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# Invention and Craft

A Guide to College Writing

Ronda Leathers Dively

Mc  
Graw  
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Education

# INVENTION AND CRAFT

## **A Guide to College Writing**

MLA Updated Edition



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MLA Updated Edition

Ronda Leathers Dively

*Southern Illinois University Carbondale*

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INVENTION AND CRAFT: A GUIDE TO COLLEGE WRITING, MLA UPDATED EDITION

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DEDICATION

To my family

# Brief Contents

*Preface xxii*

## Part ONE Creating Contexts for Understanding Composition 1

- 1 Composition and Creativity 1
- 2 Composing Processes and Creative Processes 17
- 3 Rhetorical Situations 33
- 4 Invention Strategies 53
- 5 Research Strategies 65

## Part TWO Creating Texts That Inform 77

- 6 Introduction to Texts That Inform 77
- 7 Memoir 85
- 8 Profile 109
- 9 Report 131
- 10 Annotated Bibliography 163

## Part THREE Creating Texts That Analyze 185

- 11 Introduction to Texts That Analyze 185
- 12 Writing-Process Analysis 191
- 13 Visual Analysis 207
- 14 Rhetorical Analysis 225
- 15 Literary Analysis 247

**Part FOUR** **Creating Texts That Argue 277**

- 16** Introduction to Texts That Argue 277
- 17** Research Proposal 287
- 18** Review 309
- 19** Position Paper 329
- 20** Problem-Solution Paper 347

**Part FIVE** **Creating Presentation-Quality Final Products 373**

- 21** Source Integration and Citation 373
- 22** Document Design 391
- 23** Revision and Editing 405
- 24** Peer and Instructor Review 421
- 25** Portfolios 431

*Photo Credits* 443

*Text and Line Art Credits* 444

*Index* 445



# Contents

*Preface* xxii

## Part **ONE** Creating Contexts for Understanding Composition 1

<b>1</b>	<b>Composition and Creativity 1</b>
	Some Straight Talk about Composition Courses 2
	The Search for Creativity in Expository Writing 3
	Expository Writing and Other Creative Activities 4
	Creativity and Self-Awareness 6
	The Transfer of Composing Knowledge 8
	Conditions for Knowledge Transfer 9
	Routes for Knowledge Transfer in Composition 10
	Processes Involved in Knowledge Transfer 11
	Negative Transfer and Composing Myths 13
	An Invitation to Create in Your Composition Course 13
<b>2</b>	<b>Composing Processes and Creative Processes 17</b>
	A Composing Model 18
	Invention 19
	Drafting 21
	Revision 22
	Editing 23
	Expository Writing as a Creative Act 24
	The Creative Process Model 24
	First Insight 25
	Preparation 26
	Incubation 26
	Insight 27
	Verification 28

The Creative Process Model and Expository Writing 28

Reflection and Your Development as a Writer 29

### 3 Rhetorical Situations 33

Overlap between Creative and Expository Writing 34

Creativity and the Rhetorical Situation 36

Rhetoric and Constructive Constraints 37

Elements of the Rhetorical Situation 40

Audience and Forum 40

Topic 42

Genre 44

Author's Purpose 45

Author's Role 46

Rhetorical Appeals 47

Ethos 47

Pathos 48

Logos 49

Rhetoric and Creative Drive 50

### 4 Invention Strategies 53

Prewriting Techniques 54

Unstructured Prewriting Techniques 55

Structured Prewriting Techniques 60

Invention beyond the Composition Classroom 63

### 5 Research Strategies 65

Research Methods 66

Primary Research 67

Secondary Research 71

Strategies for Managing Secondary Research 74

Research, Invention, and Knowledge Transfer 75

**Part TWO** **Creating Texts That Inform 77****6** **Introduction to Texts That Inform 77**

Purposes and Strategies for  
Informing 78

Application in College and the  
Workplace 81

**7** **Memoir 85**

Distinguishing Features of a Memoir 86

Processes for Composing a Memoir 88

Invention toward First Insight 88

Preparation through Research 90

Invention toward More Focused Insight 91

Strategies for Drafting 93

Revision and Editing 95

Transfer to Other Writing Situations 96

**READINGS 98**

“One Writer’s Beginnings,” by Eudora Welty 98

“The Workers,” by Richard Rodriguez 102

**8** **Profile 109**

Distinguishing Features of a Profile 110

Processes for Composing a Profile 111

Invention toward First Insight 112

Preparation through Research 112

Invention toward More Focused Insight 115

Strategies for Drafting 115

Revision and Editing 116

Transfer to Other Writing Situations 117

**READINGS 119**

“From a Dream to Reality,” by Erin  
Anderson, a First-Year Composition  
Student 119

“Reinventing Rio,” by Alan Riding 122

## 9 Report 131

Distinguishing Features of a Report 132

Processes for Composing a Report 138

Invention toward First Insight 138

Preparation through Research 139

Invention toward More Focused Insight 139

Strategies for Drafting 139

Revision and Editing 141

Transfer to Other Writing Situations 142

**READINGS 143**

“Mirror, Mirror on My Facebook Wall: Effects of Exposure to Facebook on Self-Esteem,” by Amy L. Gonzales and Jeffrey T. Hancock 143

“The History and Psychology of Clowns Being Scary,” by Linda Rodriguez McRobbie 153

## 10 Annotated Bibliography 163

Distinguishing Features of an Annotated Bibliography 165

Processes for Composing an Annotated Bibliography 168

Invention toward First Insight 168

Preparation through Research 168

Invention toward More Focused Insight 169

Strategies for Drafting 169

Revision and Editing 172

Transfer to Other Writing Situations 172

**READINGS 176**

“Teen Dating Violence: A Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography,” by Priscilla Offenbauer and Alice Buchalter 176

“Design and the Social Sector: An Annotated Bibliography,” by Courtney Drake and Deirdre Cerminaro with William Drenttel 179

## Part THREE Creating Texts That Analyze 185

### 11 Introduction to Texts That Analyze 185

Purposes and Strategies for Analyzing 186

Application in College and the Workplace 187

<b>12</b>	<b>Writing-Process Analysis</b>	<b>191</b>
	Distinguishing Features of a Writing-Process Analysis	192
	Processes for Composing a Writing-Process Analysis	194
	Invention toward First Insight	196
	Preparation through Research	197
	Invention toward More Focused Insight	198
	Strategies for Drafting	198
	Revision and Editing	199
	Transfer to Other Writing Situations	200
	<b>READINGS</b>	<b>202</b>
	“The Watcher at the Gates,” by Gail Godwin	202
	“A Way of Writing,” by William Stafford	204
<b>13</b>	<b>Visual Analysis</b>	<b>207</b>
	Distinguishing Features of a Visual Analysis	208
	Processes for Composing a Visual Analysis	211
	Invention toward First Insight	211
	Preparation through Research	212
	Invention toward More Focused Insight	212
	Strategies for Drafting	213
	Revision and Editing	214
	Transfer to Other Writing Situations	215
	<b>READINGS</b>	<b>217</b>
	“Is Team USA’s Militaristic Uniform a Problem?,” by Paul Achter	217
	“The Heritage of Berlin Street Art and Graffiti Scene,” by Simon Arms	219
<b>14</b>	<b>Rhetorical Analysis</b>	<b>225</b>
	Distinguishing Features of a Rhetorical Analysis	226
	Processes for Composing a Rhetorical Analysis	229
	Invention toward First Insight	229
	Preparation through Research	230
	Invention toward More Focused Insight	231
	Strategies for Drafting	231
	Revision and Editing	232
	Transfer to Other Writing Situations	232

**READINGS 234**

“A More Perfect Union,” delivered by Senator Barack Obama on March 18, 2008 234

“Why It Worked: A Rhetorical Analysis of Obama’s Speech on Race,” by Roy Peter Clark 241

**15 Literary Analysis 247**

Distinguishing Features of a Literary Analysis 248

Processes for Composing a Literary Analysis 253

Invention toward First Insight 253

Preparation through Research 253

Invention toward More Focused Insight 254

Strategies for Drafting 254

Revision and Editing 256

Transfer to Other Writing Situations 256

**READINGS 258**

“‘Neither Can Live While the Other Survives’: The Driving Force of Revenge in *Harry Potter*,” by Heidi Nielson 258

“Untold Story: The Lying Narrator in ‘The Black Cat,’” by Susan Amper 265

**Part FOUR Creating Texts That Argue 277****16 Introduction to Texts That Argue 277**

Purposes of and Strategies for Arguing 278

Tone 278

Structure 279

Logical Fallacies 281

Application in College and the Workplace 285

**17 Research Proposal 287**

Distinguishing Features of a Research Proposal 288

Introduction 290

Statement of Purpose 290

Projected Contributions 290

Literature Review 291

Research Methods 291

Conclusion 292

Works Cited or References 292

The Parts as a Whole 292

**Processes for Composing a Research Proposal 296**

- Invention toward First Insight 296
- Preparation through Research 297
- Invention toward More Focused Insight 297
- Strategies for Drafting 298
- Revision and Editing 298

