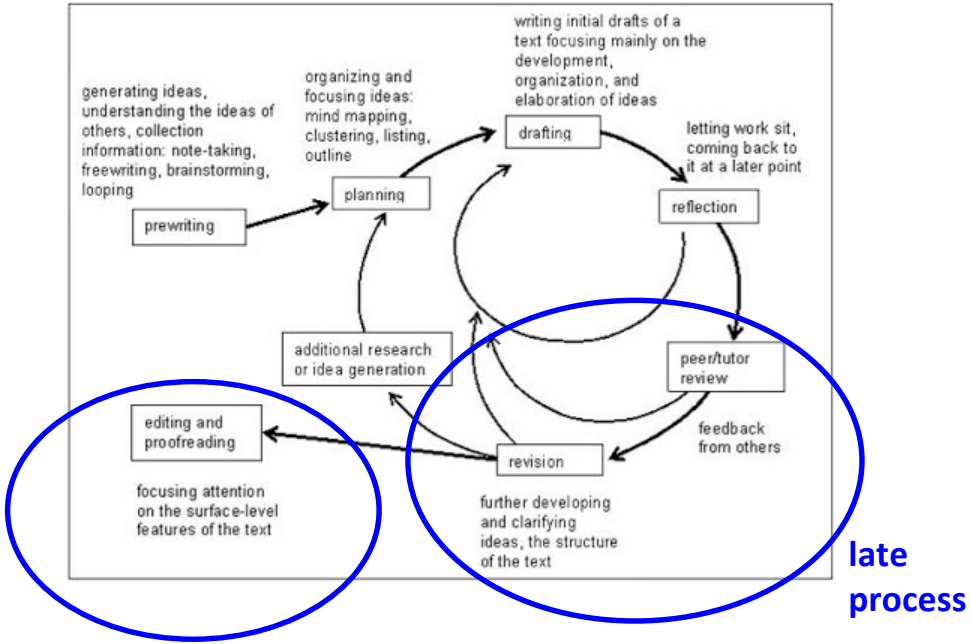
Physics 280

Writing Lab 12

Revising, Copyediting, and Proofreading

Issues Review for RPv2

early process



The writing process is **recursive**.
i.e., curves back on itself: each step may include previous steps

Source: Coffin, C., Curry, M.J., Goodman, S., Hewings, A., Lillis, T.M., Swann, J. (2003). *Teaching Academic Writing*. NY: Routledge.

[Revising] Claims Support

Support claims (i.e., assertions that something is so / true / real) **with reasoning and evidence.**

Can be thought of as reverse-engineering how you became convinced of whatever you are claiming and then presenting that process to readers, but claim first.

Tips

- give only your best reasoning and evidence (quality over quantity)
- provide in this order: claim > reasoning > evidence > more reasoning about evidence
- don’t assume your reader will accept your claim without reasoning and evidence -- tests: if this is likely, should you be making the claim as if it’s debatable or novel? are you asserting the obvious?
- take time to explain how evidence supports the claim -- don’t leave this for the reader to work out on their own (they may come to a different conclusion or remain in doubt))

Claims Support Example

Claims (assertions of truth) are backed by reasons.

[claim / assertion] North Korea is not one of the world's leading nuclear-weapon states, despite an assessment by the Japanese government in August 2019 that the nation has achieved miniaturized warheads.

Reasons answer the reader's implicit questions: Why do you say that? Why should I believe it?

[reason / backing] We have reason to doubt that the country possesses the technologies needed for a long-range missile to survive re-entry.

Evidence supports the reasons offered to back a claim. Forms of acceptable evidence differ by discipline and genre. In our case, they might include facts, statistics, examples, expert opinion. Think about all the different forms of evidence that have been used in our class lecture and readings.

[evidence / support] Michael Elleman, Director of the Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Policy Programme at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, has found based on video evidence that the Hwasong-14 (a road-transportable ICBM) failed to survive re-entry during its test in July 2017. [expert opinion, example]

Claims Support Activity

1. Strengthen Each Claim

    a. Starting at the beginning of the body of RPv1, find a claim, one that is written out so that you could underline it on the page.

    a. What comes immediately after the claim? Is it a reason that backs up why the reader should find the claim credible?

    a. After the reason, do you next provide evidence that provides support for why the reader should accept that reason?

    a. If you find a reason and/or evidence missing, write out what reason or evidence you could supply. Make a note for your revision plan.

1. Continue

    Repeat this process as you read through RPv1 until work time is up.

[Revising & Copyediting] Conclusion Development

Conclusions can be thought of as "**point statements**," which answer the reader's implicit question, "**Okay, now that we know and believe all of this content, so what? Why should I care? Why does it matter [in some larger context, to some group of stakeholders]? How does it change what we think / feel / do? What happens now?**"

1. Your conclusion for RPv2 provides recommended actions based on your analysis of a nuclear security problem. You will begin your conclusion by briefly synthesizing how you have defined the problem and its major factors (some writing advice tells you to "restate your thesis," but that advice is too narrow).

2. Now, state your recommended solution(s).

1. Next, address directly and explicitly how your definition and analysis of the problem guide your recommendation(s).

2. You could stop at Step #3, but that wouldn't be very satisfying for readers who have come all this way with you.

   Before developing a statement about your recommendation(s), take a step back to consider your recommendation(s) given a larger context. What more do you have to say without introducing a new argument or major factors not presented in your analysis.

To develop interesting, relevant content for a conclusion, answer readers' implicit questions, which naturally arise from their interest in your topic and how you have organized your discussion.
Choose one or two questions -- don't take them all on.

In RPv2, readers might wonder whether your recommendation(s) are:

- standard or novel, given the field of experts you've encountered?
- if forwarded by a group(s) of others, what shared views tend to cluster around their preferred solution(s) and how do your views align with theirs?
- strategically conservative or risky?
- feasible or somewhat impractical?
- short-term or long-term?
- partial or whole?
- resource-light or resource-intensive?
- already thoroughly researched or in need of further investigation (and if so, what do we still need to know)?

To develop your focus further, briefly answer one or more implicit follow-up questions.

ex. In discussing the feasibility of your recommendation, you could answer the implicit follow-up question: What kind of process or framework would need to be put into place (and by whom) to effect your recommendation(s)?

ex. In discussing the novelty of your recommendation(s), you could answer the implicit follow-up question: Are there standard recommendation(s) you have left out and, if so, why?

Conclusion Development Activity

Reread your conclusion for RPv1.

A. Does the beginning of your conclusion…?

1. briefly synthesizing how you have defined the problem and its major factors
2. state your recommended solution(s)
3. address directly and explicitly how your definition and analysis of the problem guide your recommendation(s)

If not, make notes for your revision plan.

B. Does your conclusion go on to address one or two of the readers' implicit questions?

If not, make notes for your revision plan. Include two of the implicit questions from our list that you may want to address.

Now, choose one of those implicit questions. Freewrite new conclusion material in response to that implicit question. Address a follow-up question if there's time.