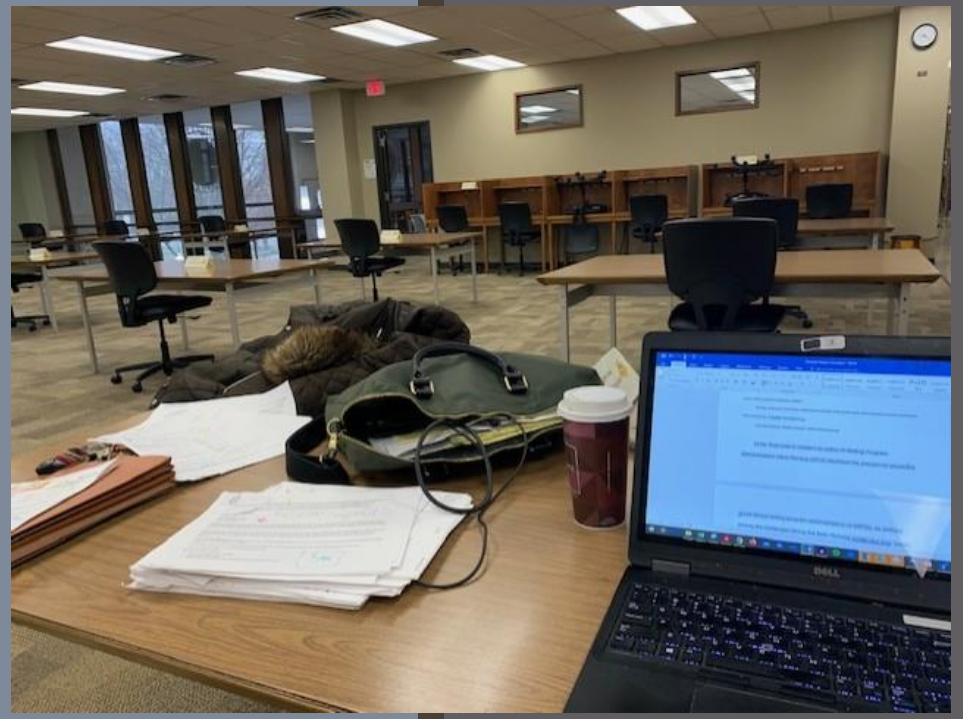
Five Academic Writing Moves to Level Up Academic Writing for Publication



