Facilitating Writing of Academic Texts Through Interactive Writing and Graphic Organizers

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Features of Academic Writing

GRE Analytical Writing Assessment

Ability to…

▶ Articulate and support complex ideas

▶ Analyze an argument

▶ Sustain a focused and coherent discussion

(Rosenfeld et al., 2004, survey of graduate and undergraduate faculty)

Top 6 of 22 tasks identified as important for undergraduates

(judged very important or important)

➢ Credit sources appropriately

➢ Organize ideas and information coherently

➢ Use grammar and syntax … in standard written English … avoid errors

➢ Avoid errors in mechanics (spelling and punctuation)

➢ Revise and edit text

➢ Write precisely and concisely

Adult Learners Need To Be Able To…

- Write argumentative, technical, and informative texts
- Create, argue for, and support a thesis statement
- Abstract and summarize supporting information
- Write precisely and concisely using appropriate vocabulary and sentence structure
- Produce a well-edited piece that is easily understood by a native English speaker
- Use and credit sources

  (Fernandez, Peyton, & Schaetzel, in press; Peyton & Schaetzel, 2016)

Struggles With Academic Writing

Students may be stumbling during their general education courses, taken during the first years of a higher education program, because of their lack of academic reading and writing skills.

(Hinkel, 2004)

Struggles With Academic Writing

▶ Students entering and participating in academic programs, when faced with the need to write an essay or another piece of writing, often feel alone and challenged. They start with a blank sheet of paper or screen and must put words on it.

▶ Writing is often the most difficult thing for them, because they do it alone, without receiving immediate or ongoing feedback about clarity, meaningfulness, and correctness.

▶ "You're putting your product out there," and it will be judged based on how it looks, how correct it is. Outside the classroom, there is no opportunity to redo it.

(Kirsten Schaetzel, personal communication, 2017)

Supporting Learners' Academic Writing

Argumentative process and products are achievable when students are provided with appropriate supports of teacher guidance and scaffold-rich curricula and assessments.

(Lee, 2017)

Supports for Teachers and Learners

Writings Tips: Strategies for Overcoming Writers' Block

Center for Writing Studies, University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign

http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/tips/writersblock

- ▶ Taking notes
- ▶ Freewriting/brainstorming
- ▶ What I Really Mean Is (WIRMI)

Supports for Teachers and Learners

Teaching ELLs to Write Academic Essays

Classroom Q&A With Larry Ferlazzo, April 22, 2017

http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/classroom_qa_with_larry_ferlazzo/2017/04/response_teaching_ells_to_write_academic_essays.html

Four Phases

1. Setting a context
2. Deconstructing a mentor text
3. Teacher-guided construction
4. Pair construction, independent construction

Supports for Teachers and Learners

ATLAS ABE Teaching & Learning Advancement System

Writing Instruction Resource Library

http://atlasabe.org/resources/writing-instruction

- ▶ Mechanics
- ▶ Grammar
- ▶ Sentence and paragraph writing
- ▶ Essay writing
- ▶ Workplace writing
- ▶ Reading/writing connections
- ▶ Research and professional development

Interactive Writing

Graphic Organizers

Interactive Writing

"A growing body of research shifts attention from what an individual student can do in isolation to how to establish a classroom community in which students experience an authentic need to engage in argumentation. Members of such classroom communities work together and make decisions about what counts as argument and what is required to support a new knowledge claim."

(Lee, 2017)

Self-Authorship

Cognitive
(Beliefs)

Intrapersonal
(Identity)

Interpersonal
(Relationships)
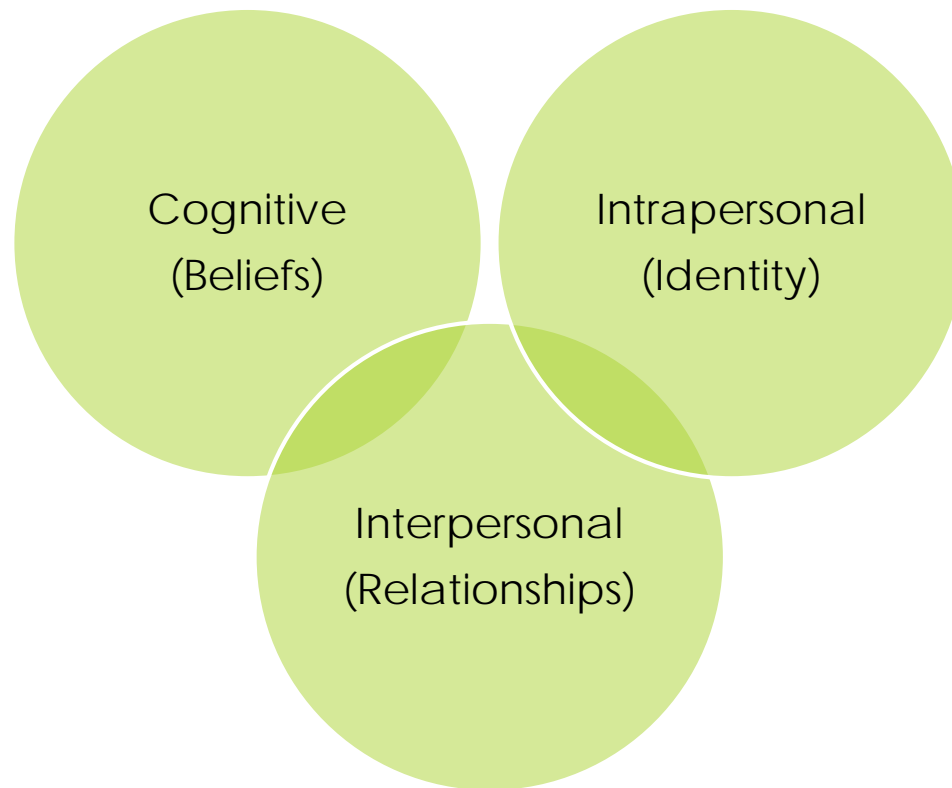
(Leslie Bohon, 2017; building on Baxter Magolda, 2001, 2009; Kegan, 1982, 1994)

Interactive Writing

"While personal journal writing has a long history in education settings as a way to promote reflective thinking, interactive writing in a dialogue journal not only promotes personal reflection but also reflection with another person, who is often more knowledgeable about the topics under consideration."

(Staton, 1984)

Dialogue