



a journal of first-year writing

**Orlando Strong: How a Tragedy
Can Bring a Community Closer
Together**
PAULA CAMPO

**A Fatal Divide: Understanding the
Rhetorical Disconnect Between
Information and Fatalistic Beliefs
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Communication between
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in a Constrained Genre**
CLAYTON WHITE

Knights Write Showcase Special Issue | Spring 2018

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Knights Write Showcase

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From the Guest Editor

The Department of Writing and Rhetoric here at UCF held its 8th Annual Knights Write Showcase on February 7, 2018 in the Pegasus Ballroom of the Student Union. This is one of the most anticipated events in our department because it features and recognizes the exceptional work produced by students in our first-year writing courses. The number of students in our ENC 1101 and ENC 1102 courses is between 6,000 and 8,000, so the pool of submitted essays for the Knights Write Showcase is quite large and the review process by the selection committee is extensive. Some of the projects submitted are featured as poster presentations on the day of the showcase and a few are selected to present on faculty-moderated student panels to share and discuss.

The student essays featured in this special issue are courtesy of the 8th Annual Knights Write Showcase panelists. This year we had two panels, the first of which was titled, "Revealing Rhetorics of Everyday Life." This panel was moderated by Allison Pinkerton and featured work from four students who took an interesting look at questions ranging from events that have affected our community to decisions we make in our daily lives.

The panel began with Paula Campo's "Orlando Strong: How a Tragedy Can Bring a Community Closer Together," which examined the effects of the tragic mass shooting that took place at the Pulse nightclub in the summer of 2016. This powerful presentation focused on some of the members of the UCF community that were impacted by this tragedy and also how the city of Orlando came together to express support and community in the wake of these events. Campo's essay reminds us that more dialogue and understanding is necessary in order to move toward a more accepting and inclusive future.

Rachel Boone was the next presenter on the panel. Her essay, "A Fatal Divide: Understanding the Rhetorical Disconnect Between Information and Fatalistic Beliefs about Nutrition-Based Cancer Prevention," looked at how information regarding cancer prevention based on people's dietary choices could be more effective in changing behavior. Her research question also covered to what extent a fatalistic view concerning what causes cancer influences how much value one puts into nutrition-based research. Some suggestions for how to better reach the audiences of these studies are also discussed.

A look at the rhetoric surrounding dietary trends was presented by Hannah West in the essay, "What Was Old Is the New Fad: Examining the Rhetoric of the Paleo Diet." In her presentation, she discussed the motivations behind dieting and how that relates to previous research on the topic. Through her textual analysis of various publications and interviews, West

was able to make connections to the inherent values communicated in the rhetoric used with the Paleo Diet. Her research suggests a strong relationship between the authors of dietary texts and their audiences.

The fourth presenter on this panel was Brian Hutchingson, with "Michael Vick's Legal Defense: I was Battling Pokémon," which looked at the rating system for video games related to violence. Hutchingson focused his analysis on the very popular game Pokémon due to its "E for everyone" rating. What the rhetorical research from this author shows, however, is that the language used in this game, while creating universal appeal, does present issues related to the covering up of the animal violence it portrays. Hutchingson advocates for more parental consideration of such implications when deciding whether or not to purchase such a game for their children.

The second student panel that presented was, "How Writing Matters Across Multiple Contexts." This panel was moderated by faculty member Stuart Dees and looked at a wide scope of questions related to how writing is used to achieve goals. This panel is a great example of how students can turn their observations of the world around them into meaningful and insightful research projects.

One of the authors that chose to use their own experiences as inspiration for their research project was Kristen Wong with her essay, "The Lack of Diversity in Video Games: A Forum Post." This study examined the lack of representation in video games when it comes to the ability to develop characters that reflect the diversity of the players involved. Wong's discussion of how personal identity development led to this research question creates a strong exigence for looking at how far video games have come in terms of technology, but how far they still need to go socially with regards to equal representation.

Catherine Abbruzzese followed with her project titled "Changing Perceptions: A Look into the Female Undergraduates' Thoughts on Engineering" that built on the current attention that the gender gap in STEM programs is receiving. Despite making some gains over the last twenty years, the percentage of women in STEM programs is still relatively small. Abbruzzese conducted interviews and focus groups to look at the extent to which gender roles and stereotypes play a part in influencing which majors women go into and their career choices. While trends did emerge from her findings, the author also called for further research to be done on this question to address this current and ongoing issue.

Another way in which one of the authors took their own experience with learning and turned it into their research project was Linh Tran, with her paper, "Flashcards: Meaning-Making for Student Success." Tran's research was unique in that she looked at various methods of preparation by international students and multilingual learners. Through interviews and textual analysis she was able to discuss the ways in which these students managed and improved their learning of complex course material.

The panel finished with "Essence of Technical Writing: Communication between Non-Experts and Experts in a Constrained Genre" by Clayton White. In this study, White looked at the ability of engineers to communicate complex ideas in simple and effective language when it came to using Dell's KACE software. This case study relied on interviews as well as genre analysis to look at the language patterns used by those requesting technical services and those who are addressing those needs. This study shows how the format of the software itself affects the communication between its users.

All of the essays presented in this special issue are excellent models for how students are able to develop their areas of interest, personal experiences, and observations of the world around them into successful research projects. The variety of topics presented in this issue is a testament to the diverse areas of interest that our first-year writing students possess. The Knights Write Showcase is a very special event where you can see and hear from our talented group of students

here at UCF, and on behalf of all of us from the Showcase we invite you to experience some of that work here in this issue and hope to see you at next year's event.

Nikolas Gardiakos
Knights Write Showcase