

# Rhetorical Research: Methods for Teaching Multiple Purposes for Texts

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## ABSTRACT

Too often, students see research as fulfilling one purpose in their writing: to provide facts that back up their claims. However, recent scholarship that looks closely at professional academic writing shows that writers bring in texts for many purposes: illustrating, justifying a methodology, setting up an analytical lens, providing an exhibit to interrogate (cf. Harris, Bizup, Hillard). Through hands-on activities, workshop participants will analyze academic and public texts to identify the range of rhetorical purposes of source use. We will evaluate how source use varies across disciplines and outside the academy. The workshop models sample activities that faculty- librarian partners can use.

## AGENDA

INTRODUCE TO RHETORICAL MOVES OF SOURCE USE:

SITUATE THE QUESTION & ESTABLISH THE FOUNDATION

EXPLORE: WHAT ARE THE CLAIMS SAYING? APPLYING METHODS

CODE PUBLIC WRITING TOGETHER

CODE DISCIPLINARY WRITING IN SMALL GROUPS

DISCUSS. TAKE A POSITION?

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2. Public Writing | Bill McKibben “Global Warming’s Terrifying New Math”
3. Disciplinary Writing:
  - a. Public Health | Debono, Roberto et. al “Risk Communication”
  - b. Religion | Moe-Lobeda, Cynthia. “Karen Bloomquist, Luther, and the Challenge of Climate Justice” (first pages)
  - c. Economics | Stern, Nicholas. “Prospects for Progress”
4. Bibliography

## Notes from Van E. Hillard's "Information literacy as situated literacy" in *Teaching Literary Research: Challenges in a Changing Environment*.

"To be effective \*as\* evidence, information must be solicited in the service of larger judgments, guiding ideas, and intellectual or disciplinary values. This is all to say that though the concept of information literacy seems to work adequately to describe the activities of academic research from the librarians' perspective, it will likely not describe the rhetorical practices associated with academic writing. Written argument and analysis are typically not understood as predominantly informational in nature. It is far more likely that research writing will be addressed in very different terms: documents, texts, traditions of inquiry and scholarship, debates and disagreements, studies -- even knowledge production -- but rarely as simply locating information" (p. 13).

"[Think] of the library not as some vast storehouse of data, but rather as an elaborate house of argument, a site where users activate and reactivate conversations and disagreements across time and space" (16).

"Literacy, then, is what one *does in practice* rather than *what one knows* and unfolds as a set of behaviors adapted to the contingencies of any particular context of use" (18).

## Notes from Joseph Bizup's "BEAM: A Rhetorical Vocabulary for Teaching Research-based Writing."

### B = background

Using sources for uncontested facts & information

You rely on these

You expect readers to accept these as factually credible.

### E = Exhibit

Using sources as occasions for exploration and evidence for claims

You describe, analyze and interpret these.

You assume your readers may see things differently than you do.

### A = Argument

Using sources for discrete claims and arguments

You engage these, extending, countering and qualifying their claims.

You want your readers to distinguish between those claims and your own claims.

### M = Method

Using sources for concepts, frameworks, approaches, methods

You follow these, apply them, modify them to suit your purposes

You want your readers to distinguish between the original use and your own application/ modification

## Notes from Harris' *Rewriting: How to Do Things with Texts*

**Coming to Terms:** "Defining the projects of other writers in a fair and generous way, so that you can make use of the source." p. 19

- Aims:
- Methods:
- Materials
- Noting Keywords and passages that will be useful
- Assessing uses and limits

**Forwarding:** "in forwarding a text, you extend its uses" p. 38; [see list p. 39]

Illustrating: when you look to other texts for examples of a point you want to make; provides material to think *about*

Authorizing: when you invoke the expertise or status of another person to support your thinking ("This move is often necessary to make, if only to prove you've done your homework, but it seems to me, for the most part, to be a straightforward and routine form of intellectual housekeeping" (44)

Borrowing: When you draw on terms or ideas from other writers to use in thinking through your subject.

