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Three Heuristics for Writing and Revising Qualitative Research Articles in English Education

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Three Heuristics for Writing and Revising Qualitative Research Articles in English Education

Cover Page Footnote

This article is in MLA format.

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance....

—Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*

Recently, English education researchers, like their colleagues in the overlapping field of education, have given renewed attention to issues of researcher preparation and development. Topics addressed include challenges and opportunities of interdisciplinarity, traditions and innovations in doctoral-program design, and affordances and constraints of new media and technologies for research methods and dissemination. However, despite the range and complexity of these conversations, there persists a crucial need for curricular resources on writing academic research genres for publication if education research writers, including undergraduate and graduate students, and early-career and more accomplished faculty, are to participate with greater ease and effectiveness in the diverse rhetorical communities of (English) education.¹ Academic research writing for publication is a high-stakes endeavor in which personal and cultural identities, social ties, institutional status, and money are in jeopardy. Vigorous dialogues regarding the aims, means, values, and possible effects of this work are important.

Specifically, more discussion is needed on tools for teaching and learning professional genres, especially research articles on which much of the field's vitality depends. Some (English) education researchers (e.g., Maxwell, Smagorinsky) have drawn on their experiences as successful research writers, journal editors, and mentors to describe the rhetorical functions and conventional structure of particular sections of qualitative research articles, like the Literature Review and Methodology sections, which also appear in other research genres, including conference presentations and dissertations. However, *relationships* among the rhetorical “jobs” of these different sections remain to be specified. Other education researchers (e.g., Kamler and Thomson) have encouraged graduate students and early-career faculty to use rhetorical frameworks developed by genre-studies researchers: for example, Swales' general outline of quantitative research texts in the natural and social sciences, “IMRD” (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion), and his overview of basic rhetorical moves made in the Introduction section, “CARS” (Creating A Research Space by “establishing a territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche”). Although Swales' guidelines resonate with the concerns of English education research writers, Kamler and Thomson have not emphasized that IMRD does not adequately

address the genre conventions of *qualitative* research articles, which tend to include *additional sections* between Introduction (what I call the Problem Statement) and Methods (what I call the Methodology section): namely, the Plan, Literature Review, Research Questions, and Theoretical Framework sections. Similarly, while Swales' CARS model identifies rhetorical moves made in the Introduction section, writers and their mentors² need *specific approaches* for writing and revising *all* of the major sections of *qualitative* research articles, especially heuristics that would highlight purposive relationships among those sections.

Inspired by previous contributions, I offer in this essay three such heuristics, or invitations to creative and critical experimentation (Lauer), that may enhance English educators' "true ease in writing" qualitative research articles for publication. These three curricular resources may also be generative for qualitative research writers in education who specialize in content areas other than English language arts. Science education researchers will note, however, that qualitative research texts in their field tend to merge the Problem Statement, Literature Review, and Research Questions sections in the "Introduction" section, a move that draws on the rhetoric of academic research in the natural sciences. In the essay that follows, I, first, review previous contributions to the literature on researcher preparation and development in (English) education. Second, I provide an overview of research on the teaching and learning of genre. Finally, I present my three heuristics, "PAGE" (Purpose, Audience, Genre, Engagement), "Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing," and "The Three INs" (INtroduction, INsertion, INterpretation). Together, these three curricular resources prompt writers to connect general rhetorical concerns, like audience, purpose, and genre, with specific writing moves, and to approach qualitative research writing as a strategic "art" rather than as a matter of "chance."

I developed these three heuristics for teaching and learning genre conventions of qualitative research articles through my work with graduate students, faculty, and research teams. Since 2005, I have taught research literacies to individuals and small groups, working extensively with education researchers specializing in a variety of content areas. I have taught both native and non-native English speakers. Through this work, I have consulted on 36 dissertations. I have also conducted a five-year ethnographic study of six extracurricular, research-writing groups for education doctoral students. Additionally, I have designed and facilitated workshops and writing retreats for graduate students and faculty. While the English education

researchers with whom I have collaborated have found the tools presented below to be useful in their research, teaching, and service, I do not regard this essay as “the last word” on genre conventions of qualitative research articles in (English) education. Instead, I offer this essay as a renewed invitation for writers and mentors to study, practice, theorize, critique, and teach the art of qualitative research writing.

Researcher Preparation and Development in (English) Education

Since the second CEE Leadership and Policy Summit in 2007, English educators have devoted new energy to issues regarding the preparation and development of English education researchers. Following the Summit, a group of contributors to the thematic strand on doctoral education, including Webb, composed and circulated the CEE belief statement on English-education doctoral programs. In 2009, Webb published the edited collection, *The Doctoral Degree in English Education*. Contributors to the book discussed a variety of concerns, including the English-education job market (e.g., Webb), the field’s interdisciplinary participation in both the humanities and the social sciences (e.g., Marshall), the design of English-education doctoral programs (e.g., Wilson and Lindquist), the distribution of research opportunities across the doctoral program (e.g., Carroll et al.), the transition from teacher to researcher (e.g., Beach and Thein), and the importance of new technologies in English education research (e.g., Rozema and McGrail). Additionally, book contributors mentioned professional genres that students might write and/or publish during their doctoral programs (e.g., conference papers, research articles, institutional review board applications, grant proposals, fieldnotes, transcripts, dissertations, and job-search documents). However, book contributors did not specify ways in which such genres might be taught and learned, or stress the importance of research-literacies development for effective participation in the field’s diverse rhetorical communities.

