
Insights - 1

Communication begins when we make an initial choice to speak or to record our ideas in writing. When we speak, our words disappear quickly, so we are often lax about our grammar because no record of what we say remains. The written word, however, creates a public record of our knowledge, our opinions, and our skill with language, so we try to make our writing accurate, forceful, and honest.

Regardless of the writer's experience or the instructor's expert direction, writing is a demanding process that requires commitment. Discovering a well-focused topic, and more importantly a reason for writing about it, begins the process. Choosing a format, exploring sources through critical reading, and then completing the writing task with grace and style are daunting tasks.

Despite this, writing is an outlet for the inquisitive and creative nature in each of us. Our writing is affected by the richness of our language, by our background and experiences, by our targeted audience, and by the form of expression that we choose. With perceptive enthusiasm for relating detailed concepts and honest insights, we discover the power of our own words. The satisfaction of writing well and relating our understanding to others provides intellectual stimulation and insight into our own beliefs and values.

As academic writers, we find that our writing assignments extend past personal thoughts and ideas and go on exploring more complex topics. Writing makes us confident in our ability to find information and present it effectively in all kinds of ways and for all sorts of projects.

Why Do research ? There are several reasons:

- Research teaches methods of discovery;
- Research teaches investigative skills;
- Research develops inquiry-based techniques;
- Research teaches critical thinking;
- Research teaches logic;
- Research teaches the basic ingredients of arguments.

On 'Explicitness'

A Text is explicit not because it says everything all by itself but rather because it strikes a careful balance between what needs to be said and what may be assumed. The writer's problem is not just being explicit; the writer's problem is knowing what to be explicit about. (Nystrand, M., Doyle, A. and Himley, M. (1986). *A critical examination of the doctrine of autonomous texts*. In M. Nystrand (ed.), *The structure of written communication* (pp.81-107). Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

On 'Good writing'

'Good writing' is that discovered combination of words which allows a person the integrity to dominate his subject with a pattern both fresh and original. 'Bad writing', then, is an echo of someone else's combination which we have merely taken over for the occasion of our writing...'Good writing' must be the discovery by a responsible person of his uniqueness within his subject. (Rohman, D.G. (1965) Pre-writing: the stage of discovery in the writing process. *College Composition and Communication*, 16:106-12.)