, the author gains credibility.

? 8. Self-citation can be beneficial for an author.

This is really hard to say. Too much self-citation seems overly self-promotional or boastful and may weaken an author's credibility. However, in some fields self-citation may be completely acceptable; and if few or no other papers have been published in an area, there may be little choice but to self-cite.

A 9. Authors use citations to demonstrate how their work advances the knowledge base of a field.

Absolutely. This is extremely important. If the research does not advance the existing work, then it may not be worthy of publication.

Task Eighteen

Read the introduction, and work through the accompanying questions and mini-tasks. The paragraphs and sentences have been numbered for ease of analysis.

Our students are often very interested in the topic of self-citation and enjoy working through this task, despite its length. They are especially surprised by the use of self-citation in a paper on self-citation, which offers an opportunity to refer back to the discussion of Point 8 in Task Seventeen. If the number of questions seems overwhelming, choose a subset to work with.

1. What is the purpose of each of the paragraphs?

Paragraph 1 Background explanation of citation analysis and its uses; some references to other work in support of the claims

Paragraph 2 A more specific focus on citations and the impact of the frequency of citation on the perception of quality; references to other work in support of the claims

Paragraph 3 An even more specific focus on self-citations and the notion that they should be ignored when determining the number of times a paper is cited (and hence determining its quality); references to other work in support of the claims

Paragraph 4 A focus on the specific absence of research on self-citation and an indication of the need for research on the efficacy of self-citation (the gap in the research on citation analysis); an announcement of the purpose of the paper

2. The author asks a number of questions at the end. What do you think of this strategy? Could you do this in an RA in your field?

   This may be a matter of personal preference and the traditions of the journal or field. However, we generally suggest that writers avoid a series of questions since they do not provide relevant information and may cause the reader to make a conclusion before reading any of the paper. It also strikes us as a strategy more common among undergraduate writers than of graduate students or junior scholars. Of course, we do acknowledge that a well-placed question can be very effective and that questions may be more common in the social sciences and the humanities than in the hard sciences and engineering.

3. The introduction contains two definitions. What are these? Do you think the definitions are necessary? Why or why not? Why do you suppose the author used two different approaches to defining the concepts?

   In the first paragraph there is a definition of citation analysis. In Paragraph 3, Sentence 8, self-citation is defined in the parentheses.

4. Where do the citations occur? Are they concentrated in one part of the introduction or in various locations?

   The citations are clustered in the first three paragraphs. There are no citations in the fourth one where the author is introducing the aim of the paper.

5. The paper follows the APA author-date style of citation. Where are the cited authors' names placed? Why? How prominent are author names in citations in your field?

   Most of the authors' names are in parentheses and thus appear in non-integral (or content prominent) citations. Writers need to be aware of the style sheet appropriate for their fields and the journals in which they want to publish.

   Chris encourages her students to find out what styles they need to know and to select one of these styles for use in their course papers.

Creating Contexts: Writing Introductions across Genres
Christine B. Feak & John M. Swales
http://www.press.umich.edu/titleDetailDesc.do?id=3367288
Michigan ELT, 2011

Although this means that she needs to be familiar with APA, IEEE, MLA, Chicago, and other styles, it makes sense for students to work with the ones appropriate for their disciplines. Surprisingly, many of our graduate students are completely unaware of the style guides.

6. The introduction contains quotes in the second and third paragraphs. Why do you suppose the author used quotes instead of putting the ideas in his own words?

   Hyland (1999) found that quotations are more common in the social sciences than in the hard sciences and engineering. Thus, the quotations here are not unusual. That said, quotations are generally used when using one's own words would fail to preserve the precise meaning of an idea from another text or the elegance of the original wording. The first quote in Sentence 7 seems like a good choice because it is important to accurately relay the rationale for how economists were chosen for the *Who's Who in Economics* book. The second quote in Sentence 11 is embedded within a point that the author wants to make about self-citation and thus is a hybrid citation. The point expressed in the quote might not seem so engaging if it had been reformulated.

7. What verbs did the author use to report information from other studies? Do you think these same verbs are commonly used in your field?

   Numerous articles have *used* . . .
   Blaug and Sturges (1982) *used* . . .
   Most academic economists *believe* . . .
   Laband (1990) *argues that* . . .
   Davis and Papanek (1984) *maintain that* . . .
   Similarly, Bodenhorn (2003) *contends that* . . .
   Johnson (1997) *argues that* . . .

   With the possible exception of *believe,* these verbs are used in many fields.

8. What verb tense (e.g., present or past) and aspect (e.g., perfect) were used in sentences referring to other literature? Why?

   Present, present perfect, and past tense are used. Note the progression from present perfect in Paragraph 1 to mostly present in the subsequent paragraphs as the author narrows his focus.

9. What is the function of *given* in Sentence 16? What is *anecdotal evidence* (Sentence 5)?

   Given in Sentence 16 is a causal connector like *because* or *due to. Anecdotal evidence* is evidence based on informal observation.

10. Are there any expressions that indicate what the author thinks about the state of knowledge regarding citation in the field? In other words, do we get a sense of the author's stance?

   In Sentence 16 the author states that it is "somewhat surprising that that there is no study on the efficacy of self-citation."

11. What is your reaction to the notion that "the number of times an article has been cited is an indicator of its quality and significance"?

   This makes sense to some extent, but, as the author points out, the number of references may be skewed because of self-citation. We also wonder about the references to papers or work that a writer has never even seen and are in fact a citation from another cited work. Should citations based on a citation be counted?

12. How is self-citation viewed in your field?

   This really depends on the field. In some fields that use a number citation style, self-citation may be less obvious. In applied linguistics self-citation is fairly common and some of us do notice that sometimes it appears to be excessive. The introduction on self-citation does offer some good reasons for citing one's own work, but for some of us it does feel a bit uncomfortable to do so. Moreover, self-citation could seem gratuitous, so good judgment in this matter is important. Our students generally say they would be reluctant to cite their own papers. As they gain experience in their fields, however, they realize that it sometimes cannot be avoided and that they would do themselves a disservice to omit a reference to their own relevant work.

Table 2 presents the 1990 CaRS model. Although variations have been proposed, including one offered by John in 2004 in *Research Genres*, we decided to give this less elaborate version to allow for discussion of the model suggested by Lewin, Fine, and Young (2001) and the other possible inclusions presented in Task Nineteen. As indicated in the volume, although the CaRS model does seem to suggest that creating an introduction involves applying a fixed set of rules, this is not the case. True, it may be somewhat easy to parody the CaRS model for the sake of writing practice, but when writers are faced with choosing the right points and references together with the appropriate gapping statement(s), the difficult strategic choices become clear.

When we discuss the model in class and assign related writing homework, we realize that some of our students have read very few RAs and thus may not know whether the model is useful or not and may have difficulty with Task Nineteen. It may, therefore, be worthwhile to assign Task Twenty first.

On a final note here, we debated whether we should place proposal and dissertation introductions before RA introductions, but then we realized that the CaRS model really did need to be introduced first since many proposal and dissertation introductions follow it. Also, many of our students publish papers before they write their dissertations (and sometimes before a proposal) because of the move toward article compilation dissertations. If this material is used in a class on dissertation writing, we think a look at the CaRS model for RAs is still a good starting point since these texts are considerably shorter than dissertation introductions and thus are more manageable.

