Seminar in the Challenges of Writing Science

Class 3B: The specific genres of scientific communities

Objectives

1. To consider whether science is constructed only by the interaction of the scientist with nature – or by the interaction of the scientist with the scientific community.
2. To introduce specific genres of interest to the scientific community.
3. To research a specific journal of relevance to each student’s discipline.

1. To consider whether science is constructed only by the interaction of the scientist with nature – or by the interaction of the scientist with the scientific community.

Presentation by students. Needs to look at the following areas:

- The creation of knowledge
- How that knowledge is negotiated
- Whether this has changed over time.
- What methods are possible in affecting change.
- The role of language in developing knowledge.

Possible readings: Kuhn, the introduction to Landmark essays on the rhetoric of science.

2. Discussion of chapter 2

Discussion in small groups: what were the key ideas to come out of this?

Short lecture on the key ideas.

3. Exercise: looking at a specific journal of relevance to each student’s discipline.

Ideally, this will be conducted online. If this is not possible, then I’ll have to bring in a range of journals.

If we do it in class, then here are some possibilities:

*Frontiers in ecology and the environment*

http://www.jstor.org/journals/15409295.html
American Journal of Human Biology
http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-in/jhome/37873?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0

Annals of human biology
http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/03014460.asp

Students could also use a journal identified by their interviewee for assignment 1

Do an exercise based on questions 6 and 7 on p. 37 of textbook

What is the purpose and intended audience of each journal? How do you know? Look at the other questions here.

Homework

1. Complete assignment 2 for peer review next Tuesday – prepare to hand in in class on Thursday
2. Portfolio exercise: Finish off in-class exercise (no 3 above) for next week
3. Give some thought to this question: is there a place for metaphor in writing science?