Extending: When you put your own spin on the terms or concepts that you take from other texts. ("I'd argue that writing tends to become more exciting as it moves outward—selecting, excerpting, commenting and sometimes, changing or inflecting the meanings of other texts" (46).

*Note: authors rarely make these moves in isolation.* (p. 49)

**Countering** "using problems in a text as a springboard to get at something [you] wouldn't otherwise say." p. 55; [see list on p. 57]

Arguing the other side: Showing the usefulness of a term or idea that a writer has criticized or noting problems with one that she or he has argued for.

Uncovering values: Surfacing a word or concept for analysis that a text has left undefined or unexamined.

Dissenting: Identifying a shared line of thought on an issue in order to note its limits

**Taking an Approach:** not just a matter of applying the theory of another, "to make new knowledge, your examples need to raise problems for your theory. . . When you take on the approach of another writer both your thinking and theirs needs to change" (74).

Acknowledging influences: Noting those writers whose work has in some way provided a model of your own p.79

Turning an approach on itself: Asking the same question of a writer that he or she asks of others p.79

Reflexivity: Noting and reflecting on the key choices you have made (concerning method, values, language) in construction your text. p.79

Function		Rhetorical Moves	Key Words
Setting the Stage/Establishing the Foundation	A) Introduction	Summarize, Situate the Question, Identify/ Demonstrate the problem, Describe the Gap in Scholarship, Position the Author in the Conversation, Establish the Audience,	He/She would say, According to, Then there is, As he/she says, I have read that, She/He argues that, We can assume, Authorities say, All told
	B) Body	Illustrate, Describe, Appeal to Authority, Provide foundational evidence	
Exploring	A) What are the claims saying?	Analyze and Interpret, Apply Methods, Borrow and Extend, Uncover values,	And again, in need of definition/clarification, If, Since, Then, So, I take it to mean, One one hand...on the other, Of course, Therefore, Thus, It is by now, In order to arrive at, To further, To better explain, To make sense of, The consequences of,
	B) Meta-Exploration	Acknowledge Influences, Acknowledge and Describe Methods/Approaches	...has shaped, Led me to, His/her approach...,
Taking a Position	A) Argument/ Call to Action/ Response	Extend, Counter, Qualify, Dissent	But, Then perhaps, Should, However, Might there not be..., There is more than a hint, seems to me, let alone, My point is, To refute, Yet, Shed light on, Contend,
	B) Meta-Argument	Turning an Approach on Itself, Extending an Approach	

### **Articles about Rhetorical Uses of Sources**

Bizup, J. "BEAM: A Rhetorical Vocabulary for Teaching Research-Based Writing." *RHETORIC REVIEW* 27.1 (2008): 72-86.

Harris, Joseph. *Rewriting: How to do Things with Texts*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2006. Summon. Web.

Hillard, Van. "Navigating the Social Turn: Information Literacy as Situated Literacy." *Teaching Literary Research: Challenges in a Changing Environment*. Eds. Stephen Harris and Kathleen Johnson. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2009. 18. Print.

Phyllis Mentzell Ryder. "Preparing "Academic Citizens:" Service-Learning in Research Universities." *Washington Academy of Sciences: Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences* 97.4 (2011): 17. Web.

### **Sample Articles for the Workshop**

DeBono, Roberto, Karen Vincenti, and Neville Calleja. "Risk Communication: Climate Change as a Human-Health Threat, a Survey of Public Perceptions in Malta." *European Journal of Public Health* 22.1 (2010): 144-9. Print.

McKibben, Bill. "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math." *Rolling Stone* July 19 2012. Print.

Moe-Lobeda, Cynthia. "Karen Bloomquist, Luther, and the Challenge of Climate Justice." *Currents in Theology and Mission* 37.3 (2010): 209-16. Print.

Stern, Nicholas. "Propsects for Progress: Moving Foward on Climate Change." *Harvard International Review* 2011.Spring (2011): 27-32. Print.