Webb’s book echoed similar discussions in the overlapping field of education. In response to increasing political pressures on public education and the rise of methodological pluralism, education researchers in the U.S. have pursued questions regarding researcher preparation and development with heightened intensity during the past fifteen years. Issues explored have included the nature of education research (e.g., Moss et al.); the epistemological diversity of the field (e.g., Pallas); the purposes, features, and outcomes of education doctoral programs (e.g., Walker et al.); models of research-methods coursework (e.g., Page); the design and implementation of

research opportunities across the doctoral program (e.g., Schoenfeld); alternative forms for the dissertation (e.g., Duke and Beck; Kilbourn); the transition from teacher to researcher (e.g., Labaree); and the affordances and constraints of new media and technologies for research methods and dissemination (e.g., Pea). Although these researchers have raised many important concerns, opportunities remain to emphasize the inextricability of writing from the project of (English) education research, and to address the crucial need for curriculum on the rhetorical conventions of professional genres, especially research articles, which greatly influence the work of (English) educators.

Some education researchers have offered general strategies for writing research articles for publication. For example, Klingner, Scanlon, and Pressley have outlined a process of purposeful reflection in which graduate students might engage while preparing a manuscript for submission to a scholarly journal. This series of strategies on planning, writing, and submitting research articles prompts writers to consider broad rhetorical concerns, like audience, purpose, and genre. However, Klingner, Scanlon, and Pressley did not also identify concrete writing moves for realizing these general rhetorical goals. More oriented toward the techniques of writing craft, other (English) education researchers have outlined the rhetorical functions and conventional structure of major sections of research articles, like the Literature Review (Boote and Beile; Maxwell) and Methodology sections (Smagorinsky). (These sections also appear in other research genres, including conference presentations and dissertations.) While such focused efforts have provided useful guidelines for writers and their mentors regarding the organization of some individual article sections, *functional relationships* among the major sections of qualitative research articles (i.e., how these sections work together to accomplish rhetorical purposes) remain to be specified.

Kamler and Thomson, education researchers working in Australia and the U.K., respectively, have encouraged research writers to use applied linguist Swales' heuristics "IMRD" and "CARS" in composing their dissertations and research articles. "IMRD" (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion) is Swales' acronym for the typical argument structure of quantitative research texts in the natural and social sciences (*Research Genres* 100, 107, 208, 217). "CARS" (Creating A Research Space by "establishing a territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche") is his model for the conventional outline of the Introduction section in quantitative research texts (*Genre* 137-66). While both of these scaffolds may support

(English) educators' writing efforts, they do not sufficiently assist *qualitative* research writers in composing and revising sections not included in IMRD, like the Plan, Literature Review, Research Questions, and Theoretical Framework sections. Moreover, the CARS model alone does not explain how the *problem for study*, what Swales calls the "niche," connects the rhetorical purposes of each of the major sections of (English) education research texts. In the essay that follows, I will attempt to augment Swales' two frameworks with the three heuristics that I present below. In doing so, my aim is not so much to address Swales' work but, rather, to offer education research writers and mentors more curricular resources.

Teaching and Learning Written Genres

Before introducing these curricular resources, I will, first, provide an overview of research on the teaching and learning of writing genres to contextualize my design of the three heuristics and to suggest possible uses for them. In their reference guide to interdisciplinary genre studies, Bawarshi and Reiff define *genre* as a "typified rhetorical way of recognizing, responding to, acting meaningfully and consequentially within, and thus participating in the reproduction of, recurring situations" (213). In other words, genres are patterns of "social action" (Miller). For example, from this perspective, a qualitative research article in English education is not merely a kind of text but, more precisely, the interrelationship of culturally and historically specific rhetorical activities, like writing, reading, classifying, and citing, which condition that kind of text's emergence, persistence, and transformation. Moreover, in this view, genres are patterns of social action which arise in response to other such patterns, and establish, develop, and inspire new configurations of rhetorical work (Bakhtin). Put differently, genres are culturally negotiated frames that, through their reiteration and adaptation, promote, coordinate, and give purpose and meaning to social action (Paltridge). For example, qualitative research articles published in a peer-reviewed journal in English education can serve as models for other such articles, and the journal itself can influence the design of similar periodicals. As "relatively stable types" of rhetorical work which respond to, anticipate, and provoke other social actions, genres can both cross and reorganize contexts of social participation (Bakhtin 60, 78-82).

To track the proliferation, consolidation, and connection of genres across social situations, genre-studies researchers have proposed the terms "genre sets" and "genre systems" (Bazerman; Devitt). A *genre set* includes genres which have been "associated through the activities and functions" of a

social group (Devitt 57). For example, regarding the diverse community of English education researchers, the genres of qualitative research article, conference presentation, and grant proposal may be included, among others, in a genre set. Moreover, the qualitative research article itself may be considered as a genre set comprising each of its major sections; hence, the crucial need for curricular resources specifying the functional relationships that connect these major sections as a genre set. By contrast, a *genre system* is the network of genre sets, in which different social groups are stakeholders (Bazerman 96-7; Devitt 56). For example, major sections of qualitative research texts (e.g., the Problem Statement, Literature Review, Theoretical Framework, and Methodology sections) may appear in multiple genres in a set valued by English education researchers (e.g., qualitative research articles, conference presentations, and grant proposals), and some of those genres in the set may be taken up by social groups with distinct yet related agendas (e.g., researchers, teachers, and policymakers) as they participate in the genre system. The limits and scalability of any given genre, genre set, or genre system are tested, contested, endorsed, and enacted by the communities that they implicate.

