

# Designing Formal Writing Assignments for Intensive Classes

Stephanie Wade, PhD  
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# Bates

WRITING @ BATES

## Formal Garden



## Permaculture Garden



How do we design formal writing assignments that acknowledge



- Changing aesthetics.
- Changing resource use.
- Changing worldviews.

# Permaculture Principles

## Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Slow observation over time.
- Work with the material at hand.
- Stacking functions.
- Every challenge is an opportunity for creative thinking.
- Care for earth, care for people, fair share.

More here:

<https://woodbinecenter.org/indigenous-permaculture-operational-framework>



# Applying permaculture to compressed classes

- Slow observation over time
- Work with the material at hand
- Stacking functions
- Every challenge is an opportunity for creative thinking
- Care for earth, care for people, fair share

## Use P.A.G.E Guidelines: Expectations

- What do you expect in regard to product?

### **Be explicit about genre conventions**

How do writers in this genre:

- Establish credibility.
- Show what is at stake.
- Make clear claims with good reasons and reliable evidence?

- How can you align process activities to support product expectations?

### **Provide scaffolding + sequencing:**

Small, informal assignments that lead to formal assignments.

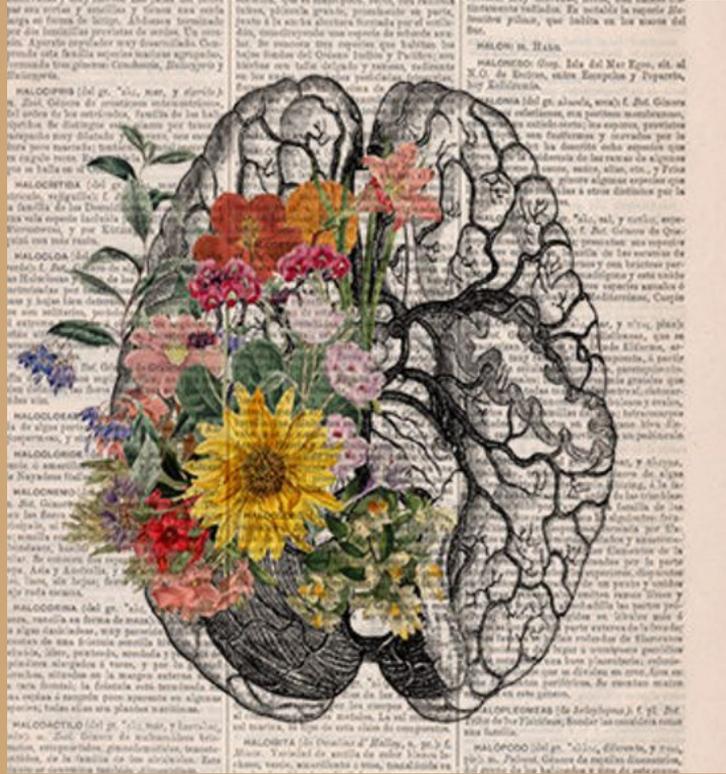


# Preparation

Find/identify an assignment you will have your students complete this semester.