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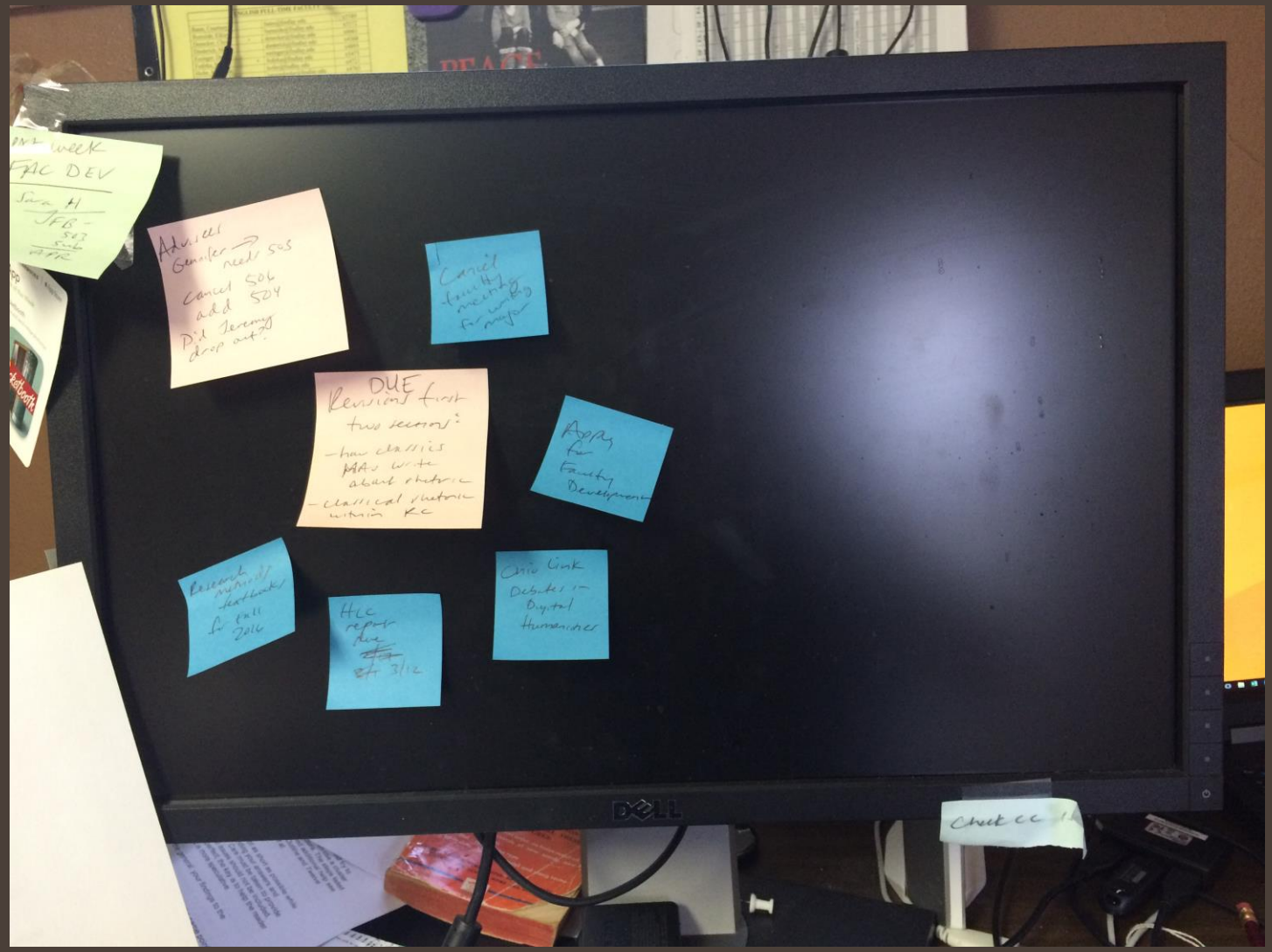
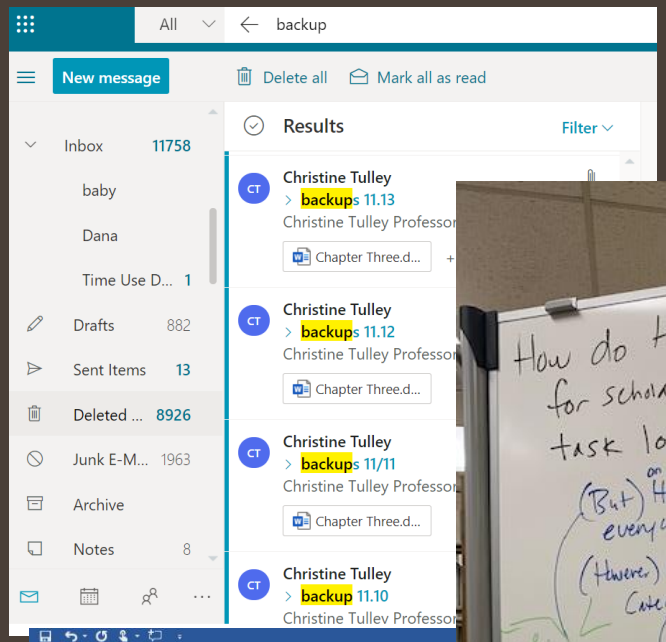
