

Research Article

From Novice to Apprentice: A Pedagogy of “Academic Discourse”

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This article brings together two pedagogical traditions in composition studies: the practice of close reading as a means of interfering with student commonplaces, pioneered by David Bartholomae, and the studies of metadiscourse aimed at making academic formulas more explicit to students, advanced by Laura Aull in particular. Bartholomae’s approach to strong reading as critical to academic literacy has been marginalized by more linguistically and rhetorically oriented approaches while Aull’s studies of academic discourse in student writing have so far left unexplored the potential for converting awareness of metadiscourse into a reading practice. Through an examination of student work done in classes taught through a Writing about Writing lens but more narrowly focused on “writing about first-year writing courses,” the article points toward a synthesis of the two projects. This synthesis is more broadly framed in terms of theories of metadiscourse advanced by the linguist Anna Wierzbicka and the scholar of literacy and cognition David Olson. This new framing for inquiries into academic literacy is proposed because of the suitability of its “scenic” presuppositions to inquiries into pedagogical practices.