



a journal of first-year writing

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The Evolution of Nurse Anesthesia  
*TRISTAN TURKKI*

Looking Through the Semiotic  
Lens: Rhetorical Sponsors of Civic  
Engagement in Cyberpublics  
*PAIGE PRESTON*

The Future of Social Work  
Research: An Analysis on the  
Improvement of Social Work  
Research Literature for the  
Betterment of the Discipline  
*CHELSEA WOOTEN*

Balancing the Equation of  
Undergraduate Research: The  
Importance of Reading, Learning,  
and Presentation Stability in the  
Success of STEM Laboratories  
*LESLIE SIMMS*

Fictional Friendships and Their  
Effect on Socialization  
*ANNAKA SKAVNES*

Charitable YouTube Discourse:  
Markiplier and the Elements of  
Online Communication  
*JENNIFER ANDERSEN-PETERS*

The Literacy Journey of Harry  
Potter: A Study in Versatile  
Sponsorship via Multimedia  
*SAMANTHA GLASER*

Elements of a Storm: The Rhetoric  
Behind a 7th Grade Poem  
*CASIANA APONTE*

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Knights Write Showcase Special Issue | Spring 2016

The Journal of the First-Year Writing Program  
at the University of Central Florida

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## *From the Guest Editor*

On February 3, 2016, UCF's Department of Writing and Rhetoric will celebrate the 6th Annual Knights Write Showcase in the Pegasus Ballroom of the Student Union. Here, select students present orally and visually the work they produced in their first-year writing classes.

It's important to note that every year, between 6,000 and 8,000 students enroll in first-year writing classes at UCF. While not every student has their work submitted, a large number end up with their essays in the pool from which these are chosen. For some of the projects in this issue, the students started with a great idea that they worked with for an entire semester; for others, their idea started out in more general terms and was cultivated along the way into something unique and special. In every case, the final materials submitted exemplify exceptional writing and research skills.

The essays presented in this issue are courtesy of the 6th Annual Knights Write Showcase panelists. The first of the panels I'll be discussing is titled: Researching Academic Disciplines. Here, four students offer their point of views on this interesting topic.

In Tristan Turkki's essay, "The Evolution of Nurse Anesthesia," the author explores the past, present, and, most importantly, the future of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, including potential changes in hospitals and education. This essay is a wonderful example on how to engage academically in your future profession.

Paige Preston wrote "Looking Through the Semiotic Lens: Rhetorical Sponsors of Civic Engagement in Cyberpublics" in her ENC 1102 class. In it, Preston asks engaging questions of: How does the Internet serve as a sponsor for civic engagement outside the scope of its boundaries? How does the multimodal, narrative nature embodied by Instagram influence civic behavior? And, what do these applications translate to in offline space? She compares case studies to help show understanding of the relationships between online and offline spaces and the potential of civic engagement. This essay is a superb model of how students can artfully add their position on a subject into an existing conversation.

Chelsea Wooten explored whether or not there is a disconnection between the academic world of social work and the practice of social work in her essay, “The Future of Social Work Research: An Analysis on the Improvement of Social Work Research Literature for the Betterment of the Discipline.” The author presents ways research in the field could be improved. Reading this essay alongside Turkki’s and Preston’s may show you multiple ways for you to academically connect with your chosen major.

The fourth presenter on this panel, Leslie Simms, wrote the essay, “Balancing the Equation of Undergraduate Research: The Importance of Reading, Learning, and Presentation Stability in the Success of S.T.E.M. Laboratories” in her ENC 1102 class. In it, the author explores compression of knowledge and physical presentations of several UCF S.T.E.M research groups. As you read, it may be useful to think about the activities—extra-curricular and otherwise—that may set you apart in your chosen field.

The second panel, Exploring Genres of Social Media, Fiction, and Verse, is also made up of four students who offer interesting and unique perspectives on these popular genres.

First, Annaka Skavnes explores how the bonds between readers and fictional characters can be used as a tool to inspire socialization and relationship-building skills among young people in her essay, “Fictional Friendships and Their Effect on Socialization.” Reflecting on the fictional characters she read herself and collecting data from her peers, Skavnes focuses on not only the friendship bonds created, but also the legitimacy of the connections. As you read this essay, think back on your favorite book characters and think about how they might have influenced you.

The next essay, “Charitable YouTube Discourse: Markiplier and the Elements of Online Communication,” by Jennifer Andersen-Peters, is an analysis of a popular Internet personality and how he uses his online platform to create a positive impact on society. The author explores posts from YouTube, Twitter, and Tumblr, looking at word choice and themes, and how they can affect audience. This essay is especially relevant considering the heavy online presence of people today. As you read, consider the effect your own posts may have on others.

The third panelist, Samantha Glaser, wrote, “The Literacy Journey of Harry Potter: A Study in Versatile Sponsorship via Multimedia.” In this essay, the author reflects on her own literacy journey through the many forms of media connected to the Harry Potter series, including books, film, and theme parks. Many people are familiar with Harry Potter. As you explore this essay, it may be fun to come up with all the types of media you’ve used as an avenue to connect to this and other fictional favorites.

Last for this panel, Casiana Aponte, wrote the essay, “Elements of a Storm: The Rhetoric Behind a 7th Grade Poem” in her ENC 1101 class. In it, she explores how her rhetorical situation helped shaped the piece of writing—in this case, a poem she wrote in 7th grade to help cope with the feelings an intense storm left her with. This essay is a great example of the many ways outside influences affect the things we write about.

The third student panel is one comprised of three authors who previously presented in past Knights Write Showcases: Tiffany Gagnon, Komysha Hassan, and Jimmy Palmer. Their presentations will explore writing and how it’s helped them to where they are now. Their work that originally earned them spots in the Showcase was published during the last two years in issues of *Stylus: A Journal of First-Year Writing*. Tiffany Gagnon’s writing can be found in the Spring 2014 Special Issue, Komysha Hassan’s in the Spring 2015 Special Issue, and James Plyler’s in *Stylus* 5.1. You can access all of their essays here: <http://writingandrhetoric.cah.ucf.edu/stylus/issues.php>. All three of these essays are excellent examples of First-Year writing at its best.

Like many students currently enrolled at UCF, you may be wondering how to approach your own writing projects, big or small. The essays in this issue are excellent models of analysis, data collection, and exceptional writing. It may help you to also read the writer’s statements to learn how the authors overcame, what to them at the time, were various roadblocks to successful writing. Some of the authors discuss how they came up with ideas and research questions, while others

offer advice on data collection and entering academic conversations in a way that interested them. Join us at the Showcase in February to see how the authors adjust their material for a different audience and genre of presenting.

If you would like to watch videos of the 2015 panelists, you can visit the Knights Write Showcase website at: <http://writingandrhetoric.cah.ucf.edu/showcase.php>

All of us at the Showcase and with *Stylus* hope you find this issue beneficial to your own writing projects. Enjoy!

Adele Richardson  
Knights Write Showcase