

*Genre is a tool
or way of
thinking about
how the
discourses of
the disciplines
work*

thesis

article

poster

grant

Writing (n./vb.) Genres

Writing Across the Curriculum
Graduate Student Workshop
Fall, 2010
Roger Graves
Director, Writing Across the Curriculum

Roger Graves



Roger Graves
Director, Writing Across the Curriculum
Professor, EFS

February 13, 2009

- wac
- c4w
- writing Initiatives
- webmail
- efs

I'm new to the University of Alberta, having come from the University of Western Ontario where I was Director of the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. In my new position here I'll be working with faculty and students across the university as part of the Writing Across the Curriculum initiative. I will also be working with students and faculty in the Department of English and Film Studies.

I am the author, co-author, or editor of five books and 29 articles, including Writing Instruction in Canadian Universities. My current research interests include the development of doctoral student writing, writing assignments across disciplinary fields, and rhetorical approaches to text encoding. Currently I serve as co-Vice-President of the Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing (CASDW) and a member of the Executive Board of the Canadian

Recent presentations
This page contains links to pdfs of slides displayed at presentations I've given.

Books
This page displays the covers and descriptions of books I've authored, co-authored, or co-edited



Blog: Thinking About Writing
A new blog on writing-related issues

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~graves1/index.html>

Centre for Writers



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Centre for Writers at the University of Alberta. The header features the University of Alberta logo, the text "Writing Initiatives University of Alberta", and the "Centre for Writers" logo. A navigation menu includes links for Home, Appointments, Contact Us, Location, Coaches, Resources, FAQ, and WAC. The main content area has a breadcrumb "Home > Home" and a "Welcome to the Centre for Writers" section. This section states that free one-on-one writing coaching is available to all students, instructors, and staff. It lists services such as thesis formation, organization, idea development, grammar, and documentation style. A link to "Request a class room visit by a tutor" is provided. A notice for the Fall 2009 term states that tutoring hours begin on Monday, September 14. On the right side, there is a date stamp "9/2/2009 10:34:15 AM", an "Express News" section, a "Twitter Updates" section with a tweet about the fall term opening on September 14, and a "GramWOW" section featuring a YouTube video player.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
Writing Initiatives
University of Alberta
Centre for Writers

Home Appointments Contact Us Location Coaches Resources FAQ WAC

Home > Home

Welcome to the Centre for Writers

We offer **free** one-on-one writing coaching and support to all students, instructors and staff at the University of Alberta - in any faculty or at any level of study.

Our writing coaches are available to assist clients with higher order concerns in their writing, such as thesis formation, organization and idea development, as well as more specific details, like grammar and documentation style. Clients can bring in any writing project at any stage of development: essays, lab reports, creative pieces, scholarly articles, thesis drafts, application letters - and more. Our coaches will also help students read instructor comments on already-graded papers. ESL and EAL students are welcome!

[Request a class room visit by a tutor.](#)

Welcome back for the Fall 2009 term! Tutoring hours will begin on Monday, September 14. The online appointment-booking schedule will be available to clients as soon as possible prior to this date. We look forward to working with you!

9/2/2009 10:34:15 AM

Express News

Twitter Updates

The Centre for Writers will open for the fall term on Monday, September 14! 5 days ago
[follow me on Twitter](#)

GramWOW

YouTube

<http://www.c4w.arts.ualberta.ca/>

Academic Support Centre

UNIVERSITY STUDENT SERVICES

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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[Home](#) > Graduate Resources

Graduate Resources

 [Print this page](#)

WORKSHOPS

If you are a graduate student or a post-doc, consider taking one of our writing or learning workshops designed specifically with your needs in mind. Detailed workshop information including dates and times are available in the menu on the top right of the screen. You can register over the phone at 780-492-2682 or in person at 2-703 SUB. All forms of payment are accepted.

PERSONALIZED ASSISTANCE

Individual LEARNING Consultations \$20/session or \$50/3 sessions

Receive expert individualized help with time management, conference posters, or data presentation, reading research papers, memory improvement, etc. as they pertain to your unique situation. We can also assist with studying, exams, or any learning task. Appointments must be scheduled with Karen in advance.