# Context: Neuroplasticity, neurogenesis, optimal stress

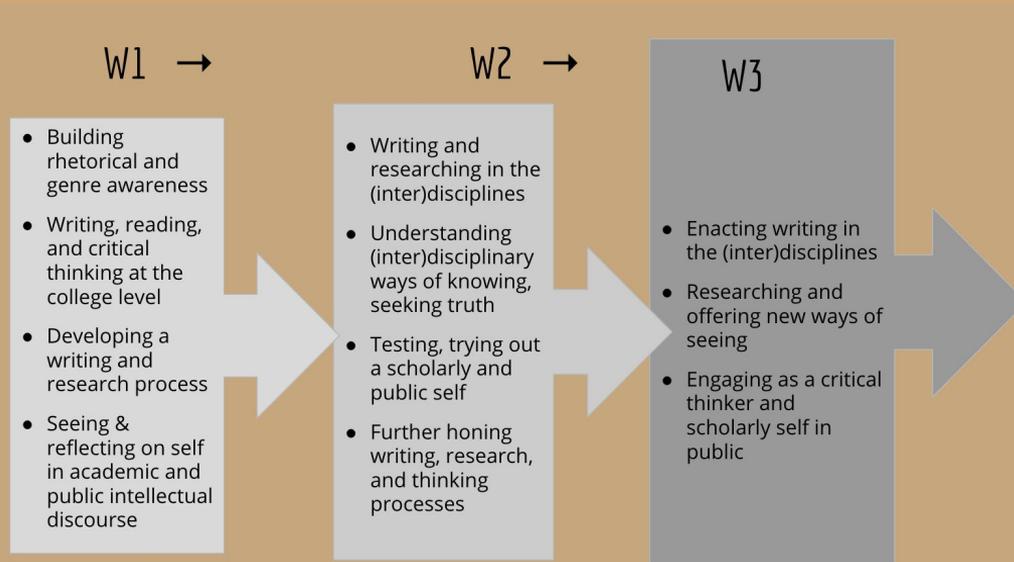


## Discussion question:

Context: Where are your students as writers? How might you learn more about this How might you account for this in assignment design?

K-12  
Rules-based  
instruction

Other



- Professional writing
- Graduate school + academic writing
- Personal writing
- Civic engagement
- Other

Permaculture principle → Work with the material at hand. We can't plant tomatoes in October in Maine.

# Best practices for designing formal writing assignments

Use P.A.G.E. Guidelines to define the:

- ★ Purpose
- ★ Audience
- ★ Genre
- ★ (other) Expectations regarding content, process + product



# Use P.A.G.E Guidelines: Purpose

## Chat questions

1. Why are you asking your students to complete this assignment?
2. How does this assignment relate to your course outcomes?
3. What will the students accomplish via this assignment? Explanation, persuasion, information, advocacy, expression, hybrid, other:



# Use P.A.G.E Guidelines: Purpose

Discussion Questions:

After listening to your colleagues, what did you learn about purpose?

How might you revise your purpose based on what you learned?



# Use P.A.G.E Guidelines: Audience

Chat question: To whom will students address their work?

- Their peers
- Their professor
- A campus community beyond class
- A community partner
- A community outside of class, such as the school board, a parent group, the readers of the New York Times
- Another person or group of people.



# Use P.A.G.E Guidelines: Audience

Discussion Questions:

After listening to your colleagues, what did you learn about audience?

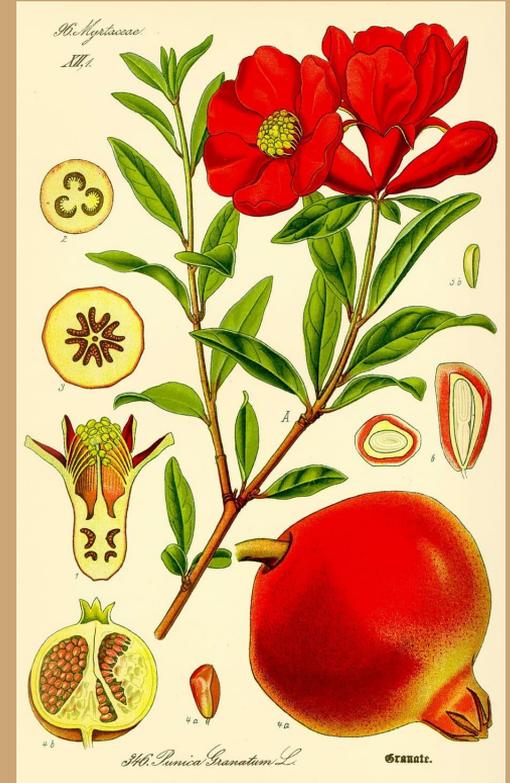
How might you revise your definition of audience for this assignment based on what you learned?



# Use P.A.G.E Guidelines: Genre

Chat question: What genre will your students use?

