

# What's Reading Got to Do With It?

Reading to Support Writing in Graduate School

Megan Behrend  
September 29, 2023

## Today's Agenda:

- Reflect on our academic reading practices
  - Introduce a framework for reading strategically in grad school
  - Introduce and practice “Reading Like a Writer”
  - Next steps and further resources
-

# Free-write

---

1. What ways of reading are used and/or valued in your field or discipline? What do these ways of reading look or feel like while you're doing them? I.e., What kinds of texts are you reading? How are you engaging with the text? What are you paying attention to? Are you taking notes? What do your notes include?
2. Do any of these ways of reading connect to your writing, either directly or indirectly? How so?

# Reading Strategically

---

# Reading ~~Strategically~~ Mindfully

---

- “Not...yet another way of reading but...a framework” (10)
- “[T]he term *mindful*, when modifying reading, describes a particular stance on the part of the reader, one that is characterized by intentional awareness of and attention to the present moment, its context, and one’s perspective” (11)
- The goal is to “become knowledgeable, deliberate, and reflective about how [you] read and the demands that contexts place on [your] reading” (11)

from Ellen Carillo, “Creating Mindful Readers”

# Imagine...

## The Reading Context

- You need to write in a genre or for an audience or purpose that you have never or rarely written in/for before.
  - You have a text that you know is an example of writing in that genre or for that audience or purpose.
  - How might you most effectively read that example text to support your own writing?
-

# Reading Like A Writer

---

“When you read like a writer, you are trying to figure out how the text you are reading was constructed so that you learn how to ‘build’ one for yourself. Author David Jauss makes a similar comparison when he writes... ‘You must look at a book the way a carpenter looks at a house someone else built, examining the details in order to see how it was made.’

from Michael Bunn, “How to Read Like a Writer”

# Reading Like a Writer

---

- What is the context (rhetorical situation) for this piece of writing?
  - Genre?
  - Audience?
  - Purpose?
- What choices do I notice? What are the effects of those choices?
- What different choices could the author have made? What would be their effects?
- What would be the advantages or disadvantages if I made a similar choice in my own writing?



# You Try

Natural Sciences Example

Social Sciences Example

pp. 128-31

Humanities Example

pp. 148-155

RLW Worksheet

- What research does the author (or authors) include ? What kinds of sources? When were they published?
  - How do they refer to others' scholarship or perspectives on their topic? Do they summarize, paraphrase, and/or directly quote their sources?
  - How do they organize the literature review?
  - How much and to what purposes do they interpret or evaluate the research they synthesize?
  - Anything else?
-

# Share Out

- What did you learn from this experience of “reading like a writer”? About the genre of the literature review? About writing for academic audiences in specific disciplines?
  - What did this reading approach require you to ignore? What kinds of meaning-making did this approach prohibit?
-

# Reflections Toward Mindful Reading

---

## Before reading...

- What reading approach will I employ first?
- What does this reading approach allow me to notice in the text?
- What must I ignore?
- What meanings does this approach allow me to construct and what meanings does it prohibit?

## After reading...

- Did I need to abandon my initial reading approach? Why did this approach take me only so far?
- What does this tell me about the approach, as well as about me as a reader?
- What other approaches do I need to bring into play to support my immediate reading and writing purposes?

# Works Cited and Further Reading

---

[Ellen Carillo](#). "Creating Mindful Readers in the First-Year Composition Classroom." *Pedagogy* 16, no. 1 (2015): 9-22.

[Mike Bunn](#). "How to Read Like a Writer." In *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, vol. 2, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky, 71-86. Parlor Press, 2011.

[Jessica McCrory Calarco](#). "Reading and Writing About Other People's Research." In *A Field Guide to Graduate School: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum*, 108-118. Princeton UP, 2020.

[Christine Pearson Casanave](#). "Reading in the Early Stages." In *Before the Dissertation: A Textual Mentor for Doctoral Students at Early Stages of a Research Project*, 65-79. University of Michigan Press, 2014.

# **How to Grad Student:** **Becoming an Effective Writer in Graduate School**

**9/29 What's Reading Got to Do with It?**

Reading to Support Writing in Graduate School

**10/6 Who Are You Talking To?**

Identifying & Responding To Your Interlocutors

**10/20 How to Make Revision Count**

Revising Practices for Graduate Students

**10/27 How Do You Conceptualize Your Time in Graduate School?**

From the Physical to the Philosophical



For more info & to register

# More Offerings from Sweetland

---

- 30 minute or 60 minute consultations with experienced writing faculty.
- You can come in at any point during your process, multiple times w/ the same instructor.

[lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/graduates](https://lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/graduates)



**WRITING WORKSHOP**