Graduate Resources

[Graduate WRITING Workshops Fall 2010](#)

[Graduate LEARNING Workshops Fall 2010](#)

[Resources and Links](#)

Home

[Pre-University Resources](#)

[Undergraduate Resources](#)

> [Graduate Resources](#)

[Customized Workshops & Presentations](#)

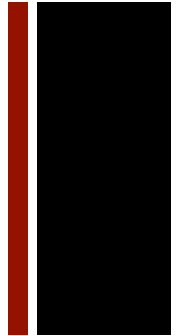
[About the Academic Support Centre](#)

[Contact Us](#)

<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/academicsupport/grad-resources.cfm>

Levels of analysis

1. Discourse/sentence
2. Rhetoric/whole unit of discourse (document)
3. **Genre/context within a discipline**
4. Larger social meanings/issues



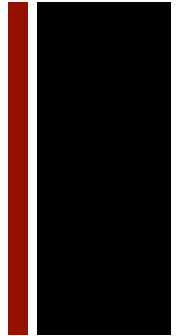
Genres at work

- Memos
- Letters
- Email messages
- Reports
- Performance reviews
- Trip reports



Genres you write

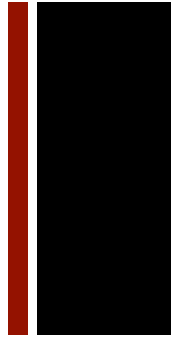
- Working with people sitting near you, list the written genres you've worked recently at home or at work.



Common genres

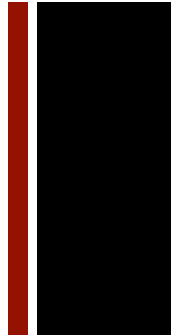
- Home

- Work/school



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)

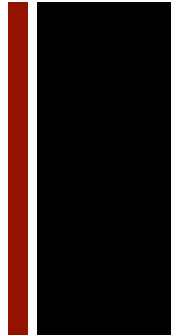


Genre in Writing Studies

- “Every text is organized within a specific genre according to its **communicative purposes**, as part of the conditions of discourse production, which generate social uses that determine any and every text.” (Brasil quoted in Bazerman x).
Bazerman, C., A. Bonini, & D. Figueiredo. *Genre in a Changing World* (2009). Fort Collins and West Lafayette, WAC Clearinghouse and Parlour Press.
- “**Thesis proposals** organized within a specific genre according to its communicative purposes, as part of the conditions of discourse production, which generate social uses that determine any and every text.”

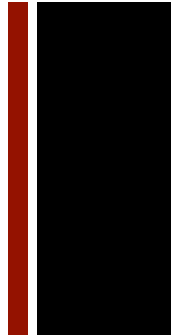
Genre as social action

- 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 (spoken and written language acts) among the group—again, perhaps thesis proposals 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)



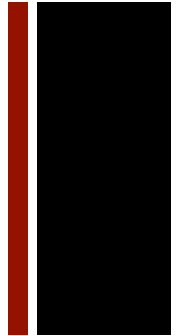
Genre as social action

- Genres shape the entire social interaction, not just the documents themselves
- **Research application:** Writing a research grant, for example, doesn't just mean filling in a form; what is written will come to structure my daily life, cause other documents (articles) to be written, cause students to be accepted into a program because a supervisor has money to pay them, and so on
- **Teaching example:** In classrooms, when an instructor selects a genre that then structures and limits the acceptable written responses to that assignment; it structures what is talked about in class; it causes other texts (textbooks, readings) to be read and discussed



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 for a document
- SSHRC/NSERC/CIHR 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
- Graduate students may write a variety of related documents: grant applications, course papers, exams, conference proposals, posters, a thesis
- Genres proliferate and change leading some researchers to call them “stable for now” (Schryer) or describe them as phenomenological: **they exist if you see them**



Genres and globalization

- Knowledge-based economies depend on the sharing of written information across borders and within disciplines
- These documents share features, communicative purposes, and specialized discourses
- Graduate students who move around the globe to study must learn these specialized discourses and genres

Bazerman, "Introduction."

