

Writing and Critical Thinking

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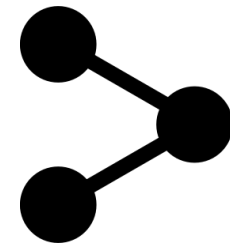
Critical thinking =

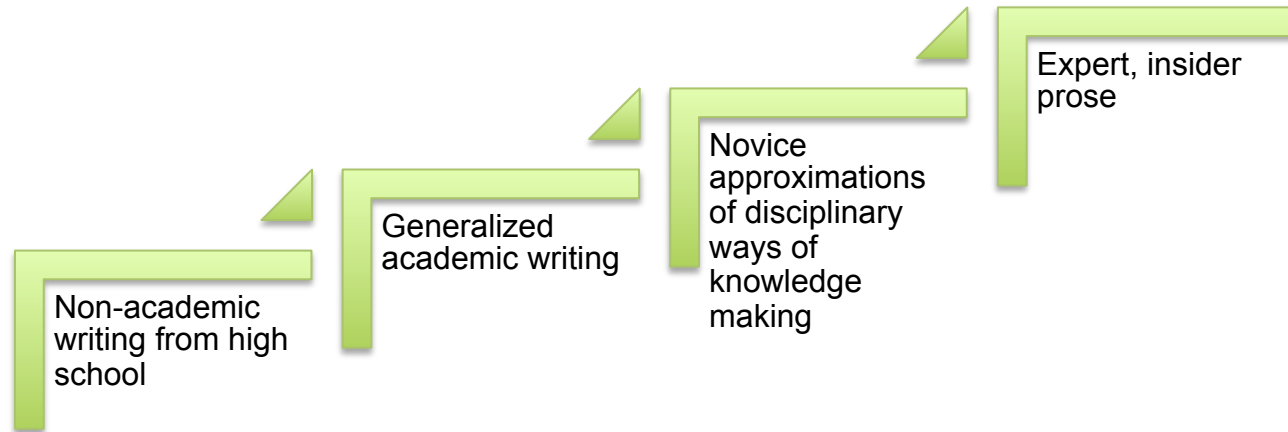
- **Raise questions/formulate problems**
- **Gather and assess information**
- **Identify potential conclusions/solutions**
- **Probe assumptions**
- **Communicate their ideas**





- **Critical thinking require dialogue**
- **Novices are wary of dialogue with experts**
- **Novices often crave certainty, not uncertainty**
- **Critical thought emerges from debate**