Task Nineteen

Here are some potential areas for inclusion in the introduction that have been proposed by several researchers. Consider whether or not these are typical or likely in your field. Mark those that are likely with a ✓+, those that are unlikely with a ✓–, those that may optionally be used with a ✓, and those about which you are unsure with a question mark (?).

There are no absolute answers here due to disciplinary differences. All of the items here have been found in RAs in different disciplines and languages. We have indicated the discipline or journal where these aspects of article introductions were found.

_____ 1. A discussion of examples to illustrate the topic (Anthony 1999; Árvay and Tankó 2004)

This is possible in software engineering RAs and purely theoretical RAs in linguistics.

_____ 2. Definitions of important terms (Anthony 1999; Duszak 1997)

These are typical of RAs in software engineering and in linguistics (specifically, semiotics, general and applied linguistics, text linguistics, Slavic studies, culture, language variation and change).

_____ 3. An evaluation of the research presented (Anthony, 1999)

This is possible in software engineering RAs.

_____ 4. A description of data analysis procedures (Li and Ge, 2009)

This may be found in medical RAs.

_____ 5. A description of the methodology (Ayers, 2008)

This is a development in RAs published in the scientific journal *Nature*.

_____ 6. Asserting your right to fill the gap as in "As the recipient of an Arts and Humanities Grant, for a project entitled 'Translators as Cultural Agents in the Global Information Age,' I have addressed this question . . . " (Corbett, 2007)

This is rare, but just possible in the arts and humanities.

_____ 7. A discussion of a theoretical framework (Árvay and Tankó, 2004)

This is possible in purely theoretical RAs in linguistics and probably in other fields.

_____ 8. Signaling the newsworthiness or the new contribution of the research as in "Our main claim here is that . . . "(Dahl, 2009)

This is possible for RAs in economics.

If any of these were to be included in an RA introduction in your field, in which part of the introduction should they go?

Element 1 is more likely in Move 1. Elements 2 and 7 may fit in either Move 1 or 3. The remaining elements are more likely in Move 3.

Task Twenty

Using the reference collection you put together in Task Fifteen, work through these questions to get an idea of the characteristics of RA introductions in your field.

We are not able to give answers here, but the analyses of the RA introductions should be enlightening. For classroom purposes, data can be pooled so that a clearer picture of the RA introduction characteristics can emerge. Chris sometimes asks a few students to compile selected data and then asks the class to write a short research paper that includes an introduction, methods, results, and discussion. She sometimes groups students according to discipline and then they orally present their results.

Citation Practices

One important point that should emerge from this section is that citation practices vary according to discipline and genre. To demonstrate, we rely on research from Dorothy Winsor, Davida Charney, Danette Paul, Ken Hyland, and Paul Thompson, and we add dissertations to the discussion of introductions. Less is known about citation practices in dissertation introductions than in RA introductions, so the data given in Tables 3 and 4 needs to be treated with caution. We do not want to give the impression that data for dissertations in other fields would be the same. We think it is important for students to continue doing analyses of writing in their own field, as in Task Twenty. Chris generally asks students to look at several dissertation introductions—ideally those written under the guidance of their advisor(s)—to gain a sense of overall organization, citation choices, the use of integral and non-integral citations, and reporting verbs. The actual task for this activity is Task Thirty-Seven. It never ceases to amazes how budding scholars, who generally are aware of the importance of good sample sizes, will look at only one dissertation or maybe even none at all prior to writing. When asked whether a sample size of one would be sufficient to draw any conclusions, they quickly realize how inadequate their choice was. We cannot stress enough the importance of students becoming amateur discourse analysts.

Task Twenty-One

Look at your answer to Question 5 in Task Twenty. Can you discern any reasons for the choice of integral or non-integral citation, if both are used? Do you agree (A) or disagree (D) with the perspectives given here? If you are not sure, place a question mark (?) in the blank.

Answers here again vary according to discipline and writing experience. When we use this task in a class or workshop there is usually a lot of debate. Clearly, there is no single correct answer here, but what is nice about this task is that it reminds writers that how one includes a citation (i.e., whether it is an integral or a non-integral one) should be a deliberate *choice*. Here are our responses based on our experience.

__A__ 1. I should choose to use integral and non-integral citations by considering old to new flow of information.

This makes good sense to us.

__D__ 2. When I refer to a well-known author, it is best to use an integral citation.

This really depends. *It is best* here seems too strong. If the text frequently refers to the well-known author, then integral citations may not be the best choice. Here the question may arise as to whether it is possible to use the first name as well as last name of an author. And you can certainly find examples of this with certain historical figures such as Charles Darwin, Isaac Newton, David Hume, Maynard Keynes, and Noam Chomsky. Typically, however, the use of both first and last name is fairly rare.

__D__ 3. There is a heavy focus on author names in my field, so I should mostly choose integral citations.

Writers in fields that use a numbering system do not need to worry so much about this, but the rest of us need to think about how this might affect the flow of ideas. If authors are prominent throughout the introduction, it may be hard for readers to grasp the larger meaning. Even if integral citations are preferred, it is important to be aware of their effect.

__?__ 4. I should try to have some variety and switch between both types of citation.

We generally welcome variety, but it is not a matter of having variety for the sake of variety. We are aware of the importance to sometimes highlight an author and do so via an integral citation.

__A__ 5. If I want to keep my focus on the work that has been done in my field, I should mostly choose non-integral citations.

In the end, we probably use more non-integral than integral citations, and this is perhaps why.

__D__ 6. I should mostly use integral (or non-integral) citations if that is what most writers in my field do.

We hope the commentary on 1–5 has made it clear that there is a choice. It is not necessary to do what everyone else does without considering the impact.

Task Twenty-Two

Here are the most common reporting verbs in published papers from the hard and social sciences. Place a check next to those you think you can use in a published paper in your field. How many of these did you find in your reference collection?

The table here is reproduced from *Academic Writing for Graduate Students.* As the table indicates, there are disciplinary differences. Experienced writers may have a good sense of what is typical; less experienced writers may be unsure. However, the answer to Question 6 in Task Twenty can contribute to answers here.

High-Frequency Reporting Verbs (harder sciences first and softer sciences next)

Discipline	Verbs and Frequency					
Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6
Harder Sciences						
Biology	describe	find	report	show	suggest	observe
Physics	develop	report	study	find	expand	
Electrical engineering	propose	use	describe	show	publish	develop
Mechanical engineering	describe	show	report	discuss	give	develop
Epidemiology	find	describe	suggest	report	examine	show
Nursing	find	suggest	report	identify	indicate	show
Medicine	show	report	demonstrate	observe	find	suggest
Softer Sciences						
Marketing	suggest	argue	find	demonstrate	propose	show
Applied linguistics	suggest	argue	show	explain	find	point out
Psychology	find	show	suggest	report	demonstrate	focus
Sociology	argue	suggest	describe	note	analyze	discuss
Education	find	suggest	note	report	demonstrate	provide
Philosophy	say	suggest	argue	claim	point out	think

From Swales, J.M. and Feak, C.B. 2004. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Now look at the non-integral citations presented here. Convert each into two integral citations using an appropriate reporting verb, one of which could suggest that you question the claim and one in which your personal perspective is not obvious.