Additionally, genre-studies researchers have proposed ways of teaching genres to encourage fuller participation in a range of social situations, including academic, workplace, and public contexts (Bawarshi and Reiff). These efforts have been motivated by the aim of enabling writers to analyze, produce, and challenge the prevailing genres of a target community, and to develop “a critical consciousness of both rhetorical purposes and ideological effects of generic forms” (Devitt 192). During the past 25 years, a variety of genre-focused pedagogies have emerged (Johns). While pedagogies from different communities of genre-studies researchers have tended to emphasize distinct aspects of genre teaching and learning, they have generally promoted compatible practices: for example, immersion in the target rhetorical community; critical investigation of that community’s social history, cultural values, and rhetorical norms; analysis of conventional and innovative features of genre models; deliberate experimentation with rhetorical techniques; extensive writing and revising in response to teacher and/or peer feedback; and comparative analysis and production of genres at work within and across rhetorical communities. My intention in providing the three tools presented below is to strengthen such pedagogical approaches as they are enacted in researcher preparation and development efforts in (English) education.

In contrast to recent efforts by (English) education researchers to share strategies for writing and publishing professional genres, some researchers in the overlapping field of writing studies have discouraged explicit instruction in the analysis, production, and revision of written genres. For example, Freedman has argued that writers may acquire conventional forms of social participation exclusively through immersion in the practices and values of the target rhetorical community. In response to Freedman, writing-studies researchers Williams and Colomb have contended that writers may, however, request, appreciate, and benefit from explicit genre instruction. Moreover, the team has reframed the issue of explicit/implicit genre instruction as “a chicken-and-egg problem”: “When we learn social context, we are also learning its forms; but when we learn forms, we may also be learning their social contexts” (262). Indeed, all genre learning emerges through dialogues, both deliberate and serendipitous, among writers and mentors, practices and purposes, and traditions and innovations. I offer the three curricular resources below to invite, extend, and bring greater focus and complexity to such dialogues.

Resources for Writing and Revising Qualitative Research Articles PAGE (Purpose, Audience, Genre, Engagement)

As I have mentioned above, (English) education and genre-studies researchers have noted that writing processes and products are often enhanced by writers’ consideration of rhetorical concerns, like audience, purpose, and genre. However, curricular resources are needed that transform these conceptual issues into practical tools for writing and revising academic research texts. To this end, I present below my first heuristic “PAGE” (Purpose, Audience, Genre, Engagement).

I designed this series of questions to prompt writers to explore personal and social implications of writing and publishing (English) education research, and to generate possibilities and decisions regarding their strategic composition and revision of academic research texts. I formulated PAGE by reworking Van Tal’s heuristic, “MAPS” (Mode, Audience, Purpose, Situation) (qtd. in Swenson and Mitchell 4-5). English educator Hicks has also worked extensively with MAPS. In teaching PAGE, I have grouped issues of “Mode,” medium, and technology with “Genre,” given their sometimes close connections. Similarly, I have distributed issues of “Situation” or occasion across “Purpose,” “Audience,” “Genre,” and “Engagement,” as I believe that they relate to all four rhetorical principles. In designing the PAGE heuristic, I chose to highlight “Engagement,” finding that

the MAPS framework does not distinguish writers' purposes from those of imagined audiences. By showcasing "Engagement," I sought to draw attention to writers' own complex purposes for writing (and not writing) so that relationships among authors' and audiences' interests, concerns, and commitments, and the sedimented values of academic research genres, may be investigated and reinvented. To enrich both (English) educators' qualitative research articles and their experiences with writing and revising those texts, I offer my PAGE heuristic as a practical way to approach qualitative research writing as a strategic art.³

Table 1 PAGE (Purpose, Audience, Genre, Engagement)		
<i>Rhetorical Principle</i>	<i>General Question</i>	<i>Specific Questions</i>
Purpose	What effects do I want this text to have on my target audience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What <i>contributions to my field</i> do I want this text to make? • What is my <i>explicit rhetorical agenda</i> for this text? (Which of my aims for this text will I strategically share with my target audience?) • What is my <i>implicit rhetorical agenda</i> for this text? (Which of my aims for this text will I strategically conceal from my target audience, as these goals of my project, while relevant to my target audience, might puzzle, offend, or otherwise alienate this audience, if announced in the text?)
Audience	How might I appeal to my target audience for this text (vs. the broader possible audience for this text)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might I relate my <i>inquiry</i> to enduring research goals of my target audience? • How might I relate my <i>emotional and ethical concerns</i> to the values of my target audience? • How might I relate the <i>design and craft of my research</i> to the cultural practices of my target audience?
Genre	What kind of text is this text?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways might this text work <i>with</i> rhetorical conventions of this kind of text? • In what ways might this text work <i>against</i> rhetorical conventions of this kind of text? • In what ways might this text work <i>beyond</i> rhetorical conventions of this kind of text, inventing new ways of writing?
Engagement	What effects might writing and publishing this text have on me (the writer)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What <i>intellectual work</i> might writing and publishing this text entail for me? • What <i>emotional and ethical work</i> might writing and publishing this text entail for me? • What <i>social and political work</i> might writing and publishing this text entail for me?