**Transfer to Other Writing Situations 299****READINGS 301**

- “Exploring and Developing Stage Combat Methodologies,” by Whitney Elmore, an Undergraduate Student 301**
- “The Evolution of Ethics,” by Matt Warren, an Undergraduate Student 304**

**18 Review 309****Distinguishing Features of a Review 310****Processes for Composing a Review 314**

- Invention toward First Insight 317
- Preparation through Research 317
- Invention toward More Focused Insight 317
- Strategies for Drafting 318
- Revision and Editing 319

**Transfer to Other Writing Situations 320****READINGS 322**

- “‘Gris Grimly’s *Frankenstein*’ Revisits, Enhances Shelley’s Famous Tale,” by Karen Sandstrom 322**
- “Old ‘Cosmos’ vs. New ‘Cosmos’: Who’s the King of the Universe?,” by Chris Taylor 323**

**19 Position Paper 329****Distinguishing Features of a Position Paper 330****Processes for Composing a Position Paper 335**

- Invention toward First Insight 335
- Preparation through Research 336
- Invention toward More Focused Insight 336
- Strategies for Drafting 337
- Revision and Editing 338

**Transfer to Other Writing Situations 338****READINGS 341**

- “Homeschooling’s Liberalism,” by David Mills 341**
- “Educating Girls Is a Good Investment,” by Becky Smith Conover 344**

- 20** **Problem-Solution Paper 347**
- Distinguishing Features of a Problem-Solution Paper 348
  - Processes for Composing a Problem-Solution Paper 353
    - Invention toward First Insight 353
    - Preparation through Research 353
    - Invention toward More Focused Insight 354
    - Strategies for Drafting 354
    - Revision and Editing 356
  - Transfer to Other Writing Situations 357
  - READINGS 359**
    - “The Creativity Crisis,” by Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman 359
    - “It Can’t Happen Here: Why Is There So Little Coverage of Americans Who Are Struggling with Poverty?,” by Dan Froomkin 366

**Part FIVE** **Creating Presentation-Quality Final Products 373**

- 21** **Source Integration and Citation 373**
- Strategies for Meshing Sources 374
    - Summary 374
    - Paraphrase 375
    - Direct Quote 378
    - Synthesis 380
  - Strategies for Citing Sources 381
    - Logic of Citation in MLA and APA 382
    - MLA Internal Citations 382
    - MLA Works Cited Page Entries 383
    - APA Internal Citations 385
    - APA References Page Entries 386
  - Transfer across Writing Situations 389

- 22** **Document Design 391**
- Emphasis 392
    - Bold Print 392
    - Italics (or Underlining) 393
    - Scare Quotes 394



	<b>White Space</b>	<b>394</b>
	Paragraphs	395
	Subheadings	395
	Bulleted and Numbered Lists	396
	Alignment	398
	<b>Images and Tables</b>	<b>399</b>
	Images	399
	Tables, Charts, and Graphs	401
	<b>Transfer across Writing Situations</b>	<b>403</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>Revision and Editing</b>	<b>405</b>
	<b>Revision</b>	<b>406</b>
	Criteria for Productive Revision	406
	Processes for Revising	407
	<b>Editing</b>	<b>410</b>
	Common Surface Errors	410
	Processes for Editing	418
	<b>Transfer across Writing Situations</b>	<b>418</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Peer and Instructor Review</b>	<b>421</b>
	<b>Invention Workshops</b>	<b>422</b>
	<b>Peer Review</b>	<b>424</b>
	<b>Instructor Feedback</b>	<b>426</b>
	<b>Writing Center Visits</b>	<b>427</b>
	<b>Transfer across Writing Situations</b>	<b>429</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Portfolios</b>	<b>431</b>
	<b>Portfolio-Based Composition Courses</b>	<b>432</b>
	<b>Portfolio Content</b>	<b>433</b>
	Document Selection	434
	Reflective Introduction	435
	<b>A Word about Procrastination</b>	<b>439</b>
	<b>E-Portfolios</b>	<b>440</b>
	<b>Transfer across Writing Situations</b>	<b>440</b>
	<i>Photo Credits</i>	443
	<i>Text and Line Art Credits</i>	444
	<i>Index</i>	445

# List of Readings, Myths, and Genre Diagrams

## Readings by Chapter

### Chapter 7

"One Writer's Beginnings," by Eudora Welty 98

"The Workers," by Richard Rodriguez 102

### Chapter 8

"From a Dream to Reality," by Erin Anderson, a First-Year Composition Student 119

"Reinventing Rio," by Alan Riding 122

### Chapter 9

"Mirror, Mirror on My Facebook Wall: Effects of Exposure to Facebook on Self-Esteem," by Amy Gonzales and Jeffrey T. Hancock 143

"The History and Psychology of Clowns Being Scary," by Linda Rodriguez McRobbie 153

### Chapter 10

"Teen Dating Violence: A Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography," by Priscilla Offenhauer and Alice Buchalter 176

"Design and the Social Sector: An Annotated Bibliography," by Courtney Drake and Deirdre Cerminaro with William Drenttel 179

### Chapter 12

"The Watcher at the Gates," by Gail Godwin 202

"A Way of Writing," by William Stafford 204

### Chapter 13

"Is Team USA's Militaristic Uniform a Problem?," by Paul Achter 217

"The Heritage of Berlin Street Art and Graffiti Scene," by Simon Arms 219

### Chapter 14

"A More Perfect Union," delivered by Senator Barack Obama on March 18, 2008 234

"Why It Worked: A Rhetorical Analysis of Obama's Speech on Race," by Roy Peter Clark 241

**Chapter 15**

"Neither Can Live While the Other Survives': The Driving Force of Revenge in *Harry Potter*," by Heidi Nielson 258

"Untold Story: The Lying Narrator in 'The Black Cat,'" by Susan Amper 265

**Chapter 17**

"Exploring and Developing Stage Combat Methodologies," by Whitney Elmore, an Undergraduate Student 301

"The Evolution of Ethics," by Matt Warren, an Undergraduate Student 304

**Chapter 18**

"'Gris Grimly's *Frankenstein*' Revisits, Enhances Shelley's Famous Tale," by Karen Sandstrom 322

"Old 'Cosmos' vs. New 'Cosmos': Who's the King of the Universe?," by Chris Taylor 323

**Chapter 19**

"Homeschooling's Liberalism," by David Mills 341

"Educating Girls Is a Good Investment," by Becky Smith Conover 344

**Chapter 20**

"The Creativity Crisis," by Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman 359

"It Can't Happen Here: Why Is There So Little Coverage of Americans Who Are Struggling with Poverty?," by Dan Froomkin 366

## Myth and Reality Boxes by Chapter

<b>Chapter 1</b>	5	14
<b>Chapter 2</b>	21	26
<b>Chapter 3</b>	36	44
<b>Chapter 4</b>	54	
<b>Chapter 5</b>	67	74
<b>Chapter 7</b>	87	
<b>Chapter 8</b>	110	
<b>Chapter 9</b>	132	
<b>Chapter 10</b>	168	171
<b>Chapter 12</b>	192	
<b>Chapter 13</b>	212	
<b>Chapter 14</b>	226	
<b>Chapter 15</b>	248	255
<b>Chapter 16</b>	279	
<b>Chapter 17</b>	288	
<b>Chapter 18</b>	310	
<b>Chapter 19</b>	335	

<b>Chapter 20</b>	349				
<b>Chapter 21</b>	375	375			
<b>Chapter 22</b>	393	395			
<b>Chapter 23</b>	409	410	412	414	418
<b>Chapter 24</b>	426	427	428		
<b>Chapter 25</b>	435				

## Genre Diagrams by Chapter

### Figure 6.1

Elements of an informative text 81

### Figure 7.1

Key elements in a memoir 87

### Figure 8.1

Relationships between elements of a profile 111

### Figure 9.2

Some key features of a report 134

### Figure 10.2

Path of development for an annotated bibliography 165

### Figure 11.2

Elements of an analysis 188

### Figure 12.1

Schematic for focusing a writing-process analysis 193

### Figure 13.2

Schematic for conceiving a visual analysis 209

### Figure 14.1

Interpretive lens for a rhetorical analysis 227

### Figure 15.3

Elements of a literary analysis 250

### Figure 16.3

Elements of the Toulmin system plotted in an argumentative essay 281

### Figure 17.1

Role of a research proposal in the research process 289

### Figure 18.3

Elements of a review 313

### Figure 19.3

Elements of a position paper 332

### Figure 20.3

Relationships between causes and solutions 355

# The Learning Support System to

## Flexible Text Format

- McGraw-Hill Education's CREATE allows instructors to build their own course material to perfectly match their course by selecting specific chapters from *Invention and Craft*. Instructors may also add readings from a wide range of collections or include their own content, such as syllabi, assignments, and course information. Finally, instructors may choose to offer their students a print or electronic version of their customized version of *Invention and Craft*.