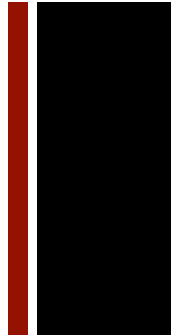
Genre and disciplines

- Genre is a tool or way of thinking about how these discourses of the disciplines work
- Genres are “focused, purposive, [and] highly differentiated task[s]”
- Genres are always situated within a context of power relations: funder/applicant, supervisor/student, FEC/worker

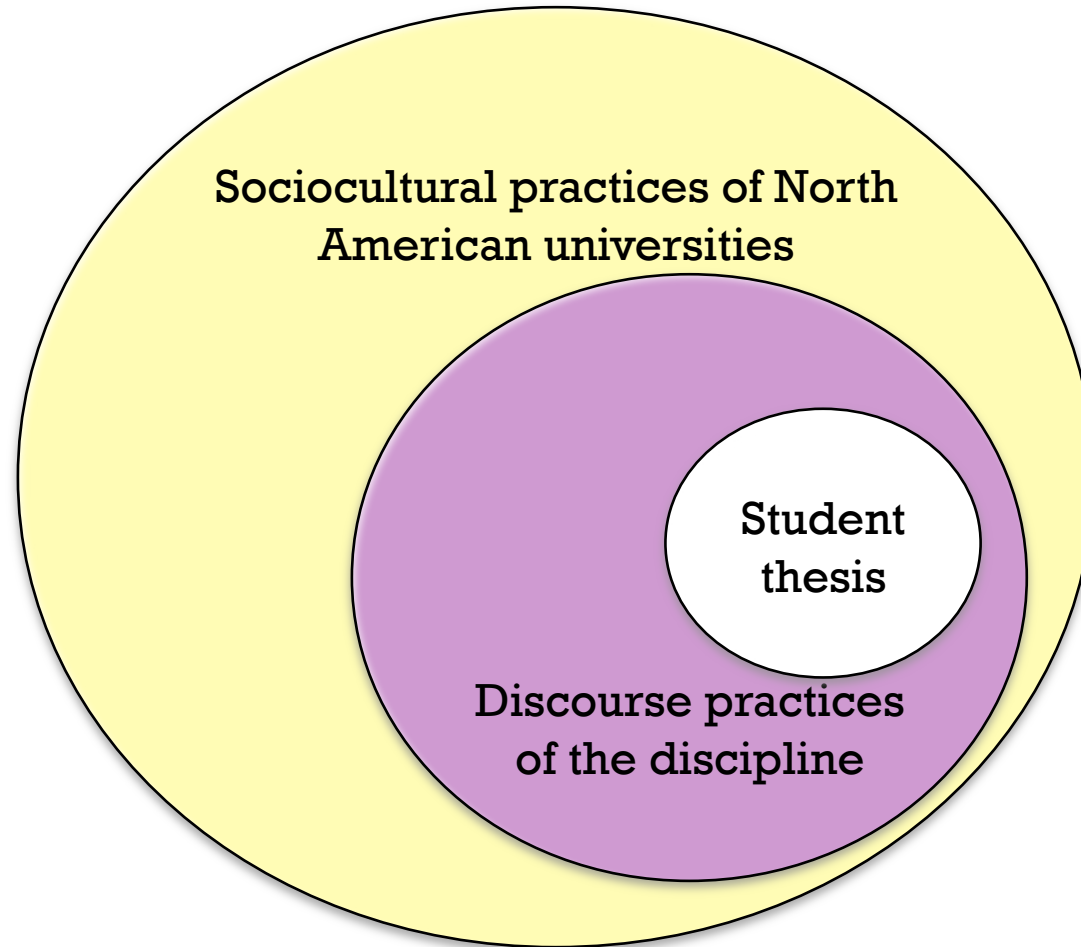
Bazerman, “Introduction.”

Format/Genre

- Format refers to a description of the look or dimensions of a document: double-spaced, 500 words, 4 citations, APA style
- Genre refers instead to the **communicative function** of the document: to persuade me that your research is worth funding, that you follow acceptable research methods
- Think about assignment descriptions given to undergraduates—they often focus too much on format and offer little guidance about the intellectual task the assignment demands



Writing as social practice



Fairclough's three dimensions of discourse, as depicted in B. Kammler and P. Thomson, *Helping Doctoral Students Write Well*, p. 21.