The PAGE heuristic may be used to inform writers' decision-making at any point in the writing and revising of qualitative research articles in (English) education. For example, work with the PAGE heuristic may help writers to plan a study and identify resources for the project, to select a target journal and suitable readers with whom to workshop the article, to determine the purpose and priority of writing and revising tasks, and to negotiate with reviewer feedback. Moreover, these questions may enrich dialogues among writers and their mentors regarding the design and craft of qualitative research articles. For example, the PAGE heuristic may facilitate writers' and mentors' creative and critical work with the rhetorical functions of the major article sections, which I will present in the next two sections of this essay.

Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing

As I have noted above, (English) education and genre-studies researchers have proposed models for understanding the conventional structure of research texts and particular sections within those texts. For example, education researchers Kamler and Thomson have promoted genre-studies researcher Swales' "IMRD" (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion) framework for wide use among graduate students and early-career faculty. However, while IMRD outlines the typical argument structure of quantitative research articles in the natural and social sciences, this framework does not address the additional sections often included in *qualitative* research articles—a point worth emphasizing for qualitative research writers in education.

Additionally, as discussed above, some (English) education researchers have described the rhetorical functions and conventional structure of some sections of qualitative research texts. However, opportunities remain to specify *functional relationships* among *all* of them: How do these distinct sections work together to accomplish rhetorical purposes?

In response to these two needs for curricular resources, I offer my second heuristic, "Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing," which I designed to highlight the dynamism of the inquiry staged by qualitative research articles. My heuristic thus contrasts with Swales' "CARS" (Creating a Research Space) model for writing Introductions, which relies on figures of stasis and colonial conquest in presenting the three rhetorical moves: "establishing a territory," "establishing a niche," and "occupying the niche" (*Genre* 137-66). To avoid connotations of "territory" and "occupation,"

I use the term “problem for study” throughout this essay, which, while analogous to Swales’ term “niche,” is both more generative and more precise. To be clear, Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing does *not* directly correspond to Swales’ three CARS moves. Although the first activity of Problem Posing may be associated with “establishing a territory” and “establishing a niche”; and Problem Addressing, with “occupying the niche”; the final activity of Problem Posing explicitly “decamps occupied territory” by identifying possibilities for new inquiry, as I will explain below. Moreover, I developed Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing to highlight three broad rhetorical moves made by *research articles*, rather than by the Introduction section alone, on which CARS focuses. Thus, my second heuristic, to some extent, *encompasses* Swales’ IMRD framework (see Table 2).

Before presenting “Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing,” I will, first, define the term *problem for study*. The problem for study is the explicitly specified *purpose* of an academic research text. Often written as “However, research remains to be done on X,” the problem for study also identifies a limitation/boundary of relevant previous research. Thus, the problem for study emerges from the interests, concerns, and commitments of the target *audience*, as well as from those of the author(s) (*engagement*). First articulated in the Problem Statement, then in the Literature Review, and again (in interrogative form) in the Research Questions, the problem for study creates audience-author involvement as it sets the agenda of the inquiry to be unfolded in the text. Moreover, the problem for study gives coherence to the major sections that compose qualitative research articles in (English) education by bringing their distinct rhetorical functions into relationship (*genre*), as I will now explain.

The problem for study (“However, research remains to be done on X”), or the *purpose* of the inquiry, includes within it the *object of study* (“X”), or the *focus* of the inquiry. (If the problem for study is “However, research remains to be done on early-career faculty’s research-writing practices,” then “early-career faculty’s research-writing practices” is the object of study.) The object of study is conceptualized and operationalized in the Theoretical Framework section. (For example, the Theoretical Framework section might theorize “early-career faculty’s research-writing practices” as “rhetorical invention” (*conceptualization*), and might designate “changes in their written texts and in their talk about those texts with their fellow writing-group members” as evidence of “rhetorical invention” (*operationalization*.) A study design for generating evidence of this object of study is described and

justified in the Methodology section. (For example, the Methodology section might address decisions regarding site selection, participant selection, data sources, data-generation procedures, data-analysis procedures, and researcher positionality, as such choices enabled and constrained investigation of “early-career faculty’s research-writing practices” (*the object of study*).)⁴

Evidence of the object of study is presented and characterized as such in the Findings section. (For example, the Findings section might display and interpret discursive changes in early-career faculty’s texts and talk as practices of “rhetorical invention.”) Rigorously responsible claims about this evidence are made in the Discussion section. Moreover, the Discussion section explicitly demonstrates how these claims extend and challenge previous research examined in the Literature Review. (For example, the Discussion section might argue that “early-career faculty drew heavily on their writing-group members’ feedback in interpreting, addressing, and challenging journal reviewers’ responses to their article submissions.” The Discussion section might then explain how this insight into early-career faculty’s research-writing practices both affirms and complicates prior research on graduate-student writing groups.) Based on the limitations/boundaries of *the current study*, new problems for study (e.g., new areas of inquiry and new research questions) are articulated in the Implications section. (For example, the Implications section might advocate for future studies that track the research-writing practices of members of a writing group as they transition from writing as graduate students to writing as new faculty, to writing as more accomplished faculty. A new *problem for study*, or research *purpose*, would be “However, research remains to be done on ways in which research-writing practices persist and change as writers move through different phases of their academic careers.” A new *object of study*, or research *focus*, would be “ways in which research-writing practices persist and change as writers move through different phases of their academic careers.”) In sum, the problem for study, which includes the object of study, determines and connects the rhetorical purposes of the major sections of qualitative research articles in (English) education.