## Connect Composition

McGraw-Hill Education's *Connect Composition*<sup>®</sup> offers a wide array of tools for students and instructors:

- **SmartBook**<sup>®</sup>. SmartBook is the first and only adaptive reading experience designed to change the way students read and learn. Dively's *Invention and Craft* will be offered in the SmartBook format.
- **Writing Assignments**. Instructors can choose from a wide variety of customizable writing assignments, with intuitive instructor commenting and annotating capabilities.
- **LearnSmart Achieve**<sup>®</sup>. McGraw-Hill Education's newest adaptive learning environment offers modules on writing topics across the curriculum: Writing Processes, Critical Reading, the Research Process, Reasoning and Argument, Grammar and Common Sentence Problems, Punctuation and Mechanics, and Style and Word Choice, as well as a module for Multilingual Writers.
- **Power of Process**. This brand-new *Connect Composition* tool guides students through performance-based assessment activities that require them to apply active reading and writing strategies.
- **Simple LMS Integration**. *Connect Composition* seamlessly integrates with any learning management system. Instructors can quickly access registration, attendance, assignments, grades, and course resources in real time in one location.
- **Mobile Access**. Students can now access powerful *Connect Composition* study resources directly from their tablets and phones.

# Accompany *Invention and Craft*

- **Tegrity.** Students can replay recordings of instructor lectures with this lecture-capture tool.
- **Connect Insight.** This analytics tool provides a series of visual data displays—each framed by an intuitive question—to provide instructors with at-a-glance information regarding how their classes are doing.
- **Outcomes-Based Assessment for Writing Assignments.** Instructors and administrators can incorporate their own custom learning outcomes into *Connect Composition*, creating a grading rubric for specific course outcomes and generating detailed reports for students, sections, or departments.
- **Four Years of Student Access.** Students benefit from this dependable writing and research resource throughout college, at a fraction of the cost of traditional textbooks.



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| COMPOSITION

## Why *Invention and Craft*?

*Invention and Craft: A Guide to College Writing* offers a new approach to teaching and learning in the first-year writing classroom. *Invention and Craft* draws on the relationship between writing processes and the creative process model and teaches a problem-solving, insight-driven approach to writing clearly and effectively in all genres. Its emphasis on knowledge transfer instructs students to recognize the patterns that occur within and across genres and to apply what they know to each new writing assignment. *Invention and Craft* offers special promise for casting students in the role of meaning-makers by pinpointing strategies for transforming knowledge—the hallmark of successful expository prose.

## The *Invention and Craft* Structural Framework

Building on her own scholarship about knowledge transfer, Ronda Leathers Dively has designed a leading-edge instructional framework that guides students through each step of their writing processes, from exercises that spur invention and insight to strategies for transferring their knowledge to new writing situations. Dively explicitly maps the similarities between expository writing and creative activity in other venues and invites students to write about their own creative and composing processes. Dively's creative approach demystifies the complexities of composition, thereby building students' confidence and energizing them to write.

## Features of *Invention and Craft*

*Invention and Craft* offers innovation and flexibility with customizable content and a learning support system that reinforces the author's focus on creativity, reflection, and metacognition.

Together with the tools available in *Connect Composition*, *Invention and Craft* addresses the specific needs of the composition course:

- **A flexible solution for the writing course.** In contrast to viewing all acts of writing as disparate, with no familiar points of departure, *Invention and Craft* acknowledges differences in both process and product, as well as applicability across multiple contexts. SmartBook provides students with an adaptive reading

experience, assists them in long-term knowledge retention, and prepares them for active in-class participation and writing assignments that tap into students' creative impulses.

- **Multiple features that promote metacognitive skills.** *Invention and Craft* promotes reflection through writing activities at the end of each assignment chapter that invite students to write about their own creative and composing processes. By focusing on writing as a creative act, *Invention and Craft* promotes metacognitive skills and helps students understand that expository composition isn't as unfamiliar or intimidating as it may seem. LearnSmart Achieve prepares students to write in any situation by teaching the core topics in composition in an adaptive environment that promotes knowledge transfer.
- **A methodical approach that deconstructs common barriers to writing.** Students often arrive with a host of preconceptions about writers and writing that undermine their capacity for mastering college-level writing challenges. *Invention and Craft* identifies and dispels common misconceptions in *Myth and Reality* boxes placed at strategic points throughout the text. Each assignment chapter features *A Look Inside*, a carefully annotated sample reading exemplifying the genre in focus. *A Look Inside* walks students through each genre, identifying rhetorical patterns and strategies that students can transfer to their own reading and writing activities.

## MYTH

**"I don't need a composition course. My career plans won't require me to write."**

The first problem with this statement is that most every career involves some sort of writing, even if only in the form of data charts or business-related communications with employers or colleagues. The second problem is that it implies that your goals won't change. At some point you'll likely consider switching careers or specific jobs within a given profession. If that different path is more dependent on writing skills and you have failed to transfer what your writing course had to offer, you may be restricted in following your dreams or advancing your career.

## REALITY

### From *The Interpretation of Dreams*

by Sigmund Freud

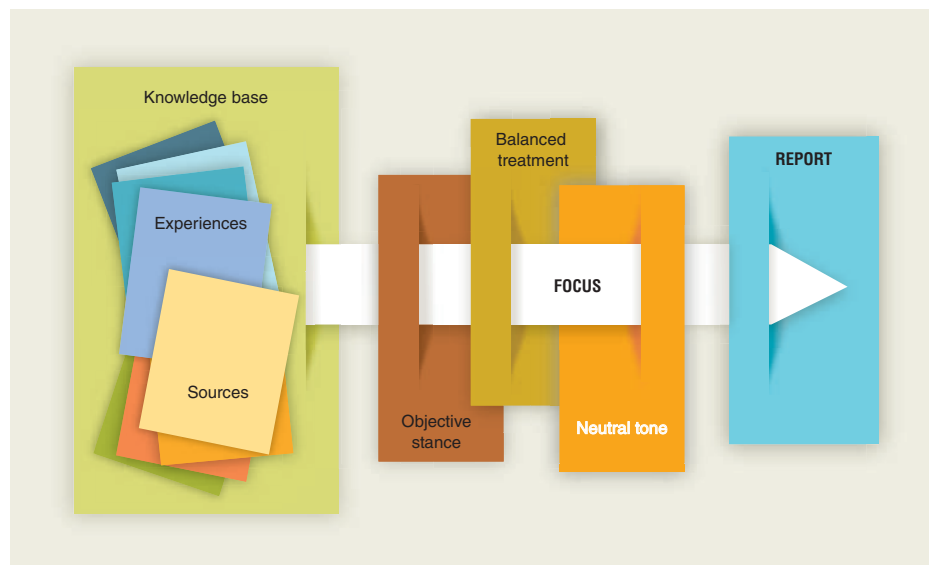
It often happens that matter appears in the dream content which one cannot recognise later in the waking state as belonging to one's knowledge and experience. One remembers well enough having dreamed about the subject in question, but cannot recall the fact or time of the experience. The dreamer is therefore in the dark as to the source from which the dream has been drawing, and is even tempted to believe an independently productive activity on the part of the dream, until, often long afterwards, a new episode brings back to recollection a former experience given up as lost, and thus reveals the source.

### A LOOK INSIDE: ANALYZING A DREAM

Freud introduces his analysis by indicating his interpretive lens: a pattern he's noticed in the way dreams pull "forgotten" experiences from the subconscious.



- **A fresh approach to writing processes.** *Invention and Craft* takes a fresh approach to writing processes. Chapter 2 focuses on the interplay between writing process and creative process models. By gaining an understanding of the recursive nature of writing processes, students begin to see that all writing is creative. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 cover the foundational concepts students need to approach any writing assignment, from employing rhetorical strategies to engaging in invention and research. Twelve assignment chapters feature illustrations of genres that inform, analyze, and argue. These illustrations engage visual learners with the abstract concepts that support writing in every genre.



**Figure 9.2 Some key features of a report.** Reports focus on explaining some aspect of the current knowledge base on a topic. As this figure illustrates, an objective stance, balanced treatment, and neutral tone are key features of this genre.

Each assignment chapter closes with a focused discussion of how students can transfer their knowledge of key elements of that genre to other writing situations. With *Invention and Craft*, students learn to approach each new writing assignment equipped with the skills and strategies acquired from previous writing tasks, effectively transferring their knowledge from one assignment to the next.

- **An abundance of opportunities to practice skills.** *Invention and Craft* provides students with extensive practice of reading and writing skills through invention exercises and strategies for drafting, as well as more comprehensive activities at the end of each chapter. Built off the proven *LearnSmart* engine that identifies what a student does or does not know and adapts in real time to

maximize each minute of time spent learning the material, the SmartBook for *Invention and Craft* contains four stages: Preview, Read, Practice, and Recharge. Starting with an initial preview of each chapter and key learning objectives, students read the material and are guided to topics that need the most practice on the basis of their responses. In this way, students engage with the text as it prepares them to respond to various writing situations.

## ACTIVITY

**Considering the Rhetoric of Fashion** Human beings communicate through various media, many of them visual in nature, such as clothing. Locate a picture (like the one of Lady Gaga in Figure 14.5) that depicts someone who is clearly sending a message through his or her fashion choices. Using whatever rhetorical elements or appeals seem most applicable, analyze this person's fashion statement.

