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# ELEMENTS OF SCHOLARLY/ ACADEMIC PAPERS

A WAC Graduate Student Seminar

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DISCOURSE->RHETORIC->GENRE

- Features shared among text types
- Analysis at the level of groups of texts
- Much attention in genre studies to the social functions of texts —the work they do to maintain relationships socially, the ways they function to regulate social systems (narratives that accompany graduate school applications)
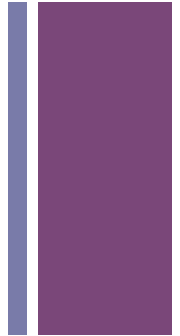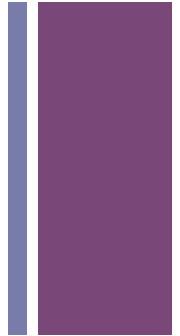
LEVELS OF ANALYSIS
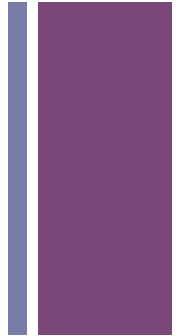
1. Discourse/sentence
2. Rhetoric/whole unit of discourse (document)
3. Genre/context within a discipline
4. Larger social meanings/issues

GENRE AS SOCIAL ACTION

- S. Miller (1984) described genre as a rhetorical action that recurs within a social setting
- The sharing of meaning is intersubjective and negotiated through discourse among the group—again, perhaps FEC meetings to rank professors might be a useful example; journal article reviewers perform a similar function through their reviews of manuscripts
- These shared discourses form into typical types of documents (genres)

DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES

- Swales (1991) developed the concept of discourse communities to explain the purposes within documents
- His concept of rhetorical "moves" within documents—such as "establish a research territory"—leads to one method for establishing the typical purposes or communicative aims for a document
- SSHRC research grant evaluation committees form into discourse communities for example
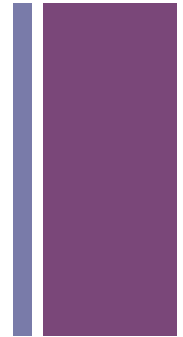
GENRE SETS

- Genres typically do not occur alone but instead as part of a set of social actions within a group
- The research article is one of a set of genres: a chapter in a dissertation, a research grant, research grant reports, peer review documents
- **Other related documents?**
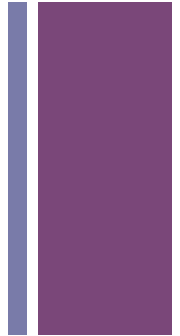
TEXT TYPE: RESEARCH
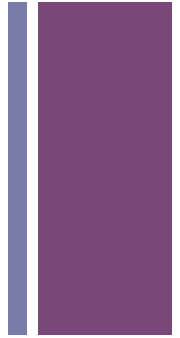
What are the features of the research article your group is working with?

Example:
Does it include an abstract? If so, how long is it? Is it in "plain" language?

MOVES

What argumentative moves can you identify in your article?

Sample: "Taken together, findings from these and other studies suggest that miscommunication and lack of communication about care preferences and decision making may be fairly universal within caregiving families and not uncommon in the interactions between providers and families" ("Decision Making in Families Facing. . .")

Move: X ("miscommunication and lack of communication")
is a wide-spread problem; therefore worthy of further study

Moves

Sample: "But few studies have examined the views and care preferences of people with dementia. This means their views aren't well considered as care strategies are selected (Cohen, 1991) " ("Do Caregivers Know . . .")

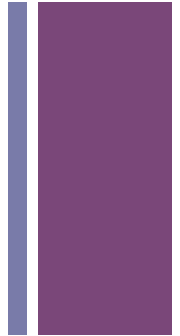**Move:** Few studies have examined X ("the views and care preferences of people with dementia")