Thus, the conventional structure of such articles may be understood as a succession of problem-posing, problem-addressing, and new problem-posing activities. Qualitative research articles in (English) education are organized to guide readers through an inquiry experience and to inspire future research. They begin by posing a research problem, or an issue that remains to be explored; then start to address that research problem, or

launch an exploration of that issue; and, finally, identify new research problems, or areas of inquiry disclosed by the current study, to explore in future research. Inquiry begets inquiry. Indeed, problems for study are less like difficulties to be resolved and more like challenges to be multiplied.

Table 2 Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing	
<i>Broad Rhetorical Function</i>	<i>Major Sections of Qualitative Research Articles</i>
Problem Posing (based on previous studies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem Statement • Plan • Literature Review • Research Questions⁵
Problem Addressing (through the current study)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical Framework • Methodology • Findings • Discussion
Problem Posing (based on the current study)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implications • Conclusion

In this way, the traditional form of qualitative research articles in (English) education rehearses a version of the scientific method (observation, background research, question formation, study design, experiment, data analysis, new question formation). However, depending on their commitments, qualitative researchers in (English) education may be more or less eager to claim affiliation with the natural sciences (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis), and thus may draw on the rhetorical techniques of their communities to challenge and rework the limits of the genre.

During the last 20 years, diverse innovations regarding theories, methods, and rhetorical styles of qualitative research in the social sciences and the interdisciplinary field of (English) education have proliferated (Denzin and Lincoln). For example, qualitative approaches like poetic inquiry (e.g., Richardson), feminist poststructural ethnography (e.g., Lather and Smithies), performance ethnography (e.g., Bagley), and archival rhizoanalysis (e.g., Alvermann) have been proposed, developed, critiqued, and renewed. While their histories differ, these transformations of qualitative inquiry have emerged in various ways through dialogues with the genre conventions that I present in this essay. Indeed, it is difficult to appreciate the creative and critical force of these innovations if they are isolated from tradition. For this reason, I have chosen to focus in this essay on rhetorical conventions of a more traditional form of qualitative research writing in (English) education.

However, I emphasize that genre conventions only emerge, persist, and change through use, and that such use is historically and culturally conditioned. In other words, what is innovative today may be traditional tomorrow, and vice versa. I also encourage (English) education researchers to explore and draw inspiration from the rich and diverse rhetorical resources offered by qualitative researchers specializing in other content areas in education, and by those working in related disciplines and fields.

The Three INs (INtroduction, INsertion, INterpretation)

As I have indicated above, (English) education researchers have described the rhetorical functions and conventional structure of some major sections of qualitative research texts, like the Literature Review and Methodology sections. However, writers and their mentors continue to need *practical approaches* for writing and revising *all* of the major sections of qualitative research articles, especially curricular resources that would highlight purposive relationships among those sections. In the previous section of this essay, I presented the distinct rhetorical jobs of each major section of qualitative research articles in (English) education as they relate to the broad activities of problem posing, problem addressing, and new problem posing. In this section of the essay, I offer my third heuristic, “The Three INs” (INtroduction, INsertion, INterpretation), which may be used as a framework for strategically crafting most of the major article sections: namely, the Literature Review, Theoretical Framework, Methodology, Findings, Discussion, and Implications sections (see Table 4). While “PAGE” and “Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing” are general orientations to the rhetorical work of qualitative research articles, the “Three INs” is a specific approach for participating in this art with greater ease and effectiveness.

The Three INs heuristic—INtroduction, INsertion, and INterpretation—is one way to structure paragraphs, subsections, and sections of qualitative research articles in (English) education. For example, in the Findings section, a paragraph might be arranged as follows:

- **INtroduction** of the qualitative data (e.g., by orienting readers to the interview quote to be presented);
- **INsertion** of the qualitative data (e.g., by presenting the interview quote);
- **INterpretation** of the qualitative data (e.g., by paraphrasing the interview quote and specifying what it illustrates).

A “Three INs” Findings paragraph in a qualitative research article on English teacher candidates’ use of new media and technologies during their student-teaching internships might read as follows:

Ms. Garcia revisited this theme in our subsequent interview, in which she explained: “It was important for me not only to give students opportunities to critically explore tools for making podcasts and videos, but also to ask them to examine what was gained and lost by their transformation of their written texts into those other media.” Remarking on her students’ remediation of their written literacy autobiographies into StoryCorps-style podcasts and digital videos, Ms. Garcia emphasized the importance of students’ critical thinking about their work with new media and technologies, further evidence of her commitment to fostering students’ development of 21st-century literacies.

The “Three INs” structure of this Findings paragraph is foregrounded in the following template:

Ms. Garcia revisited this theme in our subsequent interview, in which she explained [INtroduction]: “_____” [INsertion]. Remarking on __, Ms. Garcia emphasized the importance of __, further evidence of her commitment to __ [INterpretation].

Additionally, a Findings *subsection* may include several such Three INs paragraphs as the subsection-level INsertion, plus an INtroduction paragraph that announces the theme uniting those paragraphs, and an INterpretation paragraph that reviews the evidence that they present. Similarly, the entire Findings *section* may begin with an INtroduction paragraph orienting readers to the various subsections, then INsert those Findings subsections, and, finally, conclude with an INterpretation paragraph, or summary of key findings.

Likewise, the overall structure of the *article* may be understood—somewhat differently from my second heuristic, “Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing”—in terms of the INtroduction, INsertion, and INterpretation of *evidence* toward the goal of addressing the problem for study, or the important research that remains to be done (see Table 3). While the Three INs approach is not the only way to organize qualitative research articles in (English) education, it may be useful in drawing writers’ and mentors’ attention to the rhetorical work accomplished by particular sentences, paragraphs, subsections, and sections of a given article.