The main point here is to consider that reporting verbs are not necessarily neutral and that writers can choose certain reporting verbs to indicate whether they are negative, neutral, or positive toward a claim. Writers need to be aware of possible additional meanings and the possibility that readers may not always understand certain reporting verbs as the authors intends. Does a verb like *contend* simply reflect what the source says (or does) or is it a stance marker? Apart from using a single verb, stance can also be indicated by using verb phrases such as *wrongly conclude*. The task can also be used to practice indicating positive stance as in *correctly argue*.

1. A person's attitude toward public cell phone use changes (becomes more accepting) as they use a cell phone more (Isaac et al., 2008).

   Questioning the Claim

   Isaac et al. (2008) claim that a person's attitude toward public cell phone use changes (becomes more accepting) as they use a cell phone more.

   Concealing One's Perspective

   Isaac et al. (2008) maintain that a person's attitude toward public cell phone use changes (becomes more accepting) as they use a cell phone more.

2. The antecedents and aftermath of banking crises in rich countries and emerging markets have a surprising amount in common (Reinhart & Rogoff, 2008).

   Questioning the Claim

   Reinhart and Rogoff (2008) contend that the antecedents and aftermath of banking crises in rich countries and emerging markets have a surprising amount in common.

Concealing One's Perspective

Reinhart and Rogoff (2008) state that the antecedents and aftermath of banking crises in rich countries and emerging markets have a surprising amount in common.

3. Employees will be apt to break rules whenever it is in their interest to do so and whenever there are insufficient organizational controls to ensure rule compliance (Eisenhardt, 1989).

   Questioning the Claim

   Eisenhardt (1989) presumes that employees break rules whenever it is in their interest to do so and whenever there are insufficient organizational controls to ensure rule compliance.

   Concealing One's Perspective

   Eisenhardt (1989) reports that employees break rules whenever it is in their interest to do so and whenever there are insufficient organizational controls to ensure rule compliance.

4. In one study (Subramaniam et al., 2009) it was found that people are more likely to solve problems with insight if they are in a positive mood than if they are in a neutral or negative one.

   Questioning the Claim

   Interestingly, Subramaniam et al. (2009) speculate that one's mood influences one's ability to solve problems.

   Concealing One's Perspective

   Subramaniam et al. (2009) found that one's mood influences one's ability to solve problems.

Language Focus: Highlighting Agreement and Disagreement

We realize that this language focus is quite long, but each time we have worked through it in a class or workshop, the feedback is positive. We think this reflects the fact that junior scholars are in a vocabulary-building mode and concerned with having the right expressions to convey their ideas. Many of our students and workshop participants report that they want to be able to write without hesitation; they want certain expressions such as *it is widely believed that* to come automatically. What they do not realize is that it takes time to develop the academic phraseology that can hold ideas together. They are relieved to learn that the italicized expressions in this language focus may be borrowed without any fear of plagiarism.

This task emerged as a result of a simple question in class about what expressions other than *researchers agree that* could be used to indicate agreement. A follow-up homework assignment asked students to identify in their reference collections of article introductions expressions of disagreement as well as those indicating both agreement and disagreement. Here, we offer a summary of the collective efforts of the class. If this task is used in a class, students can compile their own lists and share them. Alternatively, they can use Google Scholar or a journal database to check for instances of the given expressions in the journals of their field.

This language focus also encourages writers to think about stance and the difference between such expressions as *there is agreement* and *there is widespread agreement*. After going through the examples and subsequently examining RAs in their fields, writers really see how opinions can be conveyed without ever saying *in my opinion*—and how frequently this may be done.

Questions on Expressing Agreement

1. Can you think of any other expressions that you could use to express agreement? Could you, for instance, use the expression *the literature* as in *there is agreement in the literature that* . . . ? Check your reference collection.

   The literature seems fine to us, as does *there is agreement in the literature that.* . . . In a class or workshop it is worth taking a moment to explain what is meant by *the literature*. Although this may seem hard to believe, we have had students that did not realize that *the literature* refers to previous work. They were thinking that this was a reference to novels, short stories, and the like. One other expression that could be used is *researchers generally concur that.* . . .

2. In Examples 6–7 *accepted* is modified by *widely* and *broadly*. What other adverbs can be used to modify *accept*?

   generally, commonly, universally, well, increasingly

Questions on Expressing Disagreement

1. Which, if any, of the expressions might be appropriate for your field?

   Answers here will depend on the discipline. A search on a journal database can provide some good answers.

2. Can you think of any other expressions that you could use to express disagreement? Check your reference collection.

   disagreement as to . . . has been growing

   scholars have expressed widespread opposition to . . .

Questions on Active and Passive Voice

1. When do you think active or passive might be preferred in an introduction?

We suggest choosing the voice that results in the best flow of ideas and maintains the desired focus.

Active Voice

① Räïsänen (1999, pp. 121–126) traces the origin of the peer review system back to the first editor of the *Philosophical Transaction of the Royal Society*, and describes the review process as "a negotiation process between reviewers and author(s) with the editor of the journal, as mediator and arbitrator" (p. 124). ② *Other researchers have also dealt with* the genres of the peer review process (Hamp-Lyons, 1997; Okamura & Shaw, 2000; Swales, 2004).

Passive Voice

① Räïsänen (1999, pp. 121–126) traces the origin of the peer review system back to the first editor of the *Philosophical Transaction of the Royal Society*, and describes the review process as "a negotiation process between reviewers and author(s) with the editor of the journal, as mediator and arbitrator" (p. 124). ② The genres of the peer review process *have also been dealt with by other researchers* (Hamp-Lyons, 1997; Okamura & Shaw, 2000; Swales, 2004).

To demonstrate, look at these two versions of a text: In the Active Voice text, researchers are the focus and the old to new connection exists because in the first sentence a single researcher, Räïsänen, is in the old information position, and *researchers* is in the old position in the second. In the Passive Voice text, however, a shift occurs between Sentences 1 and 2. Sentence 2 captures peer review, adding *genres* to this focus. However, note that Sentence 2 ends with old information, which we think results in a weak ending since no new information is offered to move the discussion forward. Thus, in this particular sequence of sentences, active voice may be the better choice.

Note, however, if the end of the second sentence were strengthened by adding some information on why researchers have investigated peer review genres, then passive may be the better choice, as demonstrated here.

Passive Voice

① Räïsänen (1999, pp. 121–126) traces the origin of the peer review system back to the first editor of the *Philosophical Transaction of the Royal Society*, and describes the review process as "a negotiation process between reviewers and author(s) with the editor of the journal, as mediator and arbitrator" (p. 124). ② The genres of the peer review process *have also been dealt with by other researchers seeking to understand the rhetoric of criticism, compliments, and suggestions* (Hamp-Lyons, 1997; Okamura & Shaw, 2000; Swales, 2004).

2. Do you think active or passive would be more common in introductions in your field?

   We are not able to give an answer here. We think in the introduction active voice is more common than passive, but both are used.

Questions on Expressing Both Agreement and Disagreement

1. Which logical connectors seem important for expressing agreement and disagreement within the same paragraph or sentence? How would you choose your connector if you wanted to use one?

