

Loyola University Maryland
Graduate Writing Center
2017

Take this diagnostic and go over the results with your advisor, your major professor, or a writing center tutor. Then, you will know your strengths and weaknesses, and you can develop a plan for improving.

There are five kinds of genre knowledge to test for:

1. Scope of your discourse community
2. Specifics of your writing process
3. Rhetorical strategies (open vs. closed) (audience)
4. Writing Conventions
5. Subject Matter (what counts as new knowledge, vs common knowledge) (what is interesting vs important).

Discourse Community Knowledge

Answer the following questions based on the degree track that you have entered in your program.

1. What are the different genres of writing appear most in your discipline?
2. Who speaks for your field? Do you know the names of the current leading thinkers?
3. Can you name theories or paradigms that define current practice in your field?
4. What is "common knowledge" and what are the burning questions in your community?

Writing Process Knowledge

Answer the following questions based on the most recent writing assignment that you have completed in your degree program:

1. Have you discussed this assignment with a professor/advisor? What feedback have you received about your strengths and weaknesses?
2. How much time did you have and how much time did you actually spend?
3. What percentage of your efforts went into research, reading, and writing? Which of these activities was most challenging? What skills do you need help with? What do you want to prioritize?
4. Did you produce multiple drafts of this assignment? If so, how many? If not, how many drafts do you usually write before you are satisfied with the work?

Rhetorical Knowledge

Answer the following questions based on the most recent writing assignment that you have been assigned in your degree program.

1. What is the main goal of assignment? What is your purpose for writing? How does the assignment connect to the larger field of study?
2. What is the context for this writing? In other words, where does it fall in relation to other writings in the course? In your larger degree process?

3. Who do you imagine as the audience for this work? What do you know about them as readers? Do they have expectations for a piece of 'field-specific' writing?

Genre Knowledge

Answer the following questions based on the most recent writing assignment that you have been given in your degree program.

1. Do you access to other examples of this kind of writing? Has your professor provided a model?
2. What is your experience with this genre? How many of these types of assignments have you done before? How much feedback have you gotten?
3. What do you think are the main characteristics of this genre?
4. Have you written in this genre in another discipline? Are there any available comparisons that might be helpful to you in understanding what is common and unique about this type of writing in your field?

Subject Matter Knowledge

Answer the following questions based on the most recent writing assignment that you have been given in your degree program:

1. Are you writing to convey what you already know, or, are you writing to learn?
2. What is your experience with this subject? How new are you to the material/subject? Are the concepts so difficult that writing can bog down as you work to understand the content? Is it feasible to separate studying and writing?
3. How does your work relate to the kind of research/work that has already been done on this subject? Are you furthering knowledge or getting up to speed?
4. Are you able to express your ideas in relation to the ideas of other writers/scholars in this area?