

Writing about Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

Creating and Contributing to Scholarly Conversations
across a Range of Genres

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“What makes a good critical friend?” (Reflection 26.1) was originally [published as a blog post](#) and is reproduced by permission of the author, Rebecca J. Hogue.

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PART 4

WRITING IN DIFFERENT GENRES

Introduction to Part 4

We suspect that many readers will jump to this part of the book because it is practical and provides detailed sets of questions to guide writing. Indeed, the genesis of this entire book can be traced to the set of questions Shelley Kinash and Kayleen Wood, Australian colleagues of Mick's, used to engage workshop participants in planning how to write an empirical research article (Kinash and Wood 2012). We draw on those questions in **chapter 12**, "Analyzing and Reporting Data: Empirical Research Articles," and we use the approach of posing questions in all the other chapters in this part of the book.

We offer frameworks for eleven forms (what we call "genres") of writing about learning and teaching (empirical research articles, theoretical and conceptual articles, literature reviews, case studies, books and edited collections, conference and workshop presentations, reflective essays, opinion pieces, stories, social media, and applications for teaching fellowships, awards, and promotions). While we present these in a particular order, our goal is not to imply a hierarchy or to value any one over the others. Rather, we start with the genres that might be most familiar and in which many scholars are (or feel) required to publish, and we map the similarities, differences, overlaps, and contrasts among those and the growing number of genres that are—or, to our minds, should be—recognized as legitimate and important. For each genre, we connect the practical approach (suggested by questions that provide a framework) with the human experience of writing (drawing on and developing identity and engaging in ongoing learning).

Each of the eleven chapters in this part of the book explores how scholars define or draw boundaries around a particular genre, and we offer insight into the value of that genre to illuminate the possibilities of writing. Moreover, we present a set of questions as a framework to guide writing in the genre, and, when possible, we pair these questions with real examples from published works.

We open part 4 with **chapter 11**, “Extending the Conventional Writing Genres: Naming and Clarifying,” which digs deeper into the genres of writing to understand the overlaps and distinctions as we see them and the ways in which they might accommodate a wider range of experiences of and perspectives on learning and teaching.

Consider addressing the following questions before you read part 4, and then keep them in mind while you are reading:

- What are your existing conceptions of the eleven genres we discuss in this section of the book? How might considering them within the book’s framework—writing as creating and contributing to scholarly conversations about learning and teaching, writing as fostering identities and clarifying values, and writing as a medium for engaging in ongoing learning—inform your understanding?
- What is your sense of the current conventions and affordances of each of these genres of writing, and how can any or all of them be expanded to invite and affirm a greater diversity of scholars of learning and teaching?