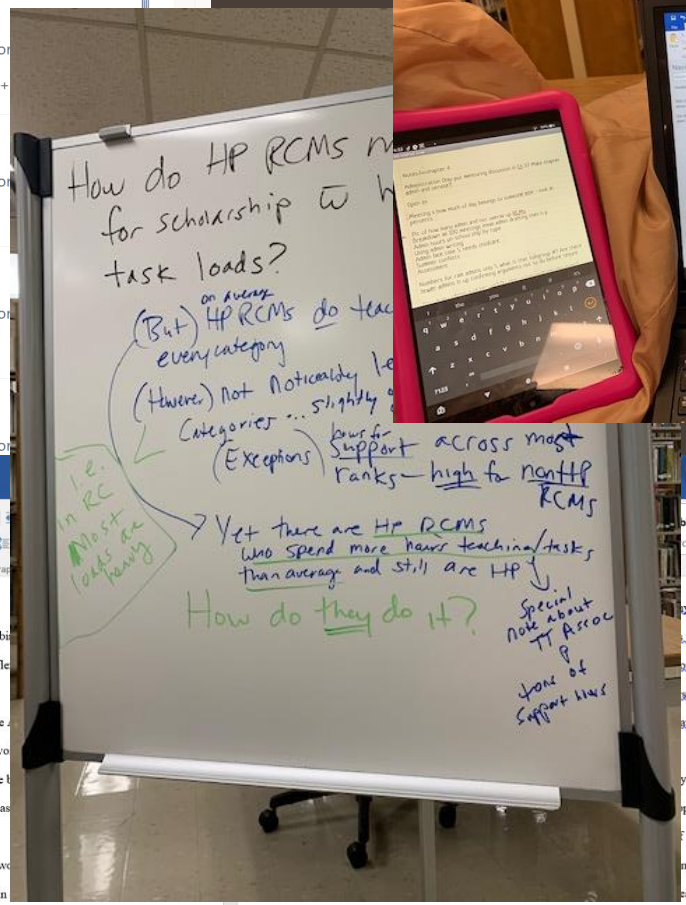
Questions during the presentation? Drop them in the chat!