Table 3 <i>The Three INs (INtroduction, INsertion, INterpretation)</i>	
<i>Broad Rhetorical Function</i>	<i>Major Sections of Qualitative Research Articles</i>
INtroduction of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem Statement • Plan • Literature Review • Research Questions • Theoretical Framework • Methodology
INsertion of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings
INterpretation of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Implications • Conclusion

The Three INs heuristic recasts writing and revising tasks as specific rhetorical actions that may be undertaken separately or together, and in a variety of orders. In this way, work with the Three INs may make writing projects seem less daunting and more adaptable to an already challenging work schedule. For example, to compose the Findings section of a qualitative research article, a writer might

1. Generate all of the INsertion passages for the major paragraphs by selecting and presenting the data (e.g., Ms. Garcia's interview quote, "It was important for me not only to give students opportunities to critically explore tools for making podcasts and videos, but also to ask them to examine what was gained and lost by their transformation of their written texts into those other media").
2. Arrange these emerging paragraphs in a compelling order.
3. Add an INtroduction sentence to the beginning of each paragraph, orienting readers to the data to be presented in the paragraph (e.g., "Ms. Garcia revisited this theme in our subsequent interview, in which she explained:...").
4. Add INterpretation sentences to the end of each paragraph by, first, *paraphrasing* the INserted data (e.g., "Remarking on her students' remediation of their written literacy autobiographies into StoryCorps-style podcasts and digital videos,...") and, second, *labeling* it as evidence of the object of study (the focus of the inquiry), using a conceptual term defined in the Theoretical Framework section (e.g., "...Ms. Garcia emphasized the importance of students' critical thinking about their work with new media and technologies, further evidence of her

commitment to fostering students' development of *21st-century literacies*").

5. Interweave transitions between the Findings paragraphs.
6. Open the Findings section with an INtroduction paragraph that gives an overview of the section.
7. Close the Findings section with an INterpretation paragraph that provides a summary of key findings.

In highlighting the specific writing moves by which general rhetorical strategies are realized, the Three INs heuristic may enhance (English) education researchers' writing and revising of qualitative research articles, their comparative analysis of genre models, and their conversations with mentors about these texts.

However, it is important to remember that even as the terms "INtroduction," "INsertion," and "INterpretation" refer to *broad* rhetorical jobs performed throughout qualitative research articles in (English) education, the *precise* work accomplished by each "IN" depends on its location in the article. In my presentation below of the rhetorical functions of each major article section (Table 4), I will indicate the particular work of each "IN" by providing an outline of a Three INs paragraph and a paragraph template for each section.⁶ In addition to helping writers to produce *all* of the major sections of qualitative research articles in (English) education, a major purpose of Table 4 is to facilitate writers' and mentors' connection of the specific writing moves made in passages drawn from sample journal articles (paragraph templates) with the strategic purposes driving those moves (rhetorical functions). Similarly, Table 4 may enable writers to translate journal reviewers' feedback on their qualitative research articles (rhetorical functions) into targeted revisions (paragraph templates).

Major Section	Specific Rhetorical Functions	Guiding Question for Writing and Revising	Possible Paragraph Structure	Possible Paragraph Template
Problem Statement (no heading)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in non-specialist terms attractive to the journal's wide readership, articulate the <i>problem for study</i> (the important research that remains to be done), based on a careful examination of relevant previous research generate an audience for the article 	What inquiry does my article begin to undertake, and why does this inquiry matter to my target audience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders in the Problem Background of the Problem Problem Proposed Response to the Problem 	English education researchers interested in __ [Stakeholders] have addressed issues of __, __, and __. Motivated by __, previous studies have assumed that __ [Background]. Whereas this assumption has generated important research, the emphasis on __ has meant that few studies have considered X [Problem], an issue that I will explore in this article by __ [Proposed Response].
Plan (no heading)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> orient readers to the investigation to follow, without revealing the article's major arguments 	What course will readers' inquiry take as they read my article?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literature Review Theoretical Framework Methodology Basic Orientation to (Not Revelation of) Major Arguments 	In this article, I will, first, review literature on __. Second, I will present my analytic perspective on X, which draws on So-and-so's theory of __. Third, I will explain and justify my study design, which __. Finally, I will offer evidence of X, generated through my research, and make arguments regarding my goal of __.
Literature Review (or thematic heading)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in the specialist terms of the target audience, with supporting citations, articulate the <i>problem for study</i> (the important research that remains to be done), based on a careful examination of relevant previous research generate an audience for the article 	How have past research efforts, both separately and together, contributed to the need for specific inquiry, which my article will begin to undertake?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of the study or set of studies Insertion of relevant contributions of the study or set of studies Interpretation of relevant limitations/boundaries of the study or set of studies, beyond which the article will attempt to make contributions 	Previous research on __ has tended to __ [Introduction]. For example, Author 1 argued that __. Similarly, Author 2 claimed that __. Most recently, Author 3 proposed that __ [Insertion]. Although these studies have provided useful insights into __, they have not examined X, inquiry that I will begin to do in this article [Interpretation].
Research Questions (no heading)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pose one or more questions to guide the inquiry undertaken in the article 	Which research questions will enable me, in this article, to extend and challenge the previous studies that I examine in the Literature Review section?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question 1 Question 2 Question 3 	In this article, I will address the following questions: (1) __; (2) __; and (3) __.
Theoretical Framework (or thematic heading)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conceptualize the <i>object of study</i> (the focus of the important research that remains to be done) operationalize that <i>object of study</i> 	What do I want readers to recognize in the data that I present in the Findings section?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of a theoretical construct that helps to define the object of study (the research focus) Insertion of a definition of the construct Interpretation of how the construct will be used in the study 	In my analysis, I will approach X as C [Introduction]. So-and-so has defined C as __. For example, __. Crucially, this interpretation of X highlights __, which is important, given my focus on __ [Insertion]. In my study, __ will constitute evidence of C [Interpretation].
Methodology (or thematic heading)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the methodological decisions that together make up the study design justify those decisions relative to the goal of addressing the problem for study (exceeding a limitation/boundary of previous research) 	How might I strengthen connections between my problem for study (the purpose of my inquiry) and the features of my study design? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site Selection: <i>When</i> and <i>where</i> were the data generated? Participant Selection: <i>Who</i>, other than the researcher(s), contributed to data generation? Data Sources: <i>What</i> data were generated? Data Generation: <i>How</i> were the data generated? Data Analysis: <i>How</i> were the data organized, selected, and interpreted? Researcher Positionality: <i>Who</i> is/are the researcher(s)? How did the <i>researcher(s)</i> contribute to data generation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of the methodological decision(s) Insertion of details regarding the methodological decision(s) Interpretation of how the methodological decision(s) were appropriate and advantageous, given the problem for study (the important research that remains to be done) 	To investigate X, I chose to __ [Introduction]. Specifically, I __ [Insertion]. This decision enabled me to __ and thus to pursue my interest in __ [Interpretation].