   Adversatives: *however, nevertheless, though, even though, although, while, despite,* to name a few. Note that *unfortunately* (*however* with an attitude) also falls into the same category. Adversatives indicate that two opposing points are true at the same time. If the goal is to highlight one aspect over another, a subordinator such as *although* would be a good choice. As shown in Example 5, the acceptance is indicated in the *although*-clause, but the disagreement is highlighted in the main clause and thus seems more important. Since the disagreement is at the end of the sentence, it also is more likely to be developed. The placement may also reveal that the writer shares the opinion of those who disagree.

2. How would you decide the order of the agreement or disagreement in a sentence?

   If we consider old to new information flow, it would make sense to discuss second the position (whether agreement or disagreement) that will be elaborated, or is close to the writer's opinion, or is the more important of the two for the purposes of the argument or claims of the paper.

3. Would you include researchers in your statements, as in Examples 6 and 7, or should you omit them, as in Examples 1 and 4?

   There is no right or wrong answer here. The choice could perhaps best be made in terms of old to new information flow.

4. Verbs like *agree* and *accept* and nouns like *agreement* are generally followed by a *that*-clause in which *that* is included. Look at all of the examples in the language focus. What other verbs and nouns also follow this pattern?

   Verb: *believe*

   Noun: *consensus*

5. Look at your reference collection. Can you find any instances where the authors point to both agreement and disagreement?

   An answer is not possible here, but we hope that some examples are found. If there are none, perhaps further investigation is necessary to see if this is common in the field.

Task Twenty-Three

How might you reformulate this sentence using some of the other ways of expressing agreement and disagreement? Try to come up with two versions.

In short, despite different assumptions *about the purposes of schooling, the nature of teaching as an enterprise, and appropriate ways to measure teaching effectiveness,* there is enormous consensus that *teaching quality makes a significant difference in learning and school effectiveness.*

Version 1
Thus, although researchers differ in regard to the aims of education, the task of teaching, and methods for assessing teacher efficacy, it is nearly universally accepted that learning and successful schooling are dependent on the quality of teaching.

Version 2
Thus, while there has been ongoing debate as to the aims of education, the task of teaching, and methods for assessing teacher efficacy, researchers generally agree that learning and successful schooling are dependent on the quality of teaching.

Establishing Your Stance

Given that several of the previous sections have mentioned stance in relation to the writing of an introduction, it may be clear by now that we think this is quite important. Our students, however, are often divided as to its importance, and this division, like others, often falls along disciplinary lines. Those in the social sciences and the humanities often agree that a writer's stance must be clear, while many in the harder sciences and engineering argue that authors should avoid stance markers and emphasize the facts. After all, they say research should give the appearance of objectivity in which the facts speak for themselves. In talking with students, it seems this misconception arises because what we mean by stance is not necessarily transparent. Some students think stance and opinion involve such expressions as *in my opinion, I think,* and *it seems to me*. Of course, this misconception can be adressed through a few carefully chosen examples. After working through the examples with her students, Chris often asks them to search for stance markers in their reference collection, which they often miss when doing Question 8 in Task Twenty.

Task Twenty-Four

Underline the language in these excerpts that seems to indicate a perspective. The text revisits the counterfeiting topic on page 75 in the main volume.

The markers have been bolded.

① The global market for counterfeits today is estimated to exceed $600 billion, accounting for approximately 7% of world trade (World Customs Organization 2004). ② The ethical case against counterfeiting aside, its adverse effects on business are **well documented and many**. ③ For example, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (2006) holds counterfeiting responsible for the loss of more than 750,000 U.S. jobs per year. ④ **Perhaps more dire**, counterfeiting has also been linked to the growing global threats of narcotics, weapons, human trafficking, and terrorism (Thomas, 2007). ⑤ **Not surprisingly**, companies are allying with governments and enforcement agencies to devote **unprecedented** resources to tackle this global problem (International AntiCounterfeiting Coalition, 2008).

⑥ The academic literature **displays a strong focus on** the supply side, while the demand side—why consumers buy fake products—**has been neglected badly**. ⑦ Even if companies and governments manage to restrict the supply of fake products, counterfeiters have **consistently** demonstrated their abilities to find **new** ways to serve customers, as long as the demand is still thriving (Albers-Miller, 1999; Ang, Cheng, Lim, & Tambyah, 2001). ⑧ **It appears necessary, therefore, to focus more attention on** the demand side in order to gain a **better** understanding of what drives customers to voluntarily buy counterfeits.

⑨ Existing research on luxury goods has **strongly suggested** that consumers' attitudes toward luxury brands **may** in fact have a social-adjustive function.

To help you explore this matter, read through this text and identify the expressions that indicate the writer's stance.

1. Introduction

① Semiconductor lasers are **typical** devices for information transmission in optical communications using direct modulation. ② **At the present time,** stable single-mode diode lasers with a **very** short pulse width, low chirp and high speed modulation capability **are highly desirable** to prevent pulse variance in the Haul telecommunication system. ③ **Unfortunately**, a communication system using a high speed direct modulation **is limited by** relaxation oscillations which result from the interplay between the optical field and the free-carrier density [1].

④ **Nowadays, there is considerable interest in** compact laser sources that operate in the blue region at picosecond pulse duration for different applications in science and technology. ⑤ The frequency doubling of near-infrared diode lasers with a waveguided antireflection coating nonlinear crystal (second harmonic generation element) **represents a competitive methodology** for obtaining a compact blue light source. ⑥ In spite of the **wide** applications of the IFD of a Q-switched diode laser, they **still up to now** are under consideration [2].

⑦ The KTP crystal can be periodically poled to satisfy quasi-phase-matching conditions that increase the second harmonic (SH) conversion efficiency at room temperature for a pulsed lasers [3, 4]. ⑧ Different methods are **widely** used to generate stable single-mode very short optical pulses including mode-locking, Q-switching and gain switching. ⑨ **Excellent** thermal quality, chemical stability and high optical nonlinearity make GaAs an **ideal** semiconductor saturable absorber for the passive Q-switching process. ⑩ The bandgap of the GaAs saturable absorber is about 1.42 eV (figure 1).

Again the reference collection may be a good source of other examples of ways to indicate author stance.

Task Twenty-Five

Look back at the examples of agreement and disagreement on pages 67–72 of the main volume and find the expressions that strengthen or weaken (hedge) the verbs and nouns and thus may help indicate a stance. Using your reference articles, expand the table with some of your own examples of other verbs and nouns along with other possible language that strengthens or softens a claim. The first verb, accept, *has been done for you.*

Note that softeners are infrequent in the sample texts and that there is no modifier for *believe.* Chris usually asks students to offer suggestions for the softener columns and to consider how *believe* can be strengthened (for the latter students usually suggest *widely, generally, broadly,* and *commonly).* She also asks them to consider whether it would be possible to use *belief* in stating agreement and disagreement in the field. Students also appreciate seeing what their classmates have found in their reference collections.