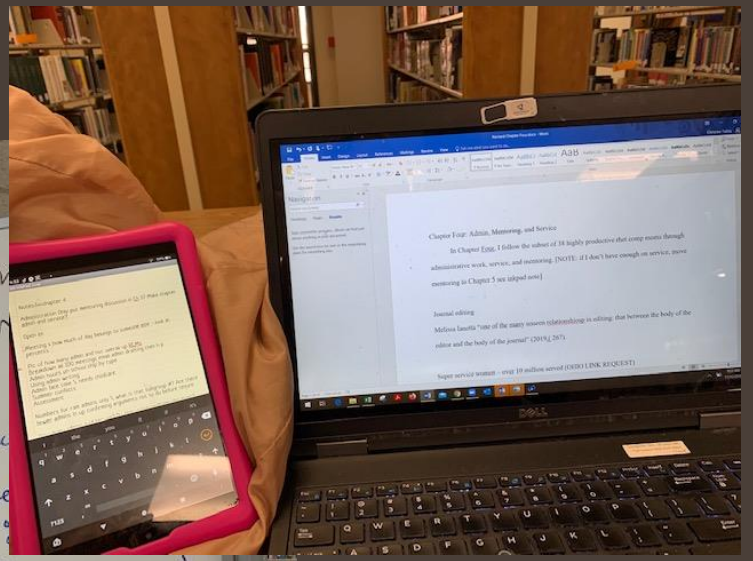


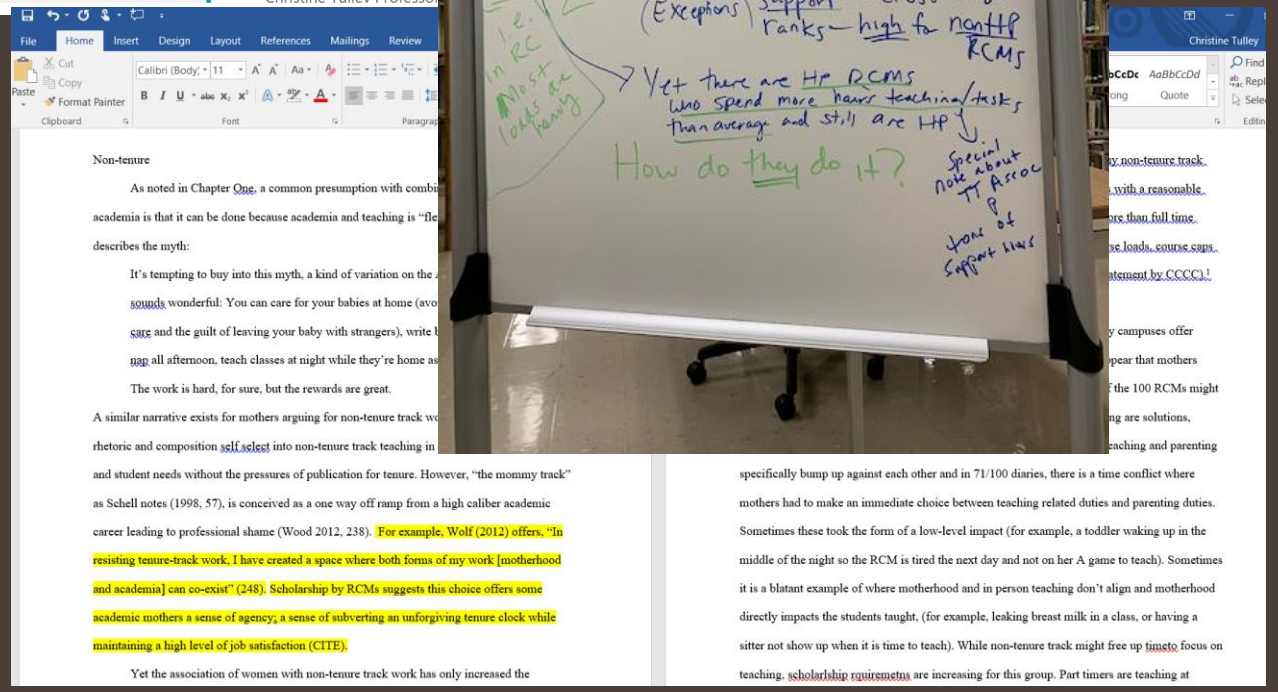
Writing is messy.

To see mine, follow on Twitter
#whatfacultywritinglookslike









