

University of Texas at El Paso

From the Selected Works of Beth L Brunk-Chavez

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Explorations: A Guided Inquiry into Writing--An Overview and TOC

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Explorations: Guided Inquiry into Writing

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Beth Brunk-Chavez and Helen Foster

Our goal with this book is to break out of a humanities-dominant approach to texts and writing and to lay the groundwork for the writing students will do in a variety of cultural contexts (as well as the writing they will do in their future writing courses, e.g., research writing, advanced composition, business writing, and technical writing):

1. in the academy, that is, in their future writing courses (advanced, business, and/or technical writing), as well as in their other academic courses;
2. in the course of their lives to make personal meaning through an autobiographical lens that explores and interprets their relationship to their own histories;
3. in their future professions; and
4. in the course of their civic participation as conscientious and responsible citizens.

We believe that a mere “how-to” book on writing in these different contexts, however, represents an impoverished view of contemporary rhetoric and writing studies scholarship and, more importantly, that it significantly diminishes students’ potential to write effectively *beyond* the context of the writing course, itself.

Therefore, we have designed a writing textbook that goes beyond merely *reflecting* contemporary rhetoric and writing studies scholarship. Rather, we *explicitly* integrate this discipline-specific content to create an environment that nurtures students’ mastery of it, even as the content guides their practice with the process and production of writing. We believe this knowing “why,” coupled with knowing “how,” renders students more effective writers within their writing courses and, importantly, effective writers beyond, in the myriad of writing situations they’ll encounter in their futures.

Inquiry-based, project-driven writing assignments are clustered into contextual modules that have students write in a variety of genres and then ultimately have them adapt their final assignment deliverable to an alternative genre and audience. Throughout, students learn to rhetorically read and analyze the social situations that require writing and to then adapt their choices of production technologies, genre, and document design to their specific purposes and audiences.

Last, while we wanted to write a sophisticated, disciplinary-specific textbook, we also wanted it to be accessible to all faculty who potentially teach writing: tenured, tenure-track, teaching assistants, lecturers, and adjuncts. To that end, the instructors’ manual is designed to provide advice and guidance, as well as to offer alternatives.

What specific features provide benefits that these instructors can’t get from the competitor(s)?

The textbook foregrounds fundamental, disciplinary content in the field of rhetoric and writing studies to teach students not only the “how-to” but also the “why” of effective inquiry and writing. It features four rhetorically, process-grounded “content modules”

that span a wide range of writing contexts: academic, personal, professional, and civic. In addition to this breadth, *each* module offers students a depth of experience in designing and conducting content-specific inquiry and in writing in a variety of genres for multiple audiences. The modules provide strong scaffolding to ensure students' understanding of the symbiotic relationship among inquiry; investigation; the making and sharing of knowledge; the planning, design, and production of documents; and thus of writing as action.

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(Progress as of 05.08.08 noted in blue)

Chapter 1: The Nature and Process of Inquiry: This chapter introduces students to the philosophical basis of the book. (written and under review)

1. What is inquiry?
 - A. The process of inquiry and rhetoric
 - B. What is the motivation of a question, curiosity, or puzzlement?
 - i. Identifying dissonance and exigence
 - ii. Translating dissonance/exigence into questions, curiosities, and/or puzzlements
 - C. What is the connection between inquiry and investigation and exploration <research>?
 - D. What is the connection between inquiry and insight?
 - E. What is the connection between inquiry and communicating your insight?
 - i. Discourse community
 - ii. Membership in a discourse community
2. Chapter conclusion

Chapter 2: A General Framework for Inquiry: This chapter leads students through the first two stages of the inquiry process outlined in this book. (written and under review)

1. The sub-process of questions, curiosities, or puzzlements
 - A. When Exigence Clearly Precedes Dissonance
 - i. Field of inquiry and topic
 - ii. Preliminary Research
2. The sub-process of exploration and investigation <research>
 - i. Direct and Indirect Questions of Inquiry
 - ii. Example
3. Appropriate Research Methods
4. Exercise