## IDEA FOR EXTENDED WRITING

**Rhetorically Analyzing a Published Essay** Think of a document you recently read that really frustrated you, angered you, made you want to cry, excited you, motivated you to take action, made you proud to be a part of something, caused you to admire somebody or some institution, or caused you to view something differently than you viewed it before. (If you can't remember an article that had a strong impact on you, search for one relevant to an issue that really interests you.) Once you have a copy of that article in hand, read it again (and again), paying attention not only to what the author said about the topic but also to the way he or she said it. Apply the tools of rhetorical analysis to help you understand how the author appears to use rhetorical elements and appeals to influence his or her intended audience. Share your conclusions in a formal rhetorical analysis targeted for members of that audience.



**Figure 14.5** Lady Gaga using fashion to make a "statement"

## Why a Digital Solution for Writing Courses?

*Connect Composition* and *LearnSmart Achieve* ensure that students learn the core topics of composition in a personalized system that identifies what they already know while providing direct instruction on unfamiliar concepts. This integrated system constantly adapts and changes as it learns more about each student—the student's strengths as well as knowledge gaps. McGraw-Hill Education's digital tools provide the kind of support instructors need to focus class time on the highest course expectations while helping students establish themselves as critical thinkers, communicate their ideas effectively, and transfer these skills to different courses and assignments throughout their college experience.

*Connect Composition* offers **four years of access** to comprehensive, reliable writing and research instruction. The following tools and services are available as part of *Connect Composition*.

Feature	Description	Instructional Value
Simple LMS Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seamlessly integrates with every learning management system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students have automatic single sign-on.</li> <li><i>Connect</i> assignment results sync to the LMS gradebook.</li> </ul>
LearnSmart Achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuously adapts to a student's strengths and weaknesses to create personalized learning moments.</li> <li>Covers Writing Processes, Critical Reading, the Research Process, Reasoning and Argument, Multilingual Writers, Grammar and Common Sentence Problems, Punctuation and Mechanics, and Style and Word Choice.</li> <li>Provides reports for instructors, with data on student and class performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students independently study the fundamental topics across Composition 1 and 2 in an adaptive environment.</li> <li>Metacognitive component supports knowledge transfer.</li> <li>Students track their own understanding and mastery and know where their gaps are.</li> </ul>
SmartBook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Available for rhetorics</i>, the first and only continuously adaptive reading experience that identifies and highlights the topics a student has not mastered.</li> <li>Provides reports for instructors, with data on student and class performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The text adapts to the student on the basis of what he or she knows and doesn't know and focuses study time on critical material.</li> <li>Metacognitive component supports knowledge transfer.</li> <li>Students track their own understanding and mastery and know where their gaps are.</li> </ul>
Power of Process	Guides students through the critical reading and writing process step-by-step.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students demonstrate understanding and develop critical-thinking skills for reading, writing, and evaluating sources by responding to short-answer and annotation questions. Students are also prompted to reflect on their own processes.</li> <li>This tool guides students to consider a source carefully.</li> </ul>
Insight	<p>Provides a quick view of student and class performance with a series of visual data displays that provide analysis on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How are my students doing?</li> <li>How is this student doing?</li> <li>How is my section doing?</li> <li>How is this assignment doing?</li> <li>How are my assignments doing?</li> </ol>	Instructors can quickly check on student and class performance.
Writing Assignments with Peer Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows instructors to assign and grade writing assignments online.</li> <li>Enables instructors to easily and efficiently set up and manage peer review assignments for the entire class.</li> <li>Allows students to highlight and comment on their classmates' writing submissions in response to peer review questions assigned by their instructor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This feature makes grading writing assignments more efficient, saving time for instructors.</li> <li>Students import their Word document(s), and instructors can comment and annotate submissions.</li> <li>Frequently used comments are automatically saved, so instructors do not have to type the same thing over and over.</li> <li>Students can download all comments made by their peers to use as a reference when rewriting their assignment.</li> </ul>
Outcomes-Based Assessment Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows instructors or course administrators to assess student writing on the basis of specific learning outcomes.</li> <li>Generates easy-to-read reports on program-specific learning outcomes.</li> <li>Includes the Writing Program Administrators learning outcomes or allows you to create your own.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This tool provides assessment transparency to students. They can see why a "B" is a "B" and what it will take to improve to an "A."</li> <li>Reports allow a program or instructor to demonstrate progress against section, course, or program goals.</li> </ul>
Connect eReader	Provides access to additional readings that are assignable via <i>Connect Composition</i> .	Sample essays provide models for students on writing.

Feature	Description	Instructional Value
Instructor Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enables review of the performance of an individual student or an entire section.</li> <li>Enables review of multiple sections to gauge progress toward course, department, or institutional goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructors can identify struggling students early and intervene to ensure retention.</li> <li>Instructors can identify challenging topics and adjust instruction accordingly.</li> <li>Reports can be generated for an accreditation process or program evaluation.</li> </ul>
Pretests and Posttests	Provides precreated nonadaptive assessments for pre- and posttesting.	Pretest provides a static benchmark for student knowledge at the beginning of the program. Posttest offers a concluding assessment of student progress.

### Spotlight on Three Tools in *Connect*

**LearnSmart Achieve** *LearnSmart Achieve* helps learners establish a baseline understanding of the language and concepts that make up the critical processes of composition—writing, critical reading, research, reasoning and argument, grammar, mechanics, and style, as well as issues surrounding multilingual writers.

UNIT	TOPIC	
THE WRITING PROCESS	The Writing Process Generating Ideas Planning and Organizing	Drafting Revising Proofreading, Formatting, and Producing Texts
CRITICAL READING	Reading to Understand Literal Meaning Evaluating Truth and Accuracy in a Text	Evaluating the Effectiveness and Appropriateness of a Text
THE RESEARCH PROCESS	Developing and Implementing a Research Plan Evaluating Information and Sources	Integrating Source Material into a Text Using Information Ethically and Legally
REASONING AND ARGUMENT	Developing an Effective Thesis or Claim Using Evidence and Reasoning to Support a Thesis or Claim	Using Ethos (Ethics) to Persuade Readers Using Pathos (Emotion) to Persuade Readers Using Logos (Logic) to Persuade Readers
GRAMMAR AND COMMON SENTENCE PROBLEMS	Parts of Speech Phrases, Clauses, and Fragments Sentence Types Fused (Run-on) Sentences and Comma Splices Pronouns Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement	Pronoun Reference Subject-Verb Agreement Verbs and Verbals Adjectives and Adverbs Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers Mixed Constructions Verb Tense and Voice Shifts
PUNCTUATION AND MECHANICS	Commas Semicolons Colons End Punctuation Apostrophes Quotation Marks Dashes	Parentheses Hyphens Abbreviations Capitalization Italics Numbers Spelling
STYLE AND WORD CHOICE	Wordiness Eliminating Redundancies and Sentence Variety Coordination and Subordination	Faulty Comparisons Word Choice Clichés, Slang, and Jargon Parallelism
MULTILINGUAL WRITERS	Helping Verbs, Gerunds and Infinitives, and Phrasal Verbs Nouns, Verbs, and Objects Articles	Count and Noncount Nouns Sentence Structure and Word Order Verb Agreement Participles and Adverb Placement

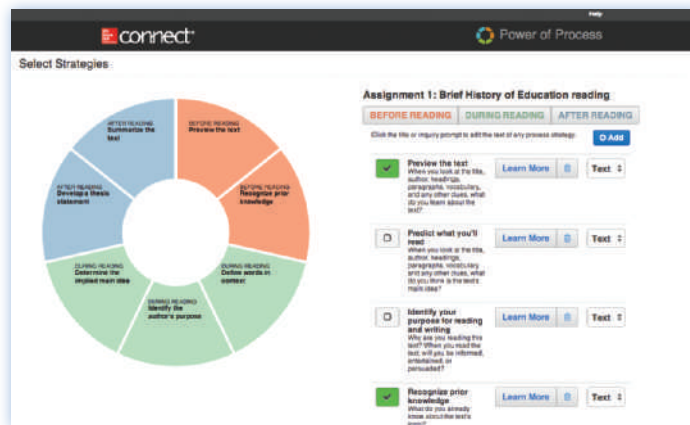
*LearnSmart Achieve* is one of the adaptive learning tools offered in *Connect Composition*.

**Outcomes-Based Assessment of Writing** Writing assignments with Outcomes-Based Assessment provide a way for any instructor to grade a writing assignment using a rubric of outcomes and proficiency levels. The Writing Program Administrators (WPA) outcomes are preloaded; however, instructors may adapt any of these outcomes or use their own. Instructors or administrators may choose to share specific outcomes with other instructors or the whole department. Writing Assignments with Outcomes-Based Assessment offer a range of clear, simple reports that allow instructors or course administrators to view progress and achievement in a variety of ways. These reports may also satisfy department or college-level requests for data relating to program goals or for accreditation purposes.



The *Outcomes-Based Assessment* tool offers a range of clear, simple reports that allow instructors to view progress and achievement in a variety of ways.