But publication requires a "clear and efficient" reading experience

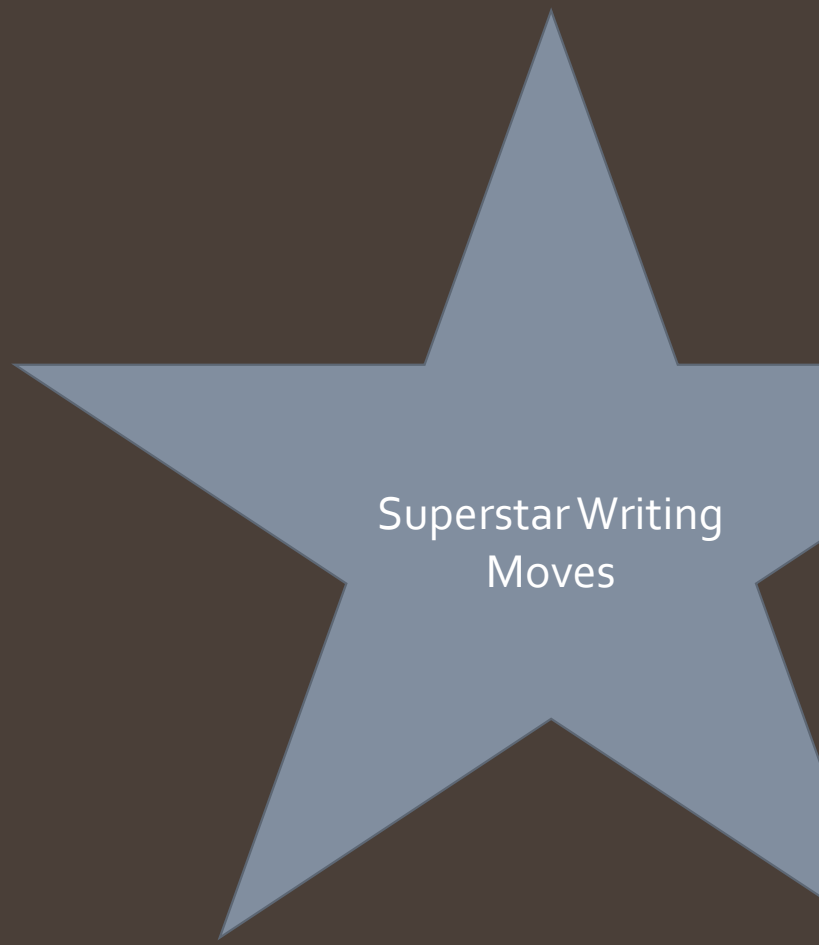
PRIORITZE skim reading and clarity of argument!