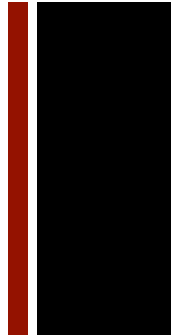
Theories of research writing

- Research **is** writing
- Texts are not reality but versions of reality that **re-present** some aspects of reality
- A thesis is one of **a set of related genres** that govern graduate student social activity as professionals
- Writing is a **social activity**—it takes place among groups of people, not individuals each working alone

Kamler, B. and P. Thomson. *Helping Doctoral Students Write: Pedagogies for Supervision*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

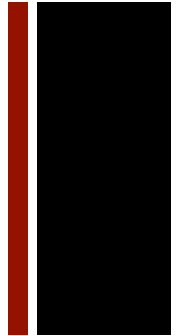
Texts and Identity

- Kenneth Burke: rhetoric/persuasion depends upon **identification** between rhetor and audience
- Texts written by graduate students build their **identity** as a member of their discipline
- You as a professional are **your textual self**—or rather, selves: the stories you tell about yourself and your work

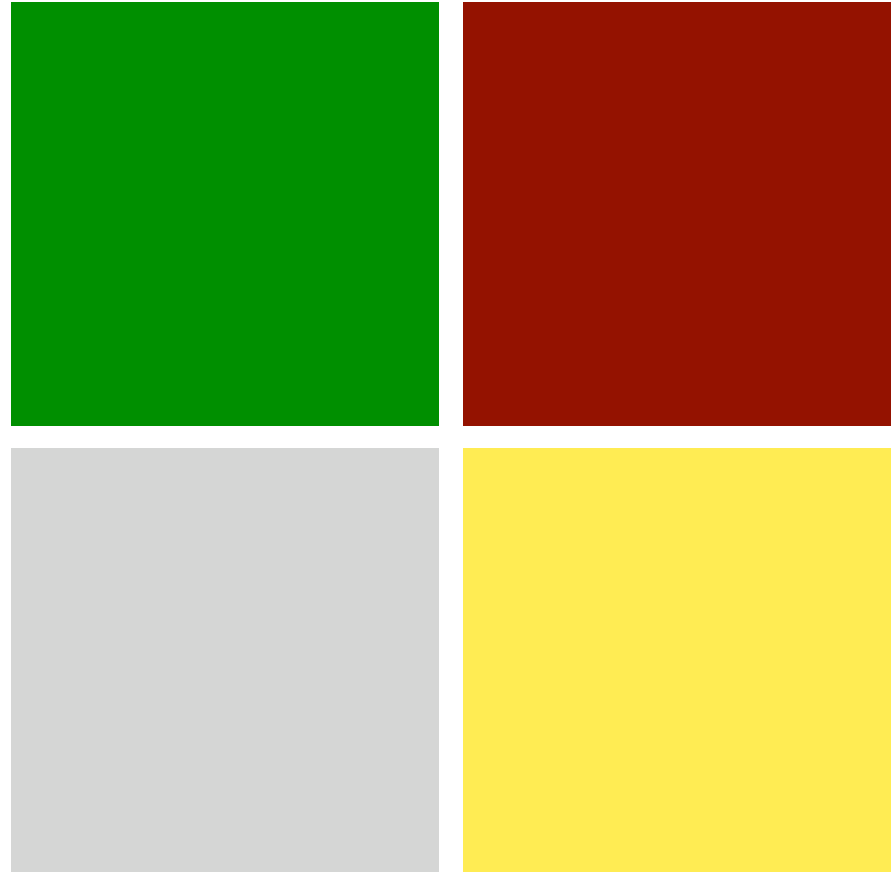


Discussion

- If writing is social in important ways, how do we create social structures to improve student writing?
- As graduate students move from reporters of knowledge to producers, how do you learn advanced discourse practices in your field?
- As graduate students, how do you advance your careers and improving our own writing ability?