- A scientific lab report
- A pamphlet
- A poster for an academic conference
- A website
- A digital story or podcast
- An academic literary analysis
- An op-ed
- A book review
- A portfolio
- Other

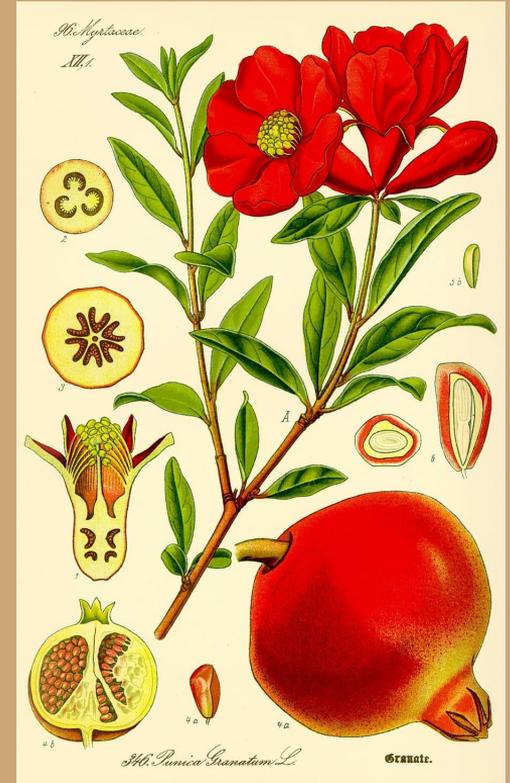


# Use P.A.G.E Guidelines: Genre

Discussion Questions:

After listening to your colleagues, what did you learn about genre?

How might you revise the genre of your assignment based on what you learned?



# Use P.A.G.E Guidelines: Expectations

- What do you expect in regard to product?

## **Be explicit about genre conventions**

How do writers in this genre:

- Establish credibility.
- Show what is at stake.
- Make clear claims with good reasons and reliable evidence



- How can you align process activities to support product expectations?

## **Provide scaffolding + sequencing:**

Small, informal assignments and activities that lead to formal assignments.

# A Rhetorical Rubric for Articulating + Clarifying Expectations

## Logic

- How do writers in this genre make claims?
- What counts as good reasons?
- What counts as reliable evidence?
- How much details to writers include about evidence?

## Emotions

- How do writers in this genre demonstrates what is at stake?
- Other

## Character 1-- How do writers earn the trust of the audience:

- Follows the conventions of writing in the genre of \_\_\_\_\_ via \_\_\_\_\_.
- Organizes material with awareness of purpose and audience's needs
- Shows care and earns trust via language clarity, concision, sentence style
- Other

## Process:

## Students' Goals:

## Other:

# Use P.A.G.E Guidelines: Expectations

<b>Sample product expectations:</b>	<b>Sample process steps:</b>
Follows the conventions of writing in the genre of _____ via _____.	Rhetorical reading of texts in that genre
Demonstrates what is at stake .	Workshop on crafting questions
Contextualizes purpose/primary claim in prior/current conversations.	Workshop on finding, evaluating, and writing about sources
Organizes material with awareness of purpose and audience's needs	Post-draft outlining + peer review
Shows care and earns trust via language clarity, concision, sentence style	Proofreading + editing workshops Other

# Breakout Activity: 20 minutes [Link](#)

1. Share your rubric/assignment sheet and your expectations in regard to product. **Column 1**

2. Discuss activities + lower stakes assignments that would help students build this product. **Column 2**

3. Consider how the activities and formal assignment might help students meet content goals?

**Column 3**

4. Consider what--if anything, you need to revise in your assignment description/rubric



Product expectations:	Process steps:	Implications for Content Knowledge

# Reconvene and Report Out

- What did you learn in breakout groups?
- What questions or concerns emerged?
- How is this changing your assignment?
- How is this changing your class?



# If time permits: Breakout 2 in Pairs

1. Share your assignment with your partner.
2. Identify questions students might have as they read the assignment.
3. Revise your assignment so the questions are answered.



# Bonus! Metacognition + Reflection for Transfer

How does might you create and integrate opportunities that will help students:

- Reflect on their learning
- Engage in self assessment
- Project future goals





# Thank you!

Please be in touch if you would like to discuss any of this or other aspects of teaching writing with me.

Stephanie Wade  
swade@bates.edu