- What do you want readers to remember about your overall argument?
- How do paragraphs structurally build toward that goal?
- Where does your argument connect to other arguments made by other articles in the journal (or book series, etc.)?

THE FIVE MOVES TO LEVEL UP

Argument breadcrumbs

Journal and journal conversation awareness



Laced “broad topic” keywords

Movement-oriented transitions

Paragraph mini essays

1. Argument Breadcrumbs

- Write argument/major claim of your article or chapter in a sentence (or two sentences) 5-6 different times in a document SEPARATE from the article itself [breadcrumbs]
- Use a breadcrumb every 3-4 pages depending on length of article/chapter
- When using breadcrumbs later in the chapter, use transitional phrases that emphasize connection between content before the breadcrumb and the overall claim
  - Thus it is important to XYZ…
  - Clearly XYZ offers ….
  - It can be argued then XYZ
  - Understanding how XYZ operates is crucial when…

Argument Breadcrumbs example ("From What Do Professors Do During a Writing Session" in *Inside Higher Education*)

- What if they don't feel like writing during a writing session? How do professors stay motivated/start writing/get something done?

I know why these future faculty members are asking. Teaching, administration and much service labor is visible in the form of instructing classes, producing reports or attending meetings. Yet faculty writing labor is just the opposite; all that is seen is the end publication itself rather than the hours of writing sessions that went into it. Despite a growing and useful body of literature that addresses writing productively as an academic (for example, Paul J. Silva's *How to Write a Lot*, Joli Jensen's *Write No Matter What* and Wendy Belcher's *Writing a Journal Article in 12 Weeks*), few texts offer a play-by-play of what professors actually do when they sit down to write for publication.

Instead, most advice focuses on getting the academic writer to sit down in the first place -- to schedule time to write, find a space, make a list of tasks to do when there and so forth. The underlying assumption is that writing will start flowing once you sit down. We've all heard variations of this advice: "Just start writing." "Get your butt in the chair and you'll write." "Just write one sentence/750 words/freewrite." But such pieces of advice don't answer the question of what professors *actually* do during writing time, so the question persists.

In addition to offering research on conditions that enable faculty writing, Helen Sword's recent *Air, Light, Time, and Space* offers brief interview excerpts from faculty members about their writing processes, including how they use writing sessions. This type of detail is sorely needed in an academic system that continues to reward publication output even as teaching and service loads increase (and will probably keep increasing post-pandemic). Experienced faculty writers must be more explicit with graduate students and new colleagues about how they use writing sessions -- and even if they write during a session at all. (In my discipline, I found evidence of frequent toggling in and out of writing projects between teaching and service tasks versus sitting down to a dedicated writing session.)

For an upcoming research project, I asked 50 faculty members at a variety of institutions about what they specifically do in writing sessions that ranged from 15 minutes to four hours each time. Here's what I learned.

2. Laced "broad topic" keywords

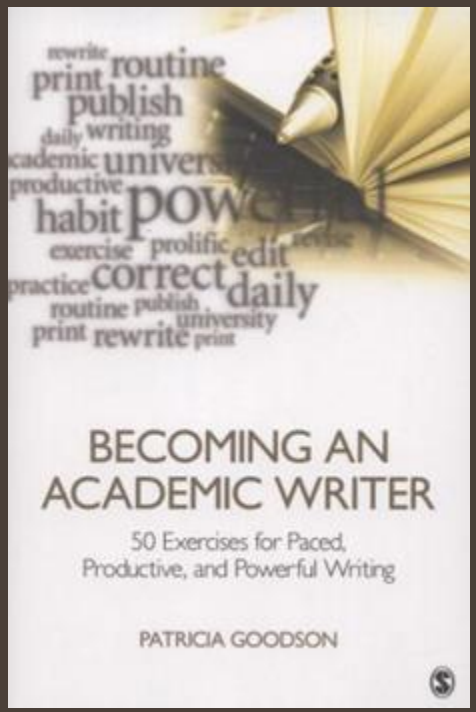
- Rephrase your topic several different ways so you can "lace" it through your writing without sound repetitious