**ELEMENTS OF
SCHOLARLY/
ACADEMIC
PAPERS**

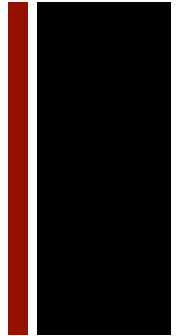


A WAC Graduate Student Seminar

Roger Graves/Heather Graves

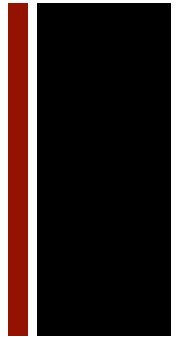
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- S. Miller (1984) described genre as a rhetorical action that recurs within a social setting
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- These shared discourses form into **typical types of documents (genres)**



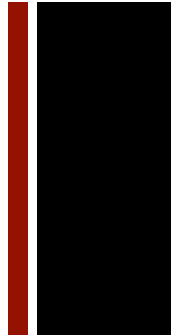
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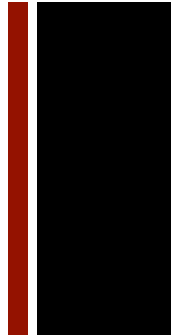


GENRE SETS

- 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

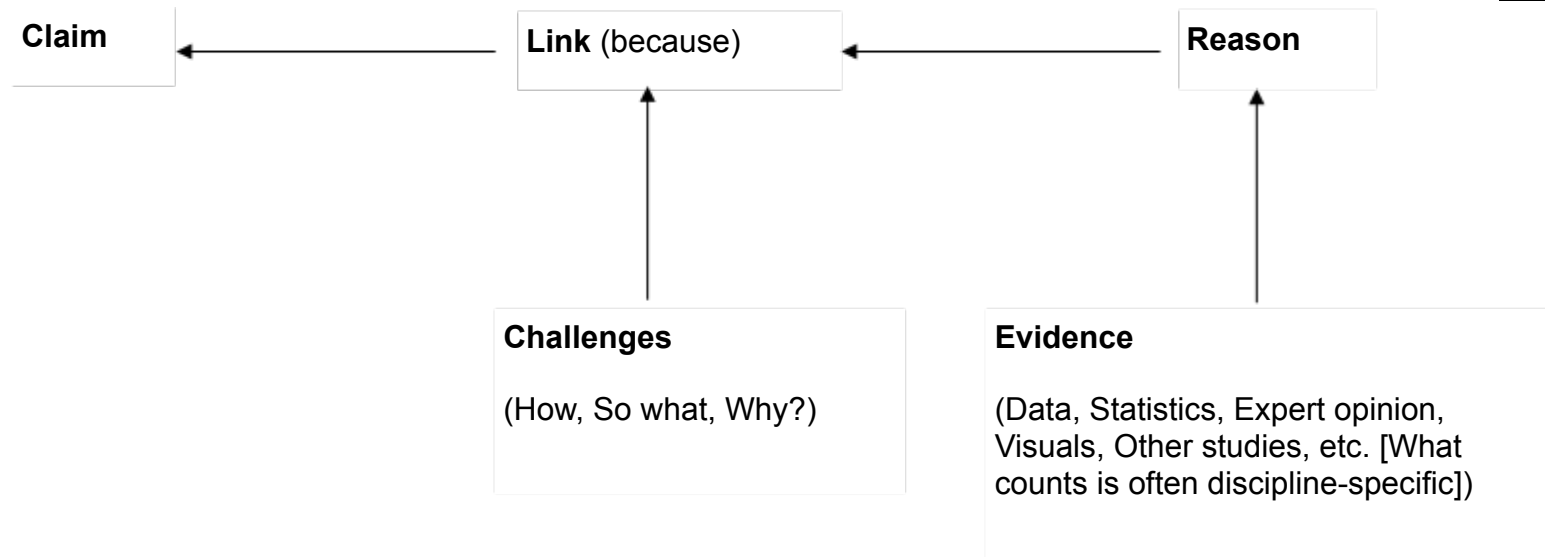
MOVES

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

+ INFORMAL ARGUMENT

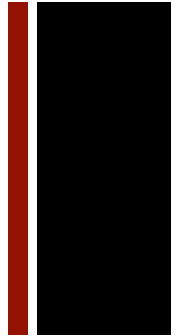


What argument does the abstract or introduction present?

+ What arguments appear in your sample article?