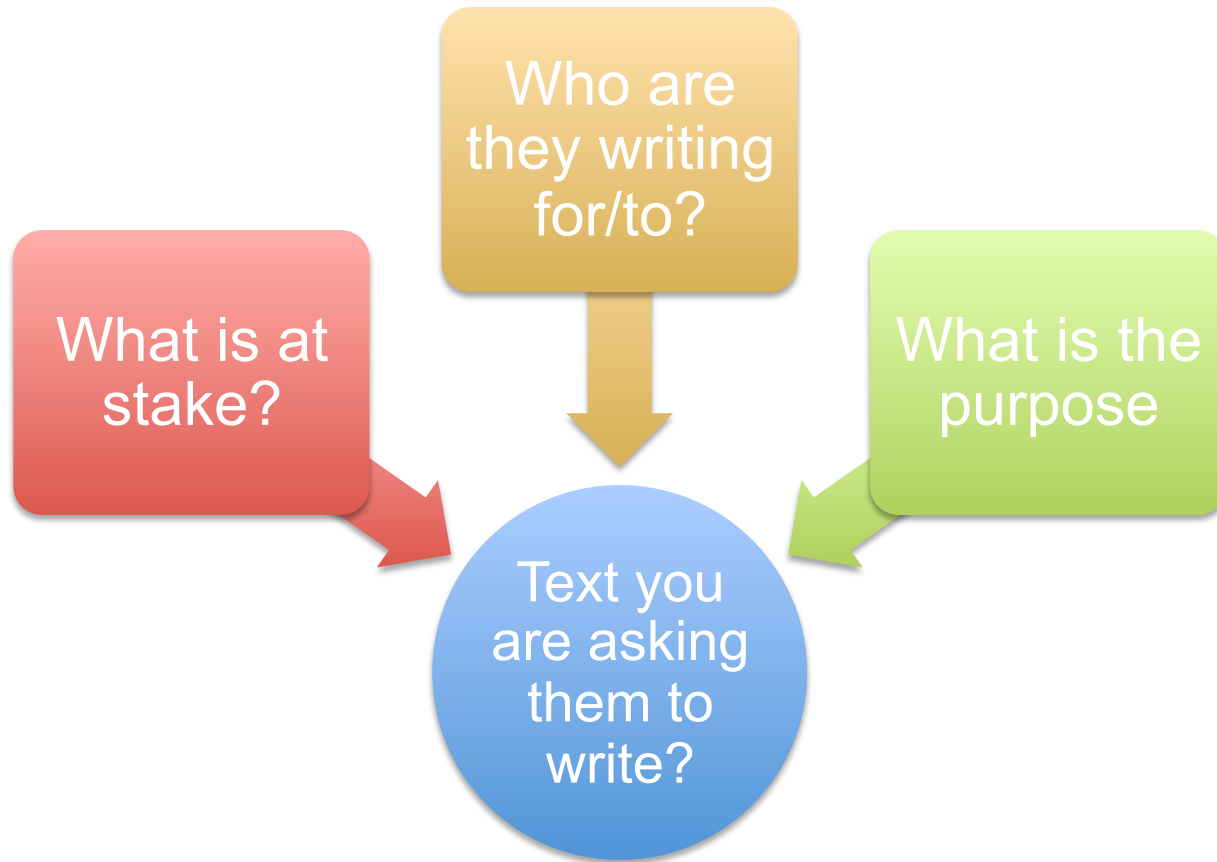


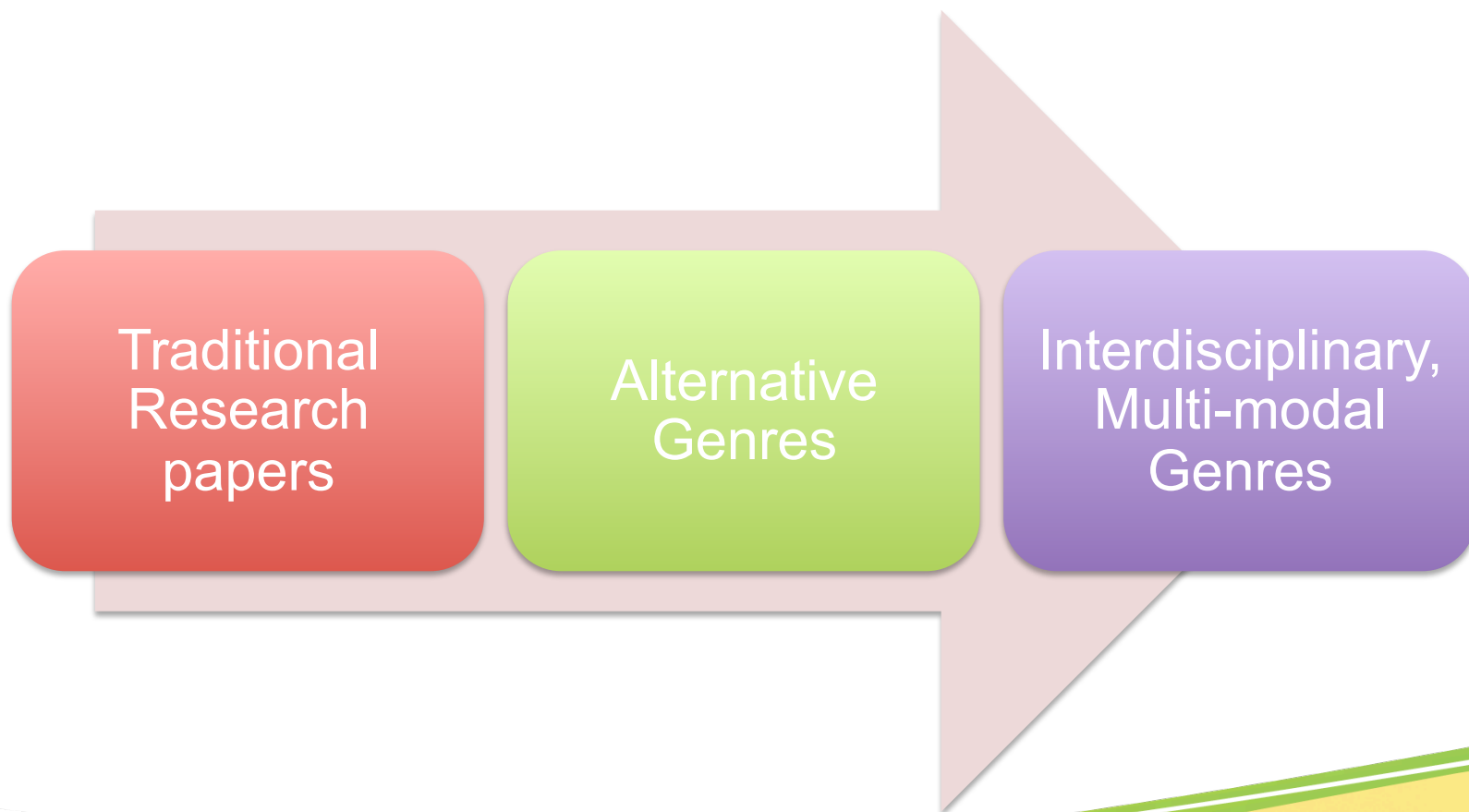


MacDonald, S. P. (2004). Professional and Academic Writing in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Spark critical thought through case simulations that include

- **Uncertainty**
- **Problem situations**
- **Conflicting values**
- **Conflicting interpretations**





What is your topic?

Writing in public health fields

What questions will you ask about the topic?

What do graduate students need to know to write well in their field?

What is a possible answer to your question?

I believe that graduate students need to have five kinds of knowledge to write well: genre knowledge, discourse community knowledge, rhetorical knowledge, subject matter knowledge, and writing process knowledge.¹

The answer (above) is your working thesis statement.

Beaufort, A. (2007). *College Writing and Beyond: A New Framework for University Writing Instruction*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.

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On an index card, write a question about some aspect or area of a course you are teaching now or next year.

If possible, focus on an area about which there is disagreement or where there are alternative positions held by people in the field.

Time: You have 5 minutes.

What is the topic?

What is the controversy?

What genre of document do you want students to write in their response to the assignment?

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Create an alternative assignment (alternative to the research paper) that you could assign to students.

Use one of the larger index cards to describe it.

Work with one or two other people if you want to.

Time: You have 10 minutes.

Moving from a traditional forensic debate

To

**Hospital rounds + Cash Cab
bonus questions**



Model new assignments on research methods that are new or becoming more dominant in your field:

- **Participant action research**
- **Predictive statistical modeling**
- **Teacher research**
- **Evidenced-based practice**
- **Multi-disciplinary science (biochemistry)**
- **Bioethics, bioethnography**

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In groups, create an assignment for one of your topics modeled on an interdisciplinary approach to research.

Time: You have the rest of your careers to do this.

- **Extend the range of assignments you consider giving to students**
- **Consider scaffolding assignments so that the term begins with shorter, less complex assignments and ends with larger, extended work**