**Power of Process** *Power of Process* is the newest tool in *Connect Composition*. *Power of Process* provides strategies that guide students through how to critically read a piece of writing or consider it as a possible source for incorporation into their own work. After they work through the strategies, which include highlighting and



*Power of Process* provides strategies that guide students in reading critically.

annotating a piece of writing, students are encouraged to reflect on their interaction with the reading. Students can print out a summary of their work to use with other projects or to submit alongside their own assignment for grading.

## Connect Composition Reports

*Connect Composition* generates a number of powerful reports and charts that allow instructors to quickly review the performance of a specific student, an entire section, or various sections. Students have their own set of reports (which include only their individual performance) that can demonstrate at a glance where they are doing well and where they are struggling. Here are a few of the reports that are available:

- *Assignment Results Report*—shows an entire section’s performance across all assignments.
- *Assignment Statistics Report*—provides quick data on each assignment, including mean score as well as high and low scores.
- *Student Performance Report*—focuses on a specific student’s progress across all assignments.
- *Learning Outcomes Assessment Report*—for instructors who use the Outcomes-Based Assessment tool to grade a writing assignment, this report provides data on student performance for specific outcomes.
- *At-Risk Report*—provides instructors a dashboard of information that can help identify at-risk students on the basis of low engagement levels.
- *LearnSmart Achieve Reports*—focus on student usage, progress, and mastery of the modules contained within *LearnSmart Achieve*.

## Support for Digital Success

McGraw-Hill Education provides a variety of ways for instructors to get the help and support they need when incorporating new technology into a writing program. The digital tools in *Connect* were developed by experts to create a teaching and learning environment that engages learners with a wide variety of course assignments, suited for online as well as hybrid or face-to-face courses. New users of *Connect* have several options for assistance in setting up courses initially as well as throughout the first term:

- **Digital Faculty Consultants.** Instructors currently using *Connect Composition* are available to offer suggestions, advice, and training for new adopters. To request a Digital Faculty Consultant’s assistance, simply e-mail your local McGraw-Hill representative.
- **Learning Technology Consultants.** Local McGraw-Hill Education representatives can provide face-to-face training and support. Find your local rep at [mhhe.com/rep](http://mhhe.com/rep).
- **Digital Learning Consultants.** These specialists in the field are available to support instructors with initial setup and training as well as answer questions that may arise throughout the term. DLCs may be contacted directly or by simply asking your local McGraw-Hill Education representative.

- **Digital Success Team.** Team members offer one-on-one training to instructors to demonstrate how *Connect* works while also providing information and guidance on how to incorporate *Connect* into a specific course design and syllabus. Ask for a session with a Team Member by writing to your local McGraw-Hill Education representative.
- **National Training Webinars.** McGraw-Hill Education offers an ongoing series of webinars for instructors to learn and master the *Connect* platform as well as its course-specific tools and features. New webinars are being scheduled all the time, so be sure to check the online catalog of courses at [webinars.mhhe.com/](http://webinars.mhhe.com/).

In general, instructors are encouraged to contact us anytime they need help. Our Customer Support Team is available at 800-331-5094 or online at [mhhe.com/contact.php](http://mhhe.com/contact.php).

### Need a *Connect* Account?

Request access to *Connect Composition* from your local McGraw-Hill Education representative ([www.mhhe.com/rep](http://www.mhhe.com/rep)) or write to [english@mheducation.com](mailto:english@mheducation.com). If you have an account already, log in at <http://connect.mheducation.com/>.

# About the Author



**Professor Ronda Leathers Dively** received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English (with teacher certification) and her Master of Arts degree in English (literature) from Eastern Illinois University. After gaining a few years of teaching experience in the secondary English classroom, she pursued her Doctor of Arts degree in English (Rhetoric and Composition) at Illinois State University, completing her degree in 1994 and accepting an assistant professorship in the English Department at Southern Illinois University Carbondale that same year. Currently an associate professor at SIUC, Dr. Dively serves as the Director of Writing Studies for the Department of English and teaches in the Rhetoric and Composition program. Her areas of teaching specialization include composition pedagogy, empirical research methods, intermediate and advanced composition, and classical rhetoric. She has also enjoyed teaching special

topics courses that explore intersections between creativity theory and composition theory. Professor Dively's scholarship investigates how intersections of creativity and composition theory may illuminate how individuals negotiate transitions between various academic composing contexts—from high school to college classrooms, from general education to discipline-specific writing courses, from status as undergraduate student to graduate student, from status as graduate student to professional. Such interests generated a book-length empirical study entitled *Preludes to Insight: Creativity, Incubation and Expository Writing* (Hampton Press, 2006), as well as various articles and conference presentations. She has also published in the areas of knowledge transfer and religious expression.



# A Letter from the Author

As writers and as teachers of writing, we share many goals for our composition students. We want them to establish themselves as critical thinkers, we want them to be able to communicate their ideas as effectively as possible, and we want them to learn how they can transfer these skills across assignments and into subsequent courses. Additionally, although it might seem too much to hope for, we want them to own and enjoy their writing—to view it as the fulfilling, creative activity that we know it is. With these objectives in mind, I decided to write a textbook that would bring together concepts and materials at the foundation of various undergraduate composition courses I’ve taught over the past 20-some years. In its pages, I hope novice instructors will find guidance for engaging their first-year students, I hope master teachers will find fresh inspiration, and I hope students will find motivation for further developing their writing abilities.

*Invention and Craft: A Guide to College Writing* is, in part, a response to teachers and students who question the long-standing divide between types of writing completed for composition courses and types of writing more commonly referred to as “creative” (i.e., poetry and fiction). While acknowledging that genres constituting both categories differ in certain ways, this textbook also works to underscore similarities, emphasizing that, anytime someone is preoccupied with writing, he or she is being creative. To be more specific, neither expository nor creative writing is necessarily more rigid or more free—nor are the respective genres associated with each. Rather, all genres are subject to constraints and opportunities that require active minds to grapple with the processes involved in generating text, the elements of the rhetorical situation, and the status of formal conventions. Ultimately, by emphasizing features that all kinds of writing have in common, alongside the distinctions between genres that enable access to diverse communities, acts of composing can be demystified and pathways for confidence building and knowledge transfer can be opened.

Commonalities between acts of composing—in fact, between composing and a multitude of other activities—are elucidated in this textbook through the lens of creativity theory, which clarifies various practices and habits of mind that result in contributions to a given field. Such contributions may come in the form of new discoveries, novel perspectives, or unique combinations of existing information. It is this goal of making a contribution through writing that leads to the focus on invention indicated in the title. As this textbook asserts, extended time on and attention to invention are crucial to successful writing, perhaps more crucial than many composition classrooms and textbooks demonstrate. Through a chapter devoted to intersections between composing processes and creative processes, as well as through discussions of process within its 12 genre chapters, *Invention and Craft* elaborates the paradigmatic composing model by juxtaposing it with the paradigmatic creative process model, the latter revealing how to break invention into a number of subprocesses so as to render it more manageable for developing writers.

Also crucial to successful writing, as it emphasizes commonalities between acts of composing, is attention to knowledge transfer. The call to help students transfer what they are learning requires anticipating which processes, strategies, and skills that they are applying in one context will be applicable in other contexts that they are likely to encounter. *Invention and Craft* alerts students to the need for transfer through an extended discussion in Chapter 2 and, then, by explaining—with regard to each of the 12 genres addressed in later chapters—which processes, strategies, and skills they can readily carry to other academic and professional contexts.

For all of the boundary breaking, demystifying, and commonality marking that *Invention and Craft* aspires to, it does not take for granted that students will be easily dazzled by what may strike them as a more amenable approach to writing than they've grown accustomed to. In fact, this textbook begins from the premise that many students resist composition courses for one reason or another. Relevant to this premise, it adopts a tone of “straight talk” about the frustrations that many students associate with school-sponsored writing, as well as the (sometimes) institutionally imposed sources of those frustrations. Contributing to this tone is one of the textbook's most notable features: A series of Myth and Reality boxes, which tackle some of the “rules” for writing that students have picked up along the way to their first-year composition classrooms but have later found (or needed to be told) do not hold true across all times or circumstances. Each box succinctly articulates a given myth and then provides a more accurate way of viewing (i.e., articulates the reality surrounding) the myth in question.

As a long-time teacher of college composition, a writing program administrator responsible for preparing other composition teachers, and an individual who loves writing, I've grown ever-more committed to meeting students where they are (not where I think they should be) as I challenge them toward greater achievements. This is the case not only in terms of writing ability but with regard to their attitudes toward and assumptions about writing. Of course, some students entering our classrooms love writing, but even they may hold some erroneous views about it. I believe that by addressing students' attitudes and assumptions up front and head on, teachers establish an ethos that stands a good chance of undermining anxiety, frustration, and resistance, thereby helping students to become more self-assured, successful writers.

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When I began writing this book, I couldn't imagine how much effort and support it would require from so many people. I'd written a book before, but not a textbook. Naively, I didn't anticipate the extent and layers of collaboration that would be required to carry out such a project. I'm indebted to so many people that it's difficult to know where to begin my list of acknowledgments. Following the lead, then, of other textbook authors, I will begin with the project's origins—the classrooms in which I generated and refined my pedagogical approach. Without the first-year composition students I've had the joy of working with across the past 20-plus years and the graduate students who have listened and responded to my ideas about teaching, this textbook would not exist. Along these lines, I would like to thank my Composition and Rhetoric colleagues at SIUC, Dr. Lisa J. McClure and Dr. Jane Cogie, for their wise counsel and for assisting me in all the ways that great colleagues do when another is involved in a strenuous project.