Laced keywords example (Broad topic: Faculty writing in rhetoric and composition)

- Scant research exists on faculty writing within the discipline of rhetoric and composition. Though several studies exist outside of writing studies, most notably from faculty development researchers Boice (1990), Belcher (2012), and Sword (2016), composition scholars have focused instead on student writing versus faculty writing. There are two notable exceptions. Hairston argued that "XYZ," positing that faculty who taught writing should be writers themselves (1986, 102), building on Gebhardt's earlier argument composition instructors needed to write to truly understand how writing works (1977, 61). Gebhardt noted "ABC" that indicated teaching and writing were yoked, yet … Cass and Keller speculate that this disciplinary disinterest in how professors write is likely due to composition's historical focus on first-year college writing (1998, 76). Indeed, the majority of research on writing continues to focus on student vs. faculty writers (Abram 2011, 76).

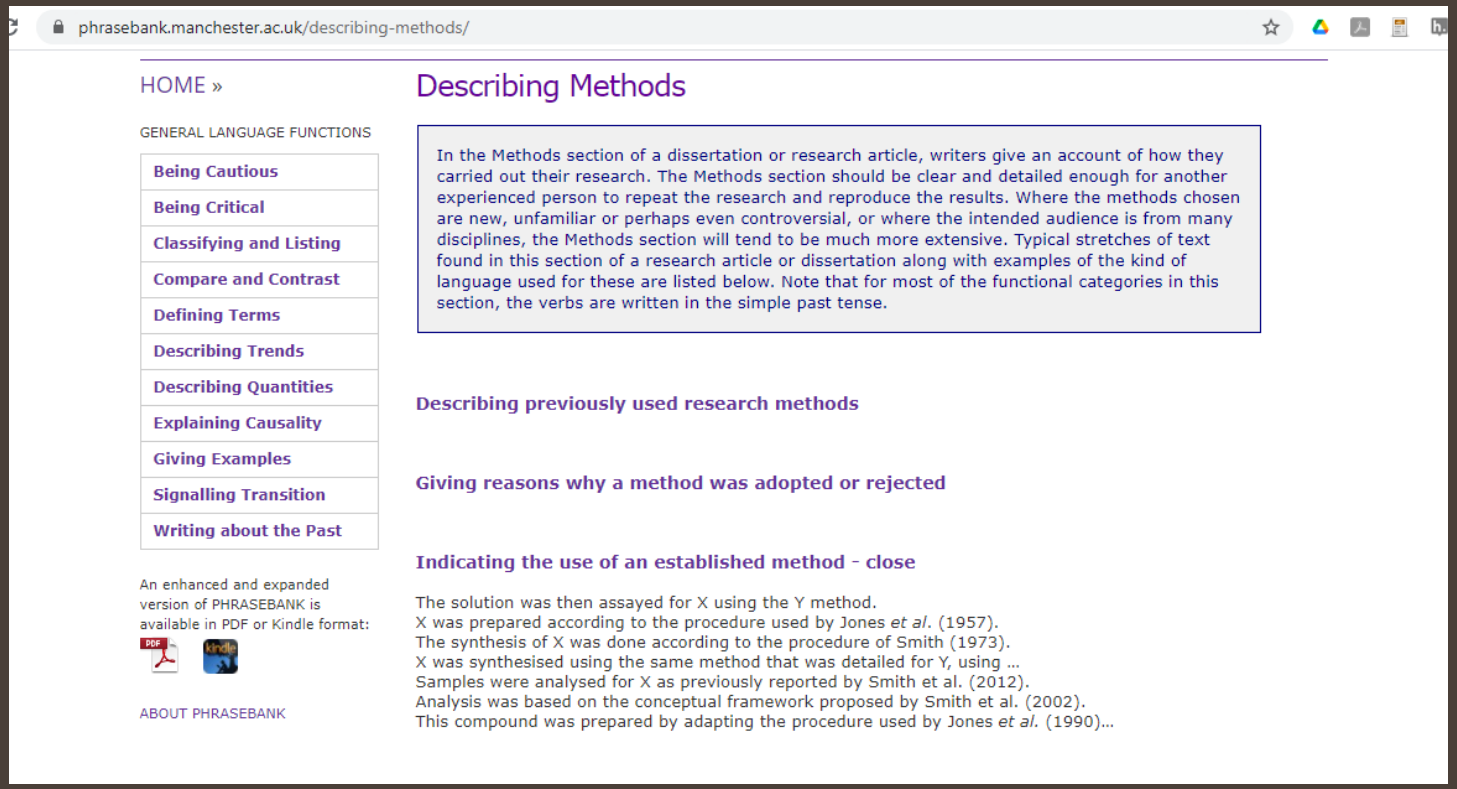
3. Paragraph mini-essays

- Patricia Goodson describes paragraphs as a formula:
  - Transition + one key idea + development of a key idea
- Treat each paragraph as a mini-essay



Transition (pick one based on the job it needs to do)

- Manchester Phrasebank – choose the transition for the job!
- http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/