Modifiers that Strengthen	Modifiers that Soften	Verbs	Modifiers that Strengthen	Modifiers that Soften	Nouns
widely, broadly		accept	widespread	some	acceptance
generally		agree	general		agreement
controversially		debate	ongoing		debate
still		disagree	longstanding, widespread enormous		disagreement
			ongoing		discussion
		believe			controversy
well		establish			
			wide, growing		consensus

Highlighting the Need for Research: The Gap

The classic gapping statement highlights what has not been done and thus contains negative language such as *there has yet to be a study*. Junior scholars are often reluctant to go so far as to say *no study*, even if they are fairly sure that there is no other work. Thus, the third example on page 79 in the main volume (*However, no study has adequately explored the possibility that)* is a good one to consider in terms of how to cautiously convey the idea that no research has been done. One way that writers accomplish this is to use expressions such as *to the best of our knowledge* or *a search of the available research revealed no studies*. Some writers even qualify their statements, indicating that they looked only for work published in English. For instance, we found a few papers that said, "A search of the English language literature on this topic produced no studies." This statement raises the interesting question of whether one should look for publications written in a language other than English. The examples on page 79 in the main volume also demonstrate that adversative connectors (for instance, *however* and *while*) are common in gapping statements. *However* is extremely common and, as we mentioned earlier to convey *however* with an attitude, *unfortunately* can be used.

As Shehzad's (2008) research has demonstrated, gaps do not necessarily have to be negative or be preceded by an adversative connector. We also know that in many fields there is a preference to indicate the need to extend research. To determine what might be best for any particular field, writers should refer to their reference collections and gather more examples if preferences are not clear.

Task Twenty-Six

Here we provide a nearly complete introduction. All of the sentences are given except for the one indicating that the research is an extension of previous work. After reading Sentences 1–7, consider which of the given options is the best Sentence 8.

This is a challenging task. Each of the choices is grammatically correct, so the choice here depends on what establishes the best connection between the first seven sentences and the final one.

> [8a] *Do informational cascades, in fact, cause part of the herding phenomenon?*

We do not particularly care for this option. The question seems to be abruptly introduced; it is not well connected to Sentence 7. But we like the use of the hedge *part.*

> [8b] *It would therefore be of interest to know whether informational cascades do, in fact, cause part of the herding phenomenon.*

We rather like the use of *therefore* and the perspective that there is something *of interest* here. Note that the statement is also cautious in saying *part of the herding phenomenon.*

> [8c] *It is therefore crucial to examine this issue.*

It is not completely clear to us what the issue is. If we assume the issue has something to do with the herding phenomenon and informational cascades, *crucial* seems a bit of an overstatement here. What is at stake? We have noticed many of our students using *crucial* (and *vital*) to indicate the importance of their work and wrongly assuming that by declaring something to be crucial, it automatically is. To establish that an issue is crucial, a lot of work needs to be done to demonstrate the importance of the matter. Declaring that an issue is *of interest* would be an easier task.

> [8d] *This then raises the question as to whether and to what extent informational cascades are in fact responsible for herding.*

We like this choice as well because of the use of *this* to show the connection to a relevant question. We think *whether and to what extent* nicely previews Sentences 9 and 10. The indirect question here also provides a much better indication of what will be examined than does the direct question in 8a.

8e No additional sentence needed—just move to Sentence 9.

Students in our classes often choose this option. The most common reason given for this choice is that Sentence 1 has already indicated the purpose of the paper and that there really is no need to sharpen the readers' focus on what the paper will explore. They believe Sentences 9 and 10 take care of any questions about the topic to be addressed.

We have tended to disagree because we have a strong preference for making good connections and establishing one's authorial stance. We think the move from Sentence 7 to 9 shifts the focus too quickly.

The text in Task Twenty-Seven is what we call an "it just makes sense to do it" kind of introduction. Originally, we thought this kind of introduction should have its own section, but then we thought it really does just represent a different kind of gap rather than an entirely different type of introduction.

At the time of this writing, graphene has emerged as a really hot research area, and there is a sense of urgency surrounding the publication of papers on this material. When one of Chris's students asked her for help on his graphene paper, he asked her not to talk about it with anyone and to make sure no one could see it! If the graphene text seems too difficult to work with, we offer here an alternative text on reality TV to demonstrate how some authors do not indicate a gap or stress the need for their research. With a few modifications, the questions in Task Twenty-Seven can be used with this text.

Papacharissi, Z. and Mendelson, A.L. (2007). An exploratory study of reality appeal: Uses and gratifications of reality TV shows. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *5*(2), 355–370.

Introduction

① For the past several years, reality television has dominated mainstream television programming, providing relatively inexpensive entertainment (Gardyn, 2001). ② The premise of reality TV requires that individuals place themselves on public display, thus forfeiting all claims to personal privacy for the sake of transient fame and the possibility of monetary compensation. ③ Some critics argue that reality TV poses a new low denominator for television content, promotes models of questionable social validity, and proliferates a culture of exhibitionism and voyeurism (Dauncey, 1996; Kaminer, 2000; Reiss & Wiltz, 2004), while others find that reality TV produces more realistic prime-time content that allows producers to move away from big budget sitcom/drama formulas (Gardyn, 2001; Kilborn, 1994). ④ Moreover, the reality model could potentially empower audiences, by allowing them to participate, directly or from home, and influence the creation of media content (Dauncey, 1996; Wong, 2001). ⑤ On the other hand, this potential empowerment could reinforce the commodification of audiences, who not only "buy" the reality show product, but become the surveilled reality show product themselves (Andrejevic, 2002; Kilborn, 1994; Wong, 2001). ⑥ Finally, the growing appeal of reality programming raises the question of distinction between real and fictional programming, especially in terms of how audiences perceive reality versus fiction (Fetveit, 1999; Mendelson & Papacharissi, 2005).

⑦ Reality TV places the audience member on the opposite side of the entertainment arena, providing all viewers with the possibility of becoming potential entertainers. ⑧ The growing popularity of the reality genre invites questions regarding its utility and consequences for audiences. ⑨ This study examines the reasons why individuals watch reality, and considers how social and psychological antecedents influence reality TV viewing from a uses and gratifications perspective.

Task Twenty-Seven

By this time we hope you are able to identify and label the different moves of an introduction. Read the introduction from materials science, and answer the questions at the end. Note that in the journal Applied Physics Letters, *papers are referred to as letters.*

1. What is the purpose of the first paragraph?

   Here the authors establish the topic and background information including the discussion of previous work.

2. What is the aim of the second paragraph? What kind of detail is offered?

   The aim is to generally describe the research. In Sentence 7 the authors introduce the work that will be presented. They then give a brief description of their method for growing the material in Sentence 8. Sentences 9–10 offer some of the results.

3. Can you find any instances where the authors reveal their perspective?

   Sentence 1: one of the key challenges in modern nanotechnology

   Sentence 2: have become of special scientific interest and technological importance

   unique

   distinctly different from

   Sentence 3: One of the promising ways to

   Sentence 5: a good candidate

   Sentence 6: can be realized effectively

4. In Sentence 7, can you think of any other verbs besides *report on* that could be used?

   Describe and maybe *discuss* seem like reasonable alternatives.

5. What verb tenses are used in Sentences 3–6? Why do you suppose these verb forms were used?

   Sentence 3 is in the present tense since it indicates the authors' belief as well as that of many in the field. Sentence 4 then moves to past tense to indicate what was done, suggesting by the use of past that it is no longer done or current. In Sentence 5 the chosen tense is present perfect to reveal that this is a recent notion that was introduced in the past and continues to be acted on, but has not reached the status of accepted knowledge of the field. The shift to present tense in Sentence 6 suggests that the recent work is strongly connected to the work presented in the paper and work that is in keeping with the authors' line of thinking.