I'd also like to thank my McGraw-Hill team—Lisa Pinto, Claire Brantley, and Elizabeth Murphy—who were instrumental in refining the initial vision for this textbook. Their sage advice and the resources they provided helped ease my load, keeping the pace of this project on track. Special appreciation goes to Elizabeth Murphy, my development editor, who is a wonderful person to work with. Smart, kind, conscientious, hardworking, humorous, calming, and generous with her time—all authors should be so fortunate to work with an editor like Elizabeth. Of course, there are many other individuals who have contributed to this textbook, including research, design, and marketing experts at McGraw-Hill Education and numerous writing instructors across the country who have reviewed my work.

The remaining paragraphs of acknowledgment are reserved for those I've always turned to first for guidance and support—my family. I can always depend on them for everything I need and more. First, I want to thank my late mother-in-law, Joyce Dively, a former high school English teacher whose genuine interest in and enthusiasm for my scholarship was displayed every time we were able to visit. Her excitement kept me excited. I want to thank my brother, Lee Leathers, his wife, Jackie, and their children, Luke and Ben, not only for their interest in my work but for being such all-around positive influences in my life. My mother, Mary Sue Leathers, one of the most selfless, uplifting people I know—as well as a former successful businesswoman—was always available for a pep talk whenever the weight of this project became a bit overwhelming. My father, Ronald M. Leathers, a former English professor and long-time Higher Education administrator, provided not only constant moral support but also helpful discipline-specific advice in response to early drafts of many chapters constituting this textbook.

On a final note, research reveals that an essential condition for creativity is a supportive life partner, one who willingly gives the time, space, and practical assistance essential for someone involved in intense and demanding artistic/intellectual work. My husband, John A. Dively, Jr., an attorney and professor of Educational Leadership, is the model for that kind of partner. His generosity, patience, emotional support, and assistance with my invention processes were more significant to the completion of this project than could possibly be articulated in a brief acknowledgment. He even did most of the cooking for the past three years and proofread turnover drafts of every chapter! Thank you for everything, John.

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# WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition

## Introduction

This Statement identifies outcomes for first-year composition programs in U.S. postsecondary education. It describes the writing knowledge, practices, and attitudes that undergraduate students develop in first-year composition, which at most schools is a required general education course or sequence of courses. This Statement therefore attempts to both represent and regularize writing programs' priorities for first-year composition, which often takes the form of one or more required general education courses. To this end it is not merely a compilation or summary of what currently takes place. Rather, this Statement articulates what composition teachers nationwide have learned from practice, research, and theory.\* It intentionally defines only “outcomes,” or types of results, and not “standards,” or precise levels of achievement. The setting of standards to measure students' achievement of these outcomes has deliberately been left to local writing programs and their institutions.

In this Statement “composing” refers broadly to complex writing processes that are increasingly reliant on the use of digital technologies. Writers also attend to elements of design, incorporating images and graphical elements into texts intended for screens as well as printed pages. Writers' composing activities have always been shaped by the technologies available to them, and digital technologies are changing writers' relationships to their texts and audiences in evolving ways.

These outcomes are supported by a large body of research demonstrating that the process of learning to write in any medium is complex: It is both individual and social and demands continued practice and informed guidance. Programmatic decisions about helping students demonstrate these outcomes should be informed by an understanding of this research.

As students move beyond first-year composition, their writing abilities do not merely improve. Rather, their abilities will diversify along disciplinary, professional, and civic lines as these writers move into new settings where expected outcomes expand, multiply, and diverge. Therefore, this document advises faculty in all disciplines about how to help students build on what they learn in introductory writing courses.

\*This Statement was amended by the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) in July 2014. For further information on its development, please see <http://wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html>. This Statement is aligned with the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*, an articulation of the skills and habits of mind essential for success in college, and is intended to help establish a continuum of valued practice from high school through to the college major.

## Rhetorical Knowledge

*Rhetorical knowledge* is the ability to analyze contexts and audiences and then to act on that analysis in comprehending and creating texts. Rhetorical knowledge is the basis of composing. Writers develop rhetorical knowledge by negotiating purpose, audience, context, and conventions as they compose a variety of texts for different situations.

*By the end of first-year composition, students should:*

- Learn and use key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of texts
- Gain experience reading and composing in several genres to understand how genre conventions shape and are shaped by readers' and writers' practices and purposes
- Develop facility in responding to a variety of situations and contexts calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium, and/or structure
- Understand and use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences
- Match the capacities of different environments (e.g., print and electronic) to varying rhetorical situations

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn:

- The expectations of readers in their fields
- The main features of genres in their fields
- The main purposes of composing in their fields

## Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing

*Critical thinking* is the ability to analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, situations, and texts. When writers think critically about the materials they use—whether print texts, photographs, data sets, videos, or other materials—they separate assertion from evidence, evaluate sources and evidence, recognize and evaluate underlying assumptions, read across texts for connections and patterns, identify and evaluate chains of reasoning, and compose appropriately qualified and developed claims and generalizations. These practices are foundational for advanced academic writing.

*By the end of first-year composition, students should:*

- Use composing and reading for inquiry, learning, critical thinking, and communicating in various rhetorical contexts
- Read a diverse range of texts, attending especially to relationships between assertion and evidence, to patterns of organization, to the interplay between

verbal and nonverbal elements, and to how these features function for different audiences and situations

- Locate and evaluate (for credibility, sufficiency, accuracy, timeliness, bias, and so on) primary and secondary research materials, including journal articles and essays, books, scholarly and professionally established and maintained databases or archives, and informal electronic networks and Internet sources
- Use strategies—such as interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design/redesign—to compose texts that integrate the writer’s ideas with those from appropriate sources

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn:

- The kinds of critical thinking important in their disciplines
- The kinds of questions, problems, and evidence that define their disciplines
- Strategies for reading a range of texts in their fields

## Processes

Writers use multiple strategies, or *composing processes*, to conceptualize, develop, and finalize projects. Composing processes are seldom linear: A writer may research a topic before drafting and then conduct additional research while revising or after consulting a colleague. Composing processes are also flexible: Successful writers can adapt their composing processes to different contexts and occasions.

*By the end of first-year composition, students should:*

- Develop a writing project through multiple drafts
- Develop flexible strategies for reading, drafting, reviewing, collaborating, revising, rewriting, rereading, and editing
- Use composing processes and tools as a means to discover and reconsider ideas
- Experience the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
- Learn to give and to act on productive feedback to works in progress
- Adapt composing processes for a variety of technologies and modalities
- Reflect on the development of composing practices and how those practices influence their work

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn:

- To employ the methods and technologies commonly used for research and communication within their fields
- To develop projects using the characteristic processes of their fields
- To review work in progress for the purpose of developing ideas before surface-level editing
- To participate effectively in collaborative processes typical of their field



## Knowledge of Conventions

*Conventions* are the formal rules and informal guidelines that define genres, and in so doing, shape readers' and writers' perceptions of correctness or appropriateness. Most obviously, conventions govern such things as mechanics, usage, spelling, and citation practices. But they also influence content, style, organization, graphics, and document design.

Conventions arise from a history of use and facilitate reading by invoking common expectations between writers and readers. These expectations are not universal; they vary by genre (conventions for lab notebooks and discussion-board exchanges differ), by discipline (conventional moves in literature reviews in Psychology differ from those in English), and by occasion (meeting minutes and executive summaries use different registers). A writer's grasp of conventions in one context does not mean a firm grasp in another. Successful writers understand, analyze, and negotiate conventions for purpose, audience, and genre, understanding that genres evolve in response to changes in material conditions and composing technologies and attending carefully to emergent conventions.

*By the end of first-year composition, students should:*

- Develop knowledge of linguistic structures, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling, through practice in composing and revising
- Understand why genre conventions for structure, paragraphing, tone, and mechanics vary
- Gain experience negotiating variations in genre conventions
- Learn common formats and/or design features for different kinds of texts
- Explore the concepts of intellectual property (such as fair use and copyright) that motivate documentation conventions
- Practice applying citation conventions systematically in their own work

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn:

- The reasons behind conventions of usage, specialized vocabulary, format, and citation systems in their fields or disciplines
- Strategies for controlling conventions in their fields or disciplines
- Factors that influence the ways work is designed, documented, and disseminated in their fields
- Ways to make informed decisions about intellectual property issues connected to common genres and modalities in their fields



# Composition and Creativity

Which of these activities is the most creative? Your immediate reaction is to say “painting,” right? If so, why? Is it the colors? Is it the freedom of expression? Maybe it’s the simple fact that common usage associates creativity with the fine arts. Regardless, many psychologists and educators—those who study human thought processes—operate by a broader definition of the concept, one that views painting, scientific

research, and even academic and professional writing as creative processes. They do so on the grounds that all of these activities involve problem solving with the goal of making meaning or some contribution to a given field. This chapter elaborates on that perspective, suggesting how and why viewing all writing as creative can assist you in negotiating the challenges it presents and in applying or transferring

your knowledge about writing to various composing situations.