+One key idea

- First sentence shows what the entire paragraph is about

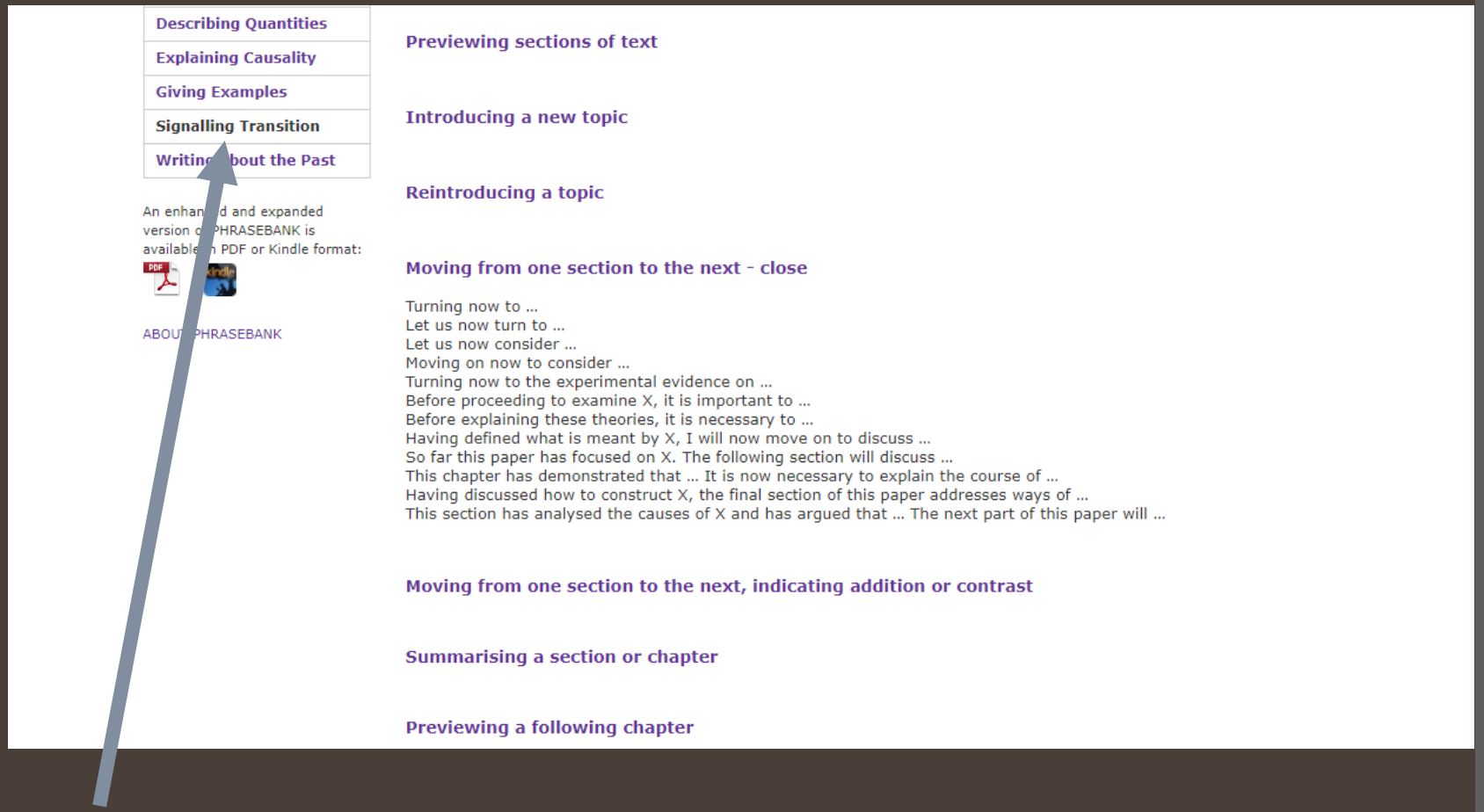
Examples of one key idea

- Scant research exists on faculty writing within the discipline of rhetoric and composition.
- I approach embodiment in this project through from my own positionality as a mother-scholar.
- Bilaterally symmetric faces generally show superficial symmetry of external structures but distinct asymmetries in nasal tissue.
- Unlike the gendered space of the US-based daycare, the French *crèche* is purposely designed to be gender neutral. (X/Y transition – the first part of the sentence refers to content in the previous paragraph)
- In addition to connective tissue regeneration, FR456 offers the possibility of strengthened muscles.(signal transition and X/Y combined)

+Build on one key idea (through echo phrasing in orange)

- Scant research exists on faculty writing within the discipline of rhetoric and composition. Though several studies exist outside of writing studies, most notably from faculty development researchers Boice (1990), Belcher (2012), and Sword (2016), composition scholars have focused instead on student writing versus faculty writing. There are two notable exceptions. Hairston argued that "XYZ," positing that faculty who taught writing should be writers themselves (1986, 102), building on Gebhardt's earlier argument faculty needed to write to truly understand how writing works (1977, 61). Gebhardt noted "ABC" that indicated teaching and writing were yoked, yet … Cass and Keller speculate that this disciplinary disinterest in how professors write is likely due to composition's historical focus on first-year college writing (1998, 76). Indeed, the majority of research on writing continues to focus on student vs. faculty writers (Abram 2011, 76).

4. Movement-based Transitions



Describing Quantities
Explaining Causality
Giving Examples
Signalling Transition
Writing about the Past

An enhanced and expanded version of PHRASEBANK is available in PDF or Kindle format:

ABOUT PHRASEBANK

Previewing sections of text

Introducing a new topic

Reintroducing a topic

Moving from one section to the next - close

Turning now to ...
Let us now turn to ...
Let us now consider ...
Moving on now to consider ...
Turning now to the experimental evidence on ...
Before proceeding to examine X, it is important to ...
Before explaining these theories, it is necessary to ...
Having defined what is meant by X, I will now move on to discuss ...
So far this paper has focused on X. The following section will discuss ...
This chapter has demonstrated that ... It is now necessary to explain the course of ...
Having discussed how to construct X, the final section of this paper addresses ways of ...
This section has analysed the causes of X and has argued that ... The next part of this paper will ...

Moving from one section to the next, indicating addition or contrast

Summarising a section or chapter

Previewing a following chapter

5. Journal and journal conversation awareness

- Read the journal you want to submit to
- CITE THE ARTICLES from that journal in your own article
- Familiarize yourself with the types of articles they publish (topics, methods, approaches AND stylistic choices such as use of headings, tables etc.)
- Reverse engineer three model articles and make a checklist of what you need to have (How are the articles put together? How long are sections? Writing style?)
- Write a paragraph of how your article extends the journal's conversation on this topic – this can be used in a cover letter or in the article itself, or both, to show your article belongs to the community

Additional Resources

Defend&Publish podcast
on iTunes and Spotify
Subscribe for 15 minutes of
weekly content!

https://christinetulley.wordpress.com/

https://www.taaonline.net/virtual-workshops-by-christine-tulley