X should be considered in the decision making process when designing care
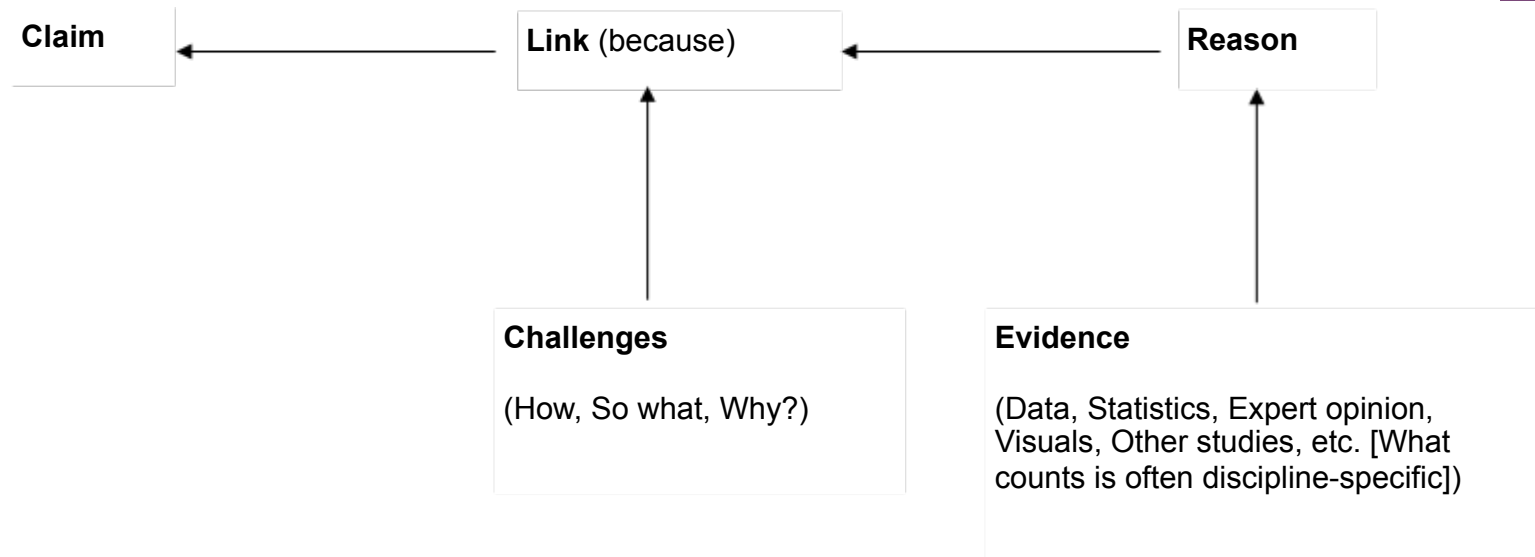
ORGANIZATION

How is your article organized?

Genetically-modified soybeans

1. Introduction
2. Materials and methods
   2.1 Samples
   2.2 DNA extraction
   [continue from this point]

3. Results and discussion
4. Concluding remarks
5. Acknowledgements
6. References

INFORMAL ARGUMENT

Claim	←	Link (because)	←	Reason

Challenges

(How, So what, Why?)

Evidence

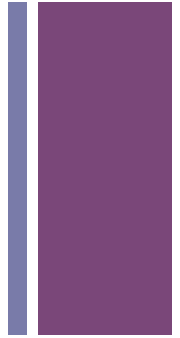(Data, Statistics, Expert opinion, Visuals, Other studies, etc. [What counts is often discipline-specific])

What argument does the abstract or introduction present?

ORGANIZATION

Examples:

TEXTUAL IDENTITY OF AUTHOR(S)

How does the author identify him or her self in the text?

No direct reference to author except parenthetical citations

Example: "Recent work with family care dyads indicates that older adults . . . slightly less emphasis on social interactions (Whitlatch et al, in press)."

Direct statement of research findings using present tense

Example: "Two interventions in particular show promise because they address a number of issues, including everyday decision making. . .." (Whitlatch, p. 92).

WHERE DOES THE AUTHOR USE "I"?

Do(es) the author(s) use first person singular (I) or plural (we)?
If yes, where?

Example: "In this brief overview I will seek to elaborate this point. I will sketch out some of the ways that genre approaches have . . . " (Hyland, "Introduction," p. 18).

Metadiscursive "I": First person singular provides structural overview of the argument

Where? In the introduction/literature review and critique of existing research
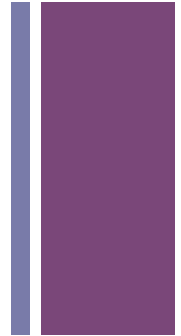
USING "I" AS A PERSUASIVE DEVICE

Example: "Instead we need to explore ways of scaffolding students' learning and using knowledge . . ." (Hyland, "A brief overview," p. 21).

Identification: We (author and reader) work together to solve problem

Where? Conclusion of section critiquing process theory Co-ops reader to find a better solution
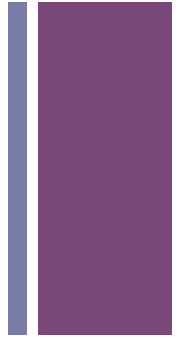
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF USING "I/WE"?

Where do(es) the author(s) use I/We?
What is the purpose of using I/We?

Example: "Recently, we have optimised and compared different DNA extraction protocols, which enabled [us] to obtain amplifiable soybean DNA from fully refined vegetable oils (Cost, Mafra, Amaral, & Oliveira, submitted for publication)" (Costa, Mafra, AMaral, & Oliveria, "Introduction," p. 302).

Purpose: Sets up a justification for the present work

VISUALS IN ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

- Does the article use visuals?
- What kind of visuals are included?
- What work do the visuals do in the article?
- How are the visuals linked to the text in the publication?