Some students entering college love to write, and they approach any course that involves writing with a sense of excitement. If this description fits you, it may be that you’ve already realized how writing supports your personal and academic goals. If it doesn’t, you may be hesitant about taking a required first-year composition

course—and you would not be alone. In fact, even students who like to write may harbor a reservation or two about composition courses. Understanding the sources of these reservations can help you overcome them, which is a significant step in learning to express yourself effectively in writing.

## Some Straight Talk about Composition Courses

Reservations about composition courses stem from a variety of sources. One possibility is the belief that your future plans won't require you to write very often and, when they do, the products will be short and require little effort. Although this belief may be dispelled only with time and experience, some of the following observations about the four realms of writing depicted in Figure 1.1 may ring true, even as you are just beginning your college career. Related to these four realms, college composition courses seek to increase your understanding of how writing well can help you succeed in all areas of your life, and that understanding will grow as you progress through college, search for a job, and become part of a work community.

Relevant to these goals, improving your writing ability will require time and effort. To be sure, most college composition courses will present you with new and complex assignments intended to challenge your abilities and thereby strengthen them. These assignments will call upon you to devote several hours each week outside class to various reading and writing activities. This is all part of the sustained study and practice that composition courses are designed to promote as they introduce you to the productive routines of experienced writers, such as researching, revising, and editing.

Committing time and effort to your composition course, as well as assuming its relevance to your future success, can ease the transition to college-level writing; but these mindsets won't necessarily erase the anxieties that writing sometimes provokes, even in those who write for a living. In fact, **writing anxiety** is more



**Figure 1.1** Four realms of writing and their significance

common than you probably imagine, and it takes various forms: a general nervousness regarding any kind of writing, frustration with certain types of assignments, or isolated tension relevant to a specific problem within a text. Whatever its form, the causes of writing anxiety may include:

- A lack of experience with a particular kind of writing or writing challenge
- A past writing course in which you felt you didn't or couldn't learn anything
- Past criticism that bred insecurity about your writing abilities
- A fear of sharing your writing with others
- The impression that your peers find writing easy while you have to labor over it

If you do experience writing anxiety, whether periodic or ongoing, sharing your concerns will reveal common points of struggle with other writers and will help your instructor and your peers learn how to best support your composing processes.

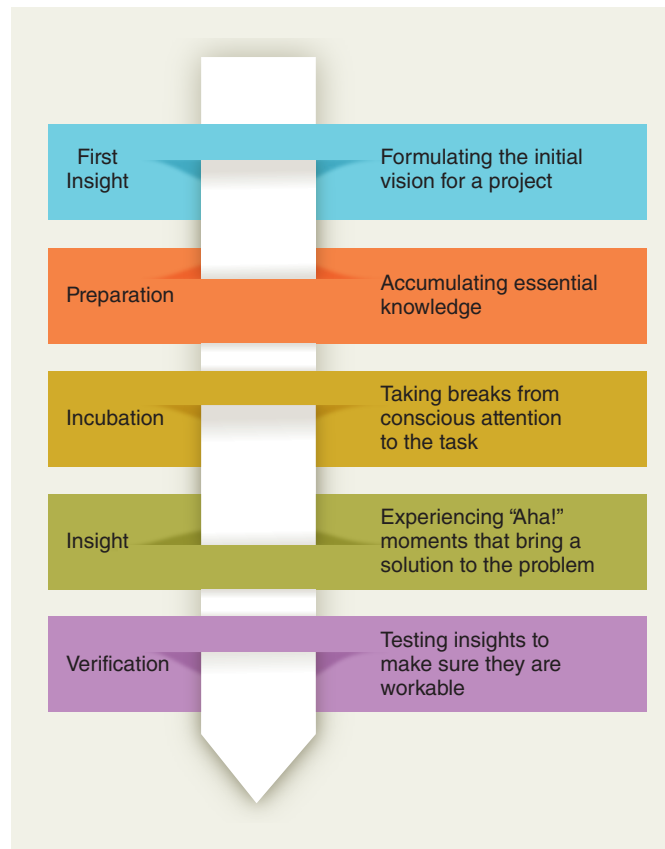
Another source of resistance to composition courses is the opinion that writing is just plain boring. There is little doubt that everyone has felt bored by a writing assignment at one time or another, but for some individuals, the lack of excitement is chronic. If you have ever felt this way, the impression could have resulted from any number of factors. Maybe your past experiences led you to view writing as a confining exercise in which there is a “right” way of responding to every composing situation. Maybe you find nit-picking over surface concerns such as spelling and punctuation to be tedious. Regardless of the causes for low motivation, a principal challenge for writers in any composing situation is to find an angle that stimulates them. When the subject matter or nature of the exercise is not stimulating enough, you will have to search for or generate motivation. One productive strategy for doing so involves viewing all writing as a creative activity.

## The Search for Creativity in Expository Writing

Creativity relevant to writing has been associated almost exclusively with fiction and poetry. Consequently, it seems that many students (and even some teachers) believe that whatever fun is to be had in a writing course can happen only in fiction and poetry workshops. Many other teachers and scholars, however, regret the separation between creative writing and **expository writing**—that is, writing that straightforwardly communicates ideas and information, as in essays, lab reports, business memos, and so forth. These individuals suggest that, as a developing writer, you can benefit from learning about what expository writing and creative writing—as well as other creative activities—have in common (Bishop; Cain et al.; Freisinger; Karnezis). Thinking in these terms involves viewing all creative activities, including writing assignments completed for your composition course, as opportunities for **meaning-making** (Berthoff)—or, in other words, as occasions for sharing insights in forms that fit your goals and satisfy your readers' expectations. This vantage point casts you in an active role. Not only does it require you to identify purposes for writing that will hold your interest and appeal to your readers, but it also invites you to experiment with ideas and ways of expressing them.

## Expository Writing and Other Creative Activities

The discipline of psychology encourages comparisons between writing and many other creative activities—perhaps those that you more readily enjoy. In fact, psychologists who study creativity and creative individuals have demonstrated that all creative products come into being through similar processes. These processes include:



If you think about these processes (Kneller; Wallas) relevant to a hobby or pastime that you frequently engage in, you’ll likely find that they closely characterize your journey toward achievement or innovation. For some examples, see Figure 1.2, which illustrates how these processes might play out in the context of two distinct activities: photography and basketball.

Any intellectual, artistic, or recreational activity might have served just as effectively as photography or basketball in portraying the creative process model in action. Take a few minutes and imagine applying it to an activity that you especially enjoy. If that activity happens to be expository writing, your model could look something like the one shown in Figure 1.3.

Comparing Figure 1.2 with Figure 1.3, you can see that working through a creative problem in the context of three very different activities involves many of the same practices and maneuvers. If you don't enjoy writing or if it seems especially difficult for you, connecting it through the creative process model with activities you take pleasure in can render it more inspiring and familiar. In addition, through the lens of this model, reflecting on strategies that lead to success or failure in areas *other than* writing can help you manage various activities that are involved in writing, such as generating ideas, organizing your plans, dealing with writer's block, and polishing your work.

## MYTH

### "Good writers are born."

This myth could mislead you into believing that "you've either got it or you don't."

There are many factors and conditions besides genetics (such as personality traits, focus, and diligence) that contribute to achievement, and you can consciously cultivate them in your own life. What's more, attributes that appear to be natural talents in someone you know might actually be the result of, for example, economic privilege or exposure to a field of study throughout childhood (maybe as a result of a parent's profession or hobbies).

## REALITY

Creative Process	Example
<b>Photography</b>	
<b>First insight</b>	A friend tells you about a new business that she's started, and you realize you could help her by taking photos to advertise that business.
<b>Preparation</b>	You talk to your friend about the business, read her business plan, study the website she's developed, etc.
<b>Incubation</b>	When an exciting idea for the ad campaign doesn't immediately strike, you decide to leave these materials (i.e., your photos, her business plan and website) behind for a while, giving yourself time to reflect on them.
<b>Insight</b>	While you are making a sandwich a few days later, an ideal visual pops into your head; you run out to take the photos.
<b>Verification</b>	You show the images to your friend, who approves, and then you seek reactions from members of the target market, who offer positive feedback.
<b>Basketball</b>	
<b>First insight</b>	An arrogant rival team talks trash about an upcoming game, and you have a vision of scoring the final basket, sealing the victory.
<b>Preparation</b>	You work harder than usual during practice and even spend some extra hours at the gym shooting baskets.
<b>Incubation</b>	On the bus ride to the game, you close your eyes, falling into a state of relaxation; images of yourself driving to the hoop float in and out of your mind.
<b>Insight</b>	Though you've been successfully blocked by the quick, 6-foot-7 player who has been guarding you all night, suddenly, with the score tied and seconds left in the game, you spot a pathway around him and put up a shot.
<b>Verification</b>	The ball passes through the basket; the buzzer sounds; 2 points are recorded on the scoreboard; the crowd roars.