Chapter 3: Inquiry-based Research Methods: Primary Research: This chapter guides students through the choices required for doing primary research. (written and under review)

1. What is a Research Method?
 - A. Primary research
 - B. Secondary research
 - C. Combination of methods
 - D. Ethics of research
2. Three types of primary research

- A. Interviews
 - i. What are interviews and why are they useful?
 - ii. How can a researcher plan and conduct an interview?
- B. Surveys
 - i. What are surveys and why are they useful?
 - ii. How can a researcher plan and conduct a survey?
- C. Site Observations
 - i. What are site observations and why are they useful?
 - ii. How can a researcher plan and conduct a site observation?
- D. Exercises

Chapter 4: Inquiry-based Research Methods: Secondary Research: This chapter will introduce students to working with secondary sources.

- Library research
- Internet research
- Archival research

Chapter 5: Analyzing Texts: This chapter will address the rhetorical approaches to a variety of documents. The purpose is to illustrate the rhetorical choices writers make and show students the choices available to them in their own writing. (50% drafted)

- Reading Processes and Annotating
- “Types” of Reading
 - Reading Social Situations
 - Academic Reading as Inquiry
 - Locating purpose, questions of inquiry, argument, support
 - Reading to Respond
 - Reading to Analyze
 - Reading to Evaluate
 - Reading Digital Texts
 - Reading Artifacts

Chapter 6: Managing Sources: This chapter will focus on how students should think about using their sources in a written project. This will include having them think critically about the appropriateness of various sources and integrating sources without plagiarizing.

- Evaluating sources
- Avoiding plagiarism
- Incorporating sources
 - Paraphrase
 - Quotation
 - Summary
 - Synthesis
- Developing an annotating bibliography

Chapter 7: Creating the project: This chapter will demonstrate how students can create common academic research projects (30% drafted)

Critique
Research paper
 Constructing an argument
 Arrangement
 Drafting
 Peer reviews/response
 Revising
 Editing

Chapter 8: Creating the project: This chapter will focus on preparing other genres of research projects that will be common across all modules (90% drafted)

Project plans
Research proposals
Progress reports
Research reports
Presentations

Chapter 9: Media and Methods of production: This chapter will introduce students to the rhetorical nature of documents and to various design considerations involved when creating a final project. (90% drafted)

Document design
Visuals
Online and multimedia writing
Using multimedia to support oral presentations

Chapter 10: Documentation

Documentation: Here, we will provide students with basic documentation principles for MLA and APA style.

Summarizing and paraphrasing
Incorporating research
Works cited page

Project Modules

1. **Academic Content Module:** Inquiry into Disciplinarity. This module context addresses the social-specific literacy required of students to become insiders to disciplinary discourse communities. The module's intellectual lens is rhetoric and writing studies' content-specific scholarship, which provides students conceptual material for a critical understanding of the relationship between the context and the assigned project. This content knowledge thus provides students with both the background and the means by which to conduct inquiry into the everyday practices that constitute disciplinary discourse communities, while the modules' pedagogy carefully articulates structures and scaffolds students' inquiry and knowledge construction process. Throughout, students learn to rhetorically read and analyze the social situations that require writing and to then adapt their choices of production technologies, genre, and document design to their specific purposes and audiences. The project deliverables include: (written and under review)
 - Research project plan

- Research project proposal
- Research progress report
- Research paper
- Presentation
- Brochure (

2. **Personal Content Module:** Inquiry into History. The project deliverables include:
(40% drafted)

- Personal history
- Oral history
- Archival research
- Presentation(s)
- Portfolio
- Documentary

3. **Public Content Module:** Inquiry into the Professions. The project deliverables include: (50% drafted)

- Business plan
- Mission statement
- Documentation
- Commercial
- Business letter
- Website information architecture

4. **Civic Content Module:** Inquiry in the Community. The project deliverables include:

- Press releases
- Posters
- Flyers
- Programs
- Business cards