This sequence of verb tense choices is very nice. Many of our students question whether different tenses can be used in a paragraph. We are not sure how they have developed this misconception, but it is important for writers to be aware that verb tenses can vary and can convey some additional meaning in terms of whether something is accepted knowledge of the field (generally present tense) or at least close to the author's own ideas (present perfect).

6. In the second paragraph does active or passive voice predominate? What seems to have motivated the choice of voice?

There is a lot of passive voice in the second paragraph. Sentence 7 is in active voice and the authors have chosen to insert themselves into the paper. (It is worth considering why the authors chose to use *we* as the subject. They could have easily written *this letter reports on*. There is no right or wrong here, of course, but the use of *we* could mean the authors wanted to clearly express ownership of or accountability for the work.) The remaining sentences are in the passive, and the authors have removed themselves to focus on the research. Passive helps to achieve old to new information flow in Sentences 7–9. It is hard for us to see an old to new connection in Sentence 10.

Filling the Gap

Task Twenty-Eight

Here are two examples of Move 3 overviews. Read them, and consider the questions that come after the excerpts.

A. The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the main features of the FRACTAL model. Section 3 describes JULIA, a Java framework that supports the FRACTAL model. Section 4 evaluates the model and its supporting framework. Section 5 discusses related work. Section 6 concludes the paper with some indications for future work.

B. The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. In Section 2 we review the data and present some summary statistics. Section 3 presents the results of analyses that relate probability of sale of individuals' mutual fund investments with a range of fund characteristics, including past performance, determinants of future potential tax liabilities, and investment costs. In Section 4 we aggregate investors' buys and sells of mutual funds into monthly measures of inflows and outflows, and analyze the determinants of those flows. Section 5 concludes.

1. Text A begins with *the paper,* while B begins with *this paper.* Do you have a preference for one over the other? Does *the paper* seem to have a different effect on you as a reader compared to *this paper*? Why?

   Each is grammatically correct, of course, but there may be a difference in terms of how readers perceive the two. *This* seems to strongly point to or make a tighter connection to the paper at hand. It focuses the readers' attention. Our sense is that *this* is more common, as well. Somehow, *the* creates distance, almost as if the paper was written by someone else. In the end, either *the* or *this* can be used, but writers need to be aware of the effect their choice may have on readers.

2. In Text B the authors include themselves using *we.* Text A, on the other hand, anthropomorphizes (i.e., attributes human activities to) the sections. Which do you prefer? Why?

   This is completely a matter of personal preference. When authors use *we* they are deliberately inserting themselves into the text, perhaps suggesting a greater degree of ownership.

3. What words or expressions do the texts have in common? Could you use these in your own writing?

   organized as follows

   present

   section . . . concludes

   We think these expressions can be used in any overview. *As follows* is a fixed expression, so writers should be careful not to change *follows* to *following. Following* is a noun that is generally preceded by *the*, as in, *The following section examines the effect of glucose on decision-making.*

4. How much variety in the sentence structure of the two overviews do you notice? How important is it to vary the sentence structure to create interest?

   The structure of the sentences in Text A is the same. In Text B there is some variety; the authors switch between writing *In section X we* + VERB and *Section X* + VERB. Varying the structure has both advantages and disadvantages. The answer to Question 5 offers more detail on this.

5. Do you think that this version represents an improvement of Text A?

   This is a very interesting question since the original and the revised texts convey the same information, differing only in sentence structure. Usually, this question leads to a lot of discussion. Many of our students dislike the revision—a lot. Although they recognize the nice variety in the sentence structure, they argue that this comes at the expense of clarity. They believe that if the purpose of the overview is to help readers see what is discussed in the paper and where, then it is best to follow a predictable order of information, placing the section number near the beginning of each sentence. Other students like the variation in the sentences offered by the revision. They believe that variation suggests an interesting paper. We see both sides, but John has always favored overviews with variety.

Task Twenty-Nine

Examine your reference collection of RA introductions again, and identify the language that guides or directs the reader.

We cannot provide answers here, of course, but the analysis of the reference collection should reveal some interesting trends or patterns in the writing of introductions in a specific discipline. Chris generally asks students to report their results to the class, which often results in some lively discussions on disciplinary differences in academic writing.

Problem-Focused Introductions

We debated whether to discuss problem-focused introductions separately or alongside CaRS introductions since one could reasonably argue that the differences between them are not that great. There is a difference in Move 2 (whether the introduction highlights a problem or a research gap or a need to extend previous research) and an additional Move 4 in the problem-focused introductions. We think the differences are important, however. Gaps and problems are not the same. In the former, there is an absence of research, while in the latter there may be research, but difficulties of some kind still exist. For instance, in surgery, research may show that a treatment protocol produces good outcomes, but not for all patients. Research may be able to identify why outcomes differ and then offer a solution that addresses the problem. To offer another example, RAs with a legal focus often focus on problems that arise because of a lack of adequate legislation or because the implications of a new law or legal decision have not been thoroughly considered. Legal RAs can highlight the real or potential problems and offer a solution. Thus, because of our classroom and workshop experiences with RA writers in fields that focus more on real problems than gaps, we decided the separate section on problem introductions was in order. When working with writers in such areas, we are much more likely to begin with problem-focused introductions and then cover Moves 1 and 3, following our approach in the CaRS section.

We did not provide a set of questions for analysis of the right to publicity text since students did not find that the questions we had were as interesting

Creating Contexts: Writing Introductions across Genres
Christine B. Feak & John M. Swales
http://www.press.umich.edu/titleDetailDesc.do?id=3367288
Michigan ELT, 2011

as looking at the flow of ideas, as indicated later. Some ideas for more closely examining the text include examining

- the opening sentence
- the definition in Sentence 5
- the logical connectors
- the verb tense and aspect
- the roadmap verbs in Move 4
- the split infinitive in Sentence 16 (*to consistently adjudicate*)

Task Thirty

Read this introduction, and answer the questions.

1. Which sentences contribute to the moves?

   Move 1: Sentences 1 and 2

   Move 2: Sentences 3–6

   Move 3: Sentences 7–9

2. Why do you suppose the authors used *however* to begin Sentence 3?

   However indicates a shift away from the previous focus and helps make the transition to the problem.

3. The authors clearly identify the problem by saying *the problem is that.* Can you think of any alternatives to this phrase?

   The reason for this is that . . .

   Specifically, one issue that needs to be addressed is . . .

   The difficulty is . . .

   The obstacle to using conventional methods is . . .

4. Sentence 8 begins with *it.* What do you think of the use of *it* here? Could the authors have been more clear?

   Something like *our approach* or *our method* would be an improvement.

5. This introduction ends with a roadmap or outline of the paper, as does the right of publicity introduction. Would you make any changes to it?

   The overview seems fine to us, but some writers may prefer an overview in which the section number is the subject of the sentence, as we discussed earlier.

The student discussion about the right of publicity text on pages 89–90 of the main volume emerged quite spontaneously. The text originally was the basis for a task in which students analyzed the moves and language, but inevitably students kept coming back to the flow of ideas. The student discussion took place in a writing class with students from several disciplines. The students in the discussion here are from engineering, biostatistics, education, and natural resources.

Task Thirty-One

What is your reaction to the revision process? Do you think Text D reflects good improvements to Text A?