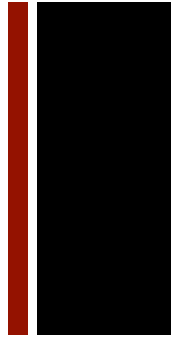
ORGANIZATION



Genetically-modified soybeans

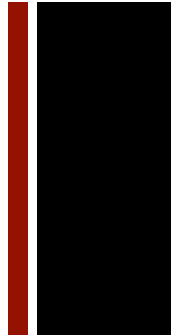
1. Introduction
2. Materials and methods
 - 2.1 Samples
 - 2.2 DNA extraction
[continue from this point]
3. Results and discussion
4. Concluding remarks
5. Acknowledgements
6. References

How is your sample article organized?



What kinds of articles are there?

- Theoretical?
- Overview?
- Experimental?



TEXTUAL IDENTITY OF AUTHOR(S)

How does the author identify him or herself 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

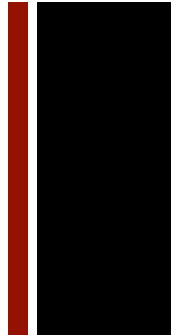
Example: "Two interventions in particular show promise because they address a number of issues, including everyday decision making. . ." (Whitlatch, p. 92).

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).

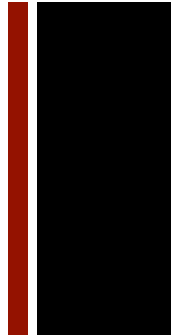
Identification: We (author and reader) work together to solve problem

Where? Conclusion of section critiquing process theory
Co-ops reader to find a better solution



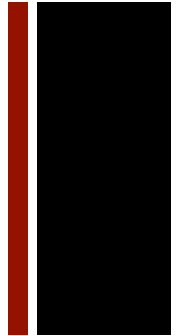
Does the article use visuals?

- 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?



Methods

- How is the methods section of your sample article organized?
- What level of description does it provide about the methods used?
- Do the authors cite other research articles in this section?

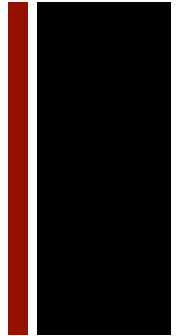


Sample Methods statements

- In air (A): Specimens were cured in a water tank saturated with lime at 20 ± 2 C for 3 days, and then kept at laboratory medium for 2 years,
- Because the number of specimens was too high, The Taguchi Test Method was used to reduce the number of the tests to be applied. Thus, an experimental design consisting of 27 different combinations was selected taking L27 test model into consideration.
- Kackar (1985) pointed out that a number of performance statistics (more than 60) was developed depending on the nature of the problem that was investigated.

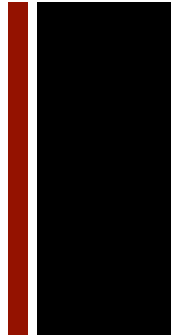
Results

- Do the authors present graphs and tables in this section?
- Do the authors summarize and describe?
- Do they present arguments to explain the data?
- Do they cite other research articles in this section?



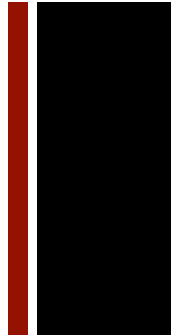
Discussion

- Do the authors present visual evidence in this section?
- Do they present arguments that tell you how to interpret their results?
- Do they cite other research?



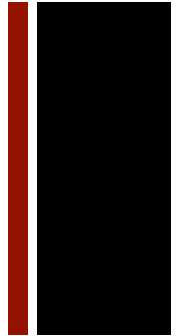
Sample R&D statements

- The unit weights and the transmission factors of the specimens obtained from the experiments were listed in Table 5.
- As it can be seen from the figures, the transmission factors increase exponentially with increasing energy supplied by ^{133}Ba in the range of 30.85–276.85 keV.
- These results show that the radiation attenuation of the concrete increased in direct proportion to the density of the concrete. In other words, highdensity concrete attenuates more radiation.



Conclusions

- Within the framework of this study, it can be concluded that the most important parameter affecting the attenuation of radiation of normal-weight concrete is the water/cement ratio. This parameter is followed by the cement content. Curing conditions and air entraining agents have little effect in comparison to the W/C ratio and the amount of cement.



References

- How many?
- What kind?