<i>Major Section</i>	<i>Specific Rhetorical Functions</i>	<i>Guiding Question for Writing and Revising</i>	<i>Possible Paragraph Structure</i>	<i>Possible Paragraph Template</i>
Discussion (or thematic heading)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make claims based on evidence of the object of study (the focus of the inquiry) presented in the Findings section qualify those claims, or set the limits of their validity explain how those claims extend and challenge previous research examined in the Literature Review section 	How might I strengthen connections between the evidence that I present in the Findings section and the claims about that evidence that I make in the Discussion section, <i>and</i> between those claims and the previous research that I examine in the Literature Review section?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction (reminder or synthesis) of evidence presented in the Findings section Insertion of rigorously responsible claim(s) about the evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part I: claim(s) Part II: qualification of claim(s) Interpretation of how the claim(s) extend and challenge relevant previous research, especially research cited in the Literature Review section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part I: reminder of contribution(s) and limitation(s) of previous research Part II: explanation of how the claim(s) extend and challenge previous research 	As I have demonstrated above, __ [INtroduction]. Thus, my research suggests that __ [INsertion, Part I]. While I do not argue that __, I do contend that __ [INsertion, Part II]. Prior research on X has focused on __. For example, __ [INterpretation, Part I]. My inquiry extends these contributions by __. However, I also complicate previous work in claiming that __ [INterpretation, Part II].
Implications (or thematic heading)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify limitations/boundaries of the current study, propose new problems for study (e.g., new areas of inquiry and new research questions) to be pursued in future studies 	How might I strengthen connections between the claims that I make in the Discussion section and the calls for future inquiry that I make in the Implications section?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction (reminder or synthesis) of Discussion claim(s) Insertion of rigorously responsible new problem(s) for study, based on Discussion claim(s) Interpretation of how the new problem(s) for study might be pursued in future research 	Based on my findings, I have proposed that __ [INtroduction]. Although my research has addressed __, my study did not examine __ [INsertion]. Future inquiries might explore __ by __ [INterpretation].
Conclusion (no heading)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> summarize the contributions of the article summarize the limitations/boundaries of those contributions summarize the article's call for future action 	How do I want readers to remember my article?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of the article's contributions Summary of the limitations/boundaries of those contributions Summary of the article's call for future action 	In this article, I have presented __ and argued that __. However, opportunities remain to investigate __. Continued research in this area of inquiry might address __.
Abstract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> represent the article arouse readers' interest in the article 	How might I summarize my article for readers and emphasize its contributions to the field of English education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem for Study (important research that remains to be done) Theoretical Framework Methodology Major Arguments Directions for Future Inquiry 	EE researchers interested in __ have addressed __. However, X remains to be explored. In this article, I investigate X by presenting __ generated in my __ study of __. Through my analysis of __, I demonstrate that __. Based on these findings, I argue that __. My research thus adds to previous research on X by claiming __. My work also encourages new inquiries into __.

The Three INs is one approach for producing qualitative-research article sections that accomplish their conventional rhetorical jobs. However, these same ends may be achieved by different means, though perhaps not as systematically or with as much ease. Below is a list of sample article sections that perform the rhetorical functions outlined in Table 4. These examples are certainly not the only ones that I might have chosen; however, they suggest some of the diversity of the field of English education. In identifying these examples, my intention was not to explore their creative and critical ingenuity, which is beyond the scope of this essay, but, rather, to inspire writers and their mentors to engage in such investigations. Additionally, I do not claim that the authors of these examples used “PAGE,” “Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing,” or “The Three INs,” or construed the rhetorical functions of the major article sections exactly as I interpret them in this essay. The design and craft of qualitative research articles in (English) education is a complex art, which, depending on the situation, may make use of a variety of rhetorical principles and techniques. My purpose in offering this essay is not to reduce that art to a set of unchanging rules or an infallible method but, rather, to make it more possible for writers and their mentors to engage with its complexity—to try and try anew.