**Figure 1.2** The creative process model applied to two different activities

Expository Writing	
Creative Process	Example
First insight	A job ad in the university newspaper catches your eye, and you begin imagining yourself applying for the position.
Preparation	With the intent of revising your résumé and writing a letter of application, you visit the business to observe, and you talk with some friends who used to work there.
Incubation	Trying to think of an angle on your application letter that will set you apart, you become blocked and decide to work on some course assignments.
Insight	Suddenly, as you are toiling with a math problem, you realize how you can frame your letter to help you stand out from the crowd of applicants.
Verification	After drafting the letter to your satisfaction, you show it to friends who are currently employed by the business. After making a couple of small changes in response to their suggestions, you drop your letter and résumé in the mail. A few days later, you are called for an interview.

**Figure 1.3** An expository writing situation mapped onto the creative process model

## Creativity and Self-Awareness

Often, when students are asked to explain how they go about composing a paper, they react with a touch of embarrassment. They hesitantly describe their habits and sometimes even apologize for them, claiming they know they “do it wrong.” Actually, it’s more productive to think about writing practices as “more or less effective” as opposed to “right” or “wrong.” Many writers adopt ineffective strategies by default, latching on to certain methods simply because they have not been exposed to possible alternatives or encouraged to experiment with them. Whether or not you or other writers are content with given practices in contrast to other possibilities could be linked to specific personality traits or special areas of intelligence.

Studies focused on the nature of creativity and on creative personalities reveal much about attitudes and intellectual qualities that tend to spark achievement in all disciplines, including expository writing. The findings of these studies aren’t perfectly in sync, but they demonstrate considerable overlap, particularly in relation to the following qualities (Davis 78-79):

- Tolerant of ambiguity
- Artistic
- Independent
- Aware of creativity
- Imaginative
- Willing to take risks
- Energetic
- Open-minded
- Appreciative of alone time
- Thorough
- Curious
- Appreciative of humor

Thinking about such qualities can help you identify strategies for overcoming your limitations and for making the most of your strengths. Regarding your *limitations*, if you don’t consider yourself artistic, for example, you could take a class in graphic design. That experience might broaden your perspective on writing, encouraging you to experiment with the way you communicate, especially through surface

features of a text. Regarding your *strengths*, you'll want to become more specifically aware of how you can capitalize on them.

Some influential research that can help you build on your strengths is referred to as **multiple intelligence theory** (Gardner). Basically, multiple intelligence theory suggests that intelligence isn't a singular entity that can be accurately measured by an IQ test. Rather, it is multifaceted—a combination of many different capabilities, some that are more pronounced than others in any given individual. The different intelligences and concepts associated with each are listed below:

<b>Linguistic</b>	• Language, words, speaking, reading, writing
<b>Logical-Mathematical</b>	• Numbers, calculations, relationships between entities
<b>Spatial</b>	• Pictures, visual layout, imagery, multidimensional thought
<b>Bodily-Kinesthetic</b>	• Physical movement and coordination, sports, dancing
<b>Musical</b>	• Voice, instruments, components of musical composition
<b>Interpersonal</b>	• Friendship, service to others, empathy, leadership
<b>Intrapersonal</b>	• Self-knowledge, self-regulation, memories, future goals
<b>Naturalistic</b>	• Sensitivity to the environment, ecology, plants, animals

Multiple intelligence research suggests that every individual enjoys a proclivity for certain areas of study or performance. This doesn't mean that if you possess special ability in a given area, you cannot perform well in other areas; on the contrary, the presumption is that all people exhibit at least some ability with regard to every type of intelligence. What it does mean, however, is that certain areas of study or performance probably come more easily for you. It also means that in disciplines that don't come as easily, it is wise to seek out strategies for taking advantage of your special areas of ability.

If you aren't sure about where your special abilities lie, you should know that there are numerous websites available to help you determine your primary intelligences and learn more about them. Whatever such tests reveal, Figure 1.4 suggests at least a couple of ways that your strongest areas of intelligence can serve you when writing.

Again, it is important to stress that all individuals possess some degree of intelligence in all of these areas. Even if linguistic intelligence doesn't rank high in your own profile, rest assured that you *do* possess linguistic intelligence, as evidenced by your capacity to read, speak, and write. In addition, remember that you can build on your strongest intelligences to make the act of writing increasingly comfortable and to support your problem-solving efforts as you work through a text.



Intelligence	Specific Applications to Writing
Linguistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You typically have plenty to say.</li> <li>You easily grasp spelling, grammar, and punctuation guidelines.</li> </ul>
Logical-mathematical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You express clear relationships between ideas through sound reasoning.</li> <li>You can fit ideas together in ways that make sense to readers.</li> </ul>
Spatial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are comfortable experimenting with form.</li> <li>You respond to visual representations of ideas when planning (i.e., in flowcharts or other diagrams).</li> </ul>
Bodily-kinesthetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You benefit from incorporating physical movement of some sort into your writing processes (e.g., jogging your way through a bout of writer's block).</li> <li>Changing environments and positions when composing typically gets your creative juices flowing.</li> </ul>
Musical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You find that music playing in the background stimulates your writing processes.</li> <li>You are tuned into rhythms of language, with a good sense of when syllables, words, sentences, and paragraphs are flowing in ways that are pleasing.</li> </ul>
Interpersonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You enjoy collaborative writing assignments.</li> <li>You enjoy receiving feedback on your writing by participating in conferences with teachers or peers.</li> </ul>
Intrapersonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You excel on assignments that ask you to explore personal feelings or experiences.</li> <li>You are adept at reflecting on writing processes and products.</li> </ul>
Naturalistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You draw inspiration from nature in preparation for or while writing (e.g., walking in the woods or gazing at a sunset).</li> <li>You tend to be a close observer of your surroundings and, therefore, are effective at description.</li> </ul>

**Figure 1.4** Multiple intelligence theory applied specifically to writing

## The Transfer of Composing Knowledge

As previous sections of this chapter suggest, you are primed to be creative simply by virtue of being human. When you acknowledge your creative potential in various areas of your life and understand that expository writing is a creative act, you will hopefully feel encouraged to explore connections between those other areas of achievement and the writing you complete for your college composition course. Exploring such relationships can also reveal similarities between writing tasks you will complete in first-year composition and those you will face in other contexts—whether academic or professional.

Of course, there's no denying that the documents you'll compose for college and the workplace will display some different features. But these features can't hide the reality that all acts of writing depend to a large extent on many of the same processes, strategies, and skills. If you focus only on the differences and fail to identify the similarities, you will perceive every composing task you encounter as unlike all those that came before it. This perspective may cause you to feel confused and overwhelmed by each new assignment, and it can undermine growth and achievement by preventing you from taking advantage of what you've already learned.

One key to successful writing, then, is the ability to consciously seek out and apply appropriate composing principles and practices *across* assignments—that is,

to engage in **knowledge transfer**. Although knowledge transfer may occur naturally, or through direct instruction, you need to supplement what your courses and teachers provide by locating possible routes for knowledge transfer on your own. After all, your unique perspectives and experiences present connection-making possibilities that no curriculum or instructor could possibly anticipate.

## Conditions for Knowledge Transfer

The ease with which knowledge will transfer across situations depends to some degree on the nature of the concepts or experiences you're associating. Consider the example of driving a car (Perkins and Salomon). Even if you've driven only a couple of different models, there's no doubt that the act of driving one prepared you for driving the other. Looking at the dashboard of a vintage car next to that of a modern hybrid (see Figure 1.5), you'll recognize that, despite some differences in the ways these cars operate, they share similarities that would enable you to transfer between them what you know about driving. These similarities include turning a steering wheel, determining speed and fuel levels, announcing your presence by honking the horn, and so on. Because the acts of driving two different cars are so similar in nature, applying knowledge about one to the other would be referred to as an instance of **near transfer** (Perkins and Salomon). In such situations, the connections will likely be fairly obvious and the transfer relatively easy.

Of course, many situations conducive to productive transfer require more diligence and a greater level of consciousness on your part. Suppose you want to learn to drive a boat. Although boats are like cars in a few respects (e.g., they have similar steering mechanisms, windshields, and rearview mirrors), they simultaneously pose some stark contrasts, including size, maneuverability, suspension, and so on. Applying knowledge across dissimilar situations—for example, from car to boat—is referred to as **far transfer**. While far transfer can be more challenging than near transfer, it stands to produce the most innovative or creative results since the connections tend to be unique to some degree (Perkins and Salomon).

In the context of writing, an example of near transfer is applying what you know about composing a letter of recommendation for a friend to composing a cover letter for your own résumé, as both would employ the same form and share the purpose of endorsing someone for a position. An example of far transfer is applying what you know about writing a letter of recommendation to writing a research proposal. Although these two documents diverge in many ways, they both call on process and grammatical knowledge, and they both require you to “sell a product”—respectively, the promise of an individual to perform a job effectively and the promise of a research study to produce valuable findings. The point is that even when constructs don't seem obviously relatable on the surface, if you actively try associating them, you can often unearth helpful connections.



**Figure 1.5** Car dashboards from two different eras