



a journal of first-year writing

Change Is Possible for Everyone

TAYLOR JONES

**Navigating Authority in Coursework and Life: An Unofficial
Guide for Fellow Students**

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**More than Just Pieces of Paper: The Role of Genres in
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From the Editor

Are you an authority on anything? Do friends and family members all come to you, for instance, when they need help with a computer problem, or when they have a question about some bit of movie trivia? Whatever your particular source of authority may be, consider this for a moment: where does the authority actually exist? Does the authority emanate from you and your actions, or is it bestowed on you by the people who choose to trust you on this particular subject? Or does it exist somewhere in between?

Authority is, admittedly, a tricky thing. Add writing into the mix and it just gets even messier. As writing students, though, the subject really can't be ignored. The odds are pretty good that your instructor this semester wants you to try and claim authority on some subject or other, or perhaps to consider how others establish authority in writing in different sorts of genres and situations. It's not easy. I think a lot of writers (and I'm including myself here) find themselves plagued with self-doubt and anxiety during the writing process, so to then try to construct something that somehow sounds authoritative—or at least worth paying attention to—can seem, at times, impossible.

These questions related to authority are at the heart of all the articles you'll find in this issue of *Stylus*. Whether the writers have taken up the subject directly or simply demonstrate what authority in writing can look like, I think they'll give you a lot to think about as you consider the role of authority in your own writing.

The first article in this issue is Taylor Jones' "Change Is Possible for Everyone." Jones details some experiences with writing in high school that may be relatable for some of you. These experiences led her to learn how to think about audience in a more useful way and, ultimately, to understand that her writing really can have an impact on others. This is an important lesson, and one deeply related, I think, to what it means to have authority in writing.

Next up is Willa Maddox's "Navigating Authority in Coursework and Life: An Unofficial Guide for Fellow Students." Maddox takes the issue of authority head-on in this article, focusing on the importance of acquiring authority in the context of specific communities. This has implications, she argues, for not just what we learn but *how* we learn it. Students in first-year composition classes should find Maddox's discussion quite useful.

The third piece in this issue is Caroline Halik's "More than Just Pieces of Paper: The Role of Genres in Professional Employee/Employer Relationships." We've chosen to excerpt the

introduction and review of literature from a larger article so that you can focus in on some of the moves Halik makes here. Note particularly how Halik positions her question and thinking alongside those of other authors in order to help her claim authority as a researcher. The ideas Halik presents about genres and how they work will likely be useful to you as well.

The final two articles in this issue of *Stylus* are the results of extended research projects in ENC 1102 courses. They differ in both subject and method, but I think you'll find both to be stellar examples of student researchers establishing their authority to speak meaningfully to issues that affect the University of Central Florida. First is Komysa Hassan's "Digital Literacy and the Making of Meaning: How Format Affects Interpretation in the University of Central Florida Libraries Search Interface." In rhetorically analyzing the search interface in the library, Hassan provides a tangible example of the intersection between digital literacies, rhetoric, and the construction of knowledge. Moreover, her careful discussion of the search process itself makes this article a good read for any students conducting research in the library.

Last but not least is Kyle Coltrain's "The Rhetoric behind College Football Recruiting." As a player on the Knights' football team himself, Coltrain combines his insider's perspective with secondary research to develop a compelling investigation into what works to recruit student athletes. His article should make for an interesting read for both fellow student researchers and fans of UCF football alike.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Stylus* and find it to be helpful in your explorations of what writing and research can accomplish. We also hope that you'll consider submitting your own work for publication in the journal; at one time or another, all of the students published here were sitting in a composition class, just like you. To read about their experiences (and, sometimes, struggles) along the way from receiving an assignment to being published, be sure to take a look at the writer's statements accompanying each essay. If you're interested in submitting work to *Stylus*, simply ask your composition instructor to forward the piece you'd like to submit to the journal and we'll take care of the rest. If you have any questions about this process, feel free to contact me at Matthew.Bryan@ucf.edu.

-Matt Bryan