Major Section	Sample
Problem Statement	Fritzen (2011) “Teaching as Sheltering: A Metaphorical Analysis of Sheltered Instruction for English Language Learners” (pp. 185-186)
Plan	Fisher (2007) “‘Every City Has Soldiers’: The Role of Intergenerational Relationships in Participatory Literacy Communities” (pp. 140-141)
Literature Review	Blackburn and Clark (2011) “Analyzing Talk in a Long-Term Literature Discussion Group: Ways of Operating within LGBT-Inclusive and Queer Discourses” (pp. 223-224)
Research Questions	Zancanella (1991) “Teachers Reading/Readers Teaching: Five Teachers’ Personal Approaches to Literature and Their Teaching of Literature” (pp. 6-7)
Theoretical Framework	Johnson, Smagorinsky, Thompson, and Fry (2003) “Learning to Teach the Five-Paragraph Theme” (pp. 142-144)
Methodology	Moje and Wade (1997) “What Case Discussions Reveal about Teacher Thinking” (pp. 693-696)
Findings	Dyson (2008) “Staying within (Curricular) Lines: Practice Constraints and Possibilities in Childhood Writing” (pp. 127-150)
Discussion	Zuidema (2012) “Making Space for Informal Inquiry: Inquiry as Stance in an Online Induction Network” (pp. 142-143)
Implications	Rex (2006) “Acting ‘Cool’ and ‘Appropriate’: Toward a Framework for Considering Literacy Classroom Interactions When Race Is a Factor” (pp. 318-319)
Conclusion	Sherry and Tremmel (2012) “English Education 2.0: An Analysis of Websites That Contain Videos of English Teaching” (p. 64)
Abstract	Anagnostopoulos, Smith, and Basmadjian (2007) “Bridging the University-School Divide: Horizontal Expertise and the ‘Two Worlds Pitfall’”

None of the three heuristics presented in this article is a formula for rhetorical success. Rather, as heuristics, they are flexible approaches designed to prompt imaginative and inquiry-driven rhetorical action. Put differently, “PAGE,” “Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing,” and “The Three INs” were made to be remade. They are not the only approaches that writers might take in writing and revising qualitative research articles in (English) education. Indeed, in offering these tools, I aim not to supersede writers’ rhetorical judgment but, rather, to support its development. Together, these three curricular resources invite writers to connect general rhetorical concerns, like purpose, audience, genre, and engagement, with specific writing moves, and to approach qualitative research writing as a strategic “art” rather than as a matter of “chance.”

While I have attended primarily in this essay to issues of qualitative research *writing*, the genre conventions and heuristics presented above may also be used to enhance *reading* and *responding* to qualitative research articles. For example, depending on the kinds of information that readers are seeking, they may engage in thorough reading of only those sections that perform the desired functions. Similarly, in responding to fellow writers’ qualitative research articles, (English) educators may more precisely identify areas for revision, given their expanded sense of the specific rhetorical work accomplished by each major section. Likewise, having read this essay, writers may find it easier to translate reviewer feedback into action plans for reworking their manuscripts. Other uses and adaptations of the three heuristics presented in this essay may emerge, which I welcome. Inquiry begets inquiry. I offer this article as another invitation for (English) education researchers to dialogue on the teaching and learning of research literacies, to explore and experiment with genre conventions, and to participate with renewed purpose and engagement, ease and art, in the rhetorical practices of the field.

Notes

1. Throughout this essay, I use the device “(English) education” to indicate the applicability of certain rhetorical moves to qualitative research articles in the wider field of education.

2. By the term “mentors,” I evoke, for example, course instructors, advisers for graduate students, mentors for new faculty, journal reviewers and editors, research team members, collaborative writing partners, and writers’ own students.

3. In the “PAGE” questions and in those that appear throughout the article, I use the first-person singular pronouns “I” and “me” rather than the first-person plural pronouns “we” and “us.” Of course, I recognize that many qualitative research articles in (English) education are collaboratively written. However, I employ the singular pronouns both for brevity and for the intensified call to rhetorical responsibility which, I believe, they evoke.

4. Qualitative researchers in English education may use the term “data” in quite different ways, depending on their theories of knowledge, truth, subject-object relations, and language (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis). In fact, some qualitative researchers may avoid using the term “data” in an effort to distinguish their work from objectivist social science. In this essay, I use the term “data” to mark one intersection of consensus and debate regarding purposes, practices, and effects of qualitative inquiry.

5. Research questions are conventionally formulated in response to a careful analysis of the contributions and limitations/boundaries of relevant previous research. For this reason, it makes sense to present the Research Questions section after the Literature Review section, as some qualitative research articles do. However, others pose the research questions at the end of the Problem Statement, assuming that readers will adequately understand the terms, purpose(s), and urgency of those questions by that point in the article. Still other qualitative research articles use the Research Questions section as a transition between the Theoretical Framework section, which precisely defines the object of study, or focus of the inquiry, and the Methodology section, which presents and justifies the study design. As discussed above, rhetorical decisions made in writing and revising qualitative research articles in English education may be facilitated through deliberate reflection on purpose, audience, genre, and engagement.

6. Graff and Birkenstein also use templates to facilitate high-school and college writers’ participation in academic discourse, broadly construed. In contrast, my paragraph templates specifically address the conventional rhetoric of qualitative research texts in (English) education.

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