We think the students did a good job revising the text. Their thinking about the audience and the need to make a clear connection is nicely reflected in Text D. Not bad work for a diverse group of students—each of whom came from a different discipline, spoke different first languages (Spanish, Korean, Chinese, and English), and were at different stages in their degree programs (Master's and PhD).

Task Thirty-Two

Some comments on the Girl with a Tray *text: In Danish* Peter *would be pronounced similar to* later. *The final "d" in Ilsted is not pronounced.*

Read the introductions, and answer the questions at the end.

1. Art history article introductions may be organized in this manner.

   description of a single work of art

   ↓

   placement of that work in its historical context

   ↓

   broader interpretation/explanations

   To what extent does the *Girl with a Tray* introduction follow this pattern?

   We think it follows the order pretty well. The text begins with a focus on the artwork but ends with a much broader focus on the Copenhagen school and possible influences on it.

2. Where in the introduction does the author hedge or cautiously state his claims? Does this seem necessary? Why?

   There are hedges in several sentences.

   ④ As Ilsted often used his own children as models, the *Girl with a Tray* is *probably* one of his daughters.

   ⑥ Both he and Ilsted were leading representatives of what is *sometimes* called the Copenhagen School, which focused on depicting quiet interiors of middle-class city homes.

   ⑧ By 1915, however, Hammershøi's productive career was *essentially* over as he was terminally ill with throat cancer, *so it is possible* that the mezzotint shows one of Hammershøi's nieces bringing water for his diseased throat.

   ⑨ Although *this last observation must remain a speculation*, in more general terms much is known about the personal relations between Ilsted and Hammershøi and their families.

⑩ What is *less clear* are the historical influences that shaped the distinctive art of the Copenhagen School.

⑪ It is, therefore, the purpose of this paper *to try and throw some further light on* this important episode in the history of northern European art.

⑫ In particular, I will examine the *likely* influence on both Danish artists of 17th century Dutch painters, such as Vermeer.

As with many paintings much is open to discussion such as the subjects, the activity, and the underlying driving forces. Since works of art can be complicated, many interpretations are possible; thus, it makes sense that there would be many instances of hedges and cautious claims. As the German artist Daniel Richter once said, "The more you know about the historical or ecological background of images, the more you can interpret, but it's not necessarily the truth about it."

3. In the third paragraph the author inserts himself into the introduction. Do you think it makes sense to do so in this type of introduction? Why?

   We think it makes sense. There is only one author of the text, and he is taking ownership of his interpretation of the painting and analysis of the Copenhagen school.

4. The author briefly clarifies a central characteristic of the Copenhagen School in Sentence 6, and offers very little explanation for mezzotint in Sentence 1, saying only that it is a difficult reproductive technique. What do these choices indicate about the author's assumptions of the audience?

   The author assumes that the reader has some knowledge of art and probably has an idea of what mezzotint and the Copenhagen School refer to. The lack of explanation of mezzotint may also reflect the assumption that readers would know that Ilsted was a printmaker and an artist who greatly contributed to advances in mezzotint technology. But, playing it safe, the author offers enough explanation to make sure readers can follow.

5. Would the specific to general organization used in this introduction be appropriate for any published RAs or other kinds of published papers in your field?

   Answers here, of course, will vary according to discipline. We have seen specific to general introductions in published RAs outside the humanities in such fields as archaeology and geology. As far as finding this type of introduction in other published academic genres, we would say book reviews are one possibility.

Task Thirty-Three

Write an introduction to a research paper that would be suitable for a published RA on a topic of interest to you.

We cannot offer an answer here but hope that responses have a good overall organization and old to new connection of ideas.

Short Research Reports

Task Thirty-Four

Read the introduction of the sandhill crane report, and answer the questions at the end.

1. This is a short introduction (fewer than 200 words), but it seems to come across as quite scholarly. In your view, which of these features contribute the most to this impression?

   a. the use of the Latin name in the opening sentence

   b. the many references in the first two paragraphs

   c. the avoidance of first-person pronouns

   d. the heavy use of dates to show changes and developments

   e. the use of the passive in the middle paragraph

   f. the avoidance of evaluative or subjective depictions of the cranes

   We think all of these contribute to the "scholarly" nature of the text. The content and style suggest that the introduction was very carefully written to appeal to both experts in the field and birdwatchers in general in Michigan.

2. In the last paragraph the author describes his publication as a *report.* What does this tell us? And what do you think about the choice of *documents* as a reporting verb?

   Designating the text as a report suggests that there will be a lot of data given, but that this is not necessarily a thorough research endeavor. *Document* seems fine since the report will provide the number of sandhill cranes counted in various locations. We can essentially expect to find a more or less factual record and perhaps some recommendations.

3. What do you think of the final sentence in the introduction? Do you think something more specific or something stronger might have been written? What about, "Without this survey data, it becomes almost impossible to plan for . . ."?

   The suggested revision would seem to indicate that there is something more urgent that needs to be done with the data collected other than facilitating viewing and photography, which are the final two points made in the original. Management of areas seems to be less important in the original version, so if management of nesting or feeding areas is of concern, perhaps the revision could indicate this more clearly.

Introductions to Proposals

Task Thirty-Five

After the abstract, the "specific aims" is the first narrative part of the proposal, which serves as an introduction. Read through this introductory section, and then answer the subsequent questions.

1. Identify the purpose of each paragraph. Does the order of information follow a pattern of organization that seems familiar?

   It looks like a problem-to-solution organization.

   Paragraph 1: background to the general problem associated with the new policy

   Paragraph 2: explication of the impact of the policy change by introducing *Clostridium difficile* infection as an example

   Paragraph 3: further clarification of financial impact of *Clostridium difficile* infection and highlighting a potential solution (a prediction rule to identify at-risk patients) that can reduce the cost to hospitals

   Paragraph 4: the study aims

   Paragraph 5: evaluation of the proposed solution and contribution of the study

2. Earlier we stated that research proposals should answer three questions.

   - What do you plan to do?
   - Why is this work important for the field?
   - How will you do the work?

   To what extent does this introduction do this? If these questions are not answered, what effect would this have on the proposal reviewer?

   It seems that each of the questions has been answered. While we do not know the specifics of how the work will be done, the methodology is developed in more detail later in the proposal. Not answering the questions will likely result in a failed proposal.

3. What language did the author use to convince the proposal reviewers that the work is important? Does the work seem important to you? Why?

   We think Greta made a great deal of effort to convince her readers. The first paragraph is quite convincing with regard to the concern that the policy shift will result in a major shift in how hospital complications are viewed and how hospitals will be left to deal with the financial burden. Note, for instance, the use of *landmark decision, the widespread impact, will shift the traditional view of hospital complications,* and *entirely preventable event.*

   In Paragraph 2, note these expressions chosen to reveal the need for research.

   ⑥ The rate of *C. difficile* infection (CDI) tripled. . . .

   ⑦ Compounding the rising incidence of CDI, is an increase in both severity and mortality of the disease. . . .

   ⑧ . . . the mortality associated with CDI surpasses that of all other intestinal diseases combined (Redelings MD et al., 2007)

   ⑨ Despite scrupulous attention to hygiene measures, the incidence of CDI has continued to escalate due in part to the rise of a hypervirulent strain of *C. difficile* . . .

   ⑩ The NAP1/B1/027 toxinotype III pathogen is more virulent than other strains and has demonstrated resistance. . . .

   In Paragraph 3 we find these expressions used to highlight the importance.

   ⑪ The *financial burden* . . . due to *longer lengths* of hospitalization and treatment, is estimated to be *as high as $3.2 billon dollars annually* . . .

   ⑫ Adding to this are the indirect costs of CDI, such as the *pain and suffering* patients will endure, which is less often acknowledged, but results in *an even greater human cost.* . . .

   ⑬ The prevalence of CDI has particular *repercussions* in the elderly population where the risk of CDI can be *as much as 20-fold higher than* . . .

⑭ Because nurses are at the bedside *24/7,* they are positioned to impact the rate of CDI directly at the point of care.

⑮ Although not currently available, a clinical prediction rule to identify those at the greatest risk for CDI is a *cost-effective, nontechnological, and nonpharmaceutical approach. . .*

⑯ Operationalizing a patient's risk will enable nurses to anticipate, rather than simply react to, *the increasing threat* of CDI in hospitalized patients.

In Paragraph 4 we find these expressions used to highlight the importance.

⑱ A clinical prediction rule, or risk score, specific for initial onset of CDI in surgical patients, to our knowledge, *is without precedence in the published literature and has received only limited attention in other patient populations. (Hu et al., 2008; Kyne, Sougioultzis, McFarland, & Kelly, 2002).*

⑲ We propose to investigate the risk factors for CDI in a *high-volume, high-risk cohort.* . . .

㉒ Integrate *the most robust variables* associated with CDI in the postoperative colectomy patient into a clinical prediction rule model.

In Paragraph 5 we find these expressions used to highlight the importance.

㉔ This proposal provides the *necessary* foundation. . . .

㉕ The *broader long-term objectives* of this research are. . . .

㉖ We propose that the *early identification* of the patients *most vulnerable* for CDI early in, or prior to, hospitalization is the *ultimate* strategy to protect *high-risk* patients, target preventative interventions, and help *curb the escalation* of CDI in hospitals.

We are concerned and we are not even in the field!

4. Does the author appear to be knowledgeable? Why or why not?

   We think so. She has highlighted the potential serious impact of the new policy and has identified one hospital acquired infection (*Clostridium difficile*) that is costly. She offers a good solution to the problem of *Clostridium difficile* infection, namely a prediction rule to identify patients at risk for this infection. She evaluates the potential benefits of her proposed rule in terms of reducing the rates of *Clostridium difficile* infection.

5. How much background information do you think is necessary to understand the proposal? What information did the author assume the proposal reviewers would have? Was this a reasonable assumption? Why or why not?

   She assumes at least a general knowledge of Medicare and Medicaid and how important these institutions are in the United States. The first paragraph eases the reader into the discussion and does not require expert knowledge; a non-expert can easily follow the broad point. This was a deliberate choice since Greta knew that the reviewers would not necessarily be familiar with *Clostridium difficile* infection. She wanted the opening paragraph to be accessible.

   As the introduction progresses, it becomes more specific, however, and here Greta tried to find a balance between being specific to reflect her expertise and addressing an audience who may not be completely familiar with *Clostridium difficile* infection. She assumes readers will know what a colectomy is, but does not assume they will know what a prediction rule is and clarifies this in Sentence 18. The second paragraph requires the most expert knowledge to understand, while the remaining paragraphs require less. Overall, she errs on the side of caution, assuming readers had some knowledge, but were not necessarily experts in her specific research area.

6. Note the use of *we* in Sentences 19 and 26. Do you think the use of *we* is appropriate? Can you think of a way to rewrite the sentences without *we*?

   Although Greta wrote the proposal, she will not be alone in doing the research. Her advisor will be very involved, as will other members of her committee. Therefore, it would not quite be accurate for her to use

I. Greta could have rewritten Sentence 19 to omit *we* by writing *This study proposes to investigate ....*

In Sentence 26 she could have simply omitted *we propose that.* Alternatively, she could have said *The study outcomes will show that. . . .*

Task Thirty-Six

Take a look at this excerpt from an interview that we had with Greta, the student who wrote the proposal. Do any of her comments surprise you? Which, if any, seem relevant for the writing of a proposal in your field?

Greta's experience as a first-time grant proposal writer seems fairly typical in that it took a lot of effort to get it done—it was one year in the making. But unlike many of our students, she seems to have taken advantage of every possible available resource and was fortunate enough to be able to afford a proofreader to catch small, but important, grammar and punctuation errors. She also was able to pay a statistician. Given the competitive nature of the grant, these were good choices. While we do not recommend paying for proposal support, at least in this case her investment was worthwhile considering that she now has two years of financial support. Greta's point about asking people for letters of recommendation early cannot be stressed enough. We do think her strategy of asking for more letters than she needed is an interesting one, but not necessarily feasible in all contexts.

Greta's reaction to the reviewer feedback is one most of us have had. Initially, we may see only the negative and perhaps feel somewhat wounded as a result. However, by taking a step back, we often will notice that the intent of the feedback is to make the work better. Indeed, Greta noted that she is considering incorporating some of the suggestions into her study.

Greta also mentioned the importance of word choice and overall skill in writing. This, too, is significant in that a poorly written document, even one that describes a good idea, is less likely to be successful. The quality of the writing does influence the reader's impression of the author and his or her ability to do the proposed work.

Task Thirty-Seven

Based on the feedback on the background of the proposal, which of the following should be apparent in a strong proposal introduction? Place a checkmark (✓) next to the ones you are most sure about and a question mark (?) next to those you are not.

_____ 1. The rationale and background of the study are clear.

_____ 2. The author knows the relevant literature and is up-to-date.

_____ 3. The proposed research builds on earlier work and interest in the field.

_____ 4. The proposed work refines earlier work.

_____ 5. The study is well-conceptualized.

_____ 6. The research may have immediate implications.

_____ 7. The work addresses a very important issue.

_____ 8. The research offers a good solution to a problem.

We think that Numbers 1–5 should be apparent in an introduction. However, 6–8 will largely depend on the nature of the proposed research. Some research will not have immediate implications and will not necessarily address or solve a *very* important issue. Issues and problems that are not so far-reaching as hospital acquired infection are also worthy of attention and funding. The issue, however, does need to be presented as relevant or highly interesting.

Introductions to Dissertations

Task Thirty-Eight

Find 3–5 dissertation introductions from your area of interest and ideally written by students of your advisor. Work through these questions to get an idea of the characteristics of dissertation introductions in your field.

We are not able to provide answers here, but the analysis based on the task questions should provide some interesting insights. At the very least, it should be clear how important it is to look at more than one sample to get an idea of how to write a dissertation introduction. When we use this task in a class, we ask students to share their findings, so that everyone can gain a good sense of the different possibilities for writing the introduction. Question 10 is particularly important since it helps many students come up with ideas for writing their introductions that they can then discuss with their advisors. Having some of their own ideas, they feel less dependent on their advisors for guidance and thus more in control of their writing.

Final Comments

This is the end of the commentary but not the end of our work. We are sure that readers of this commentary will have questions and insights, which we would very much like to hear about. Feel free to email us. We, ourselves, will also have much to add to the commentary as we use the material in classes and workshops. As matters arise, we will make updates to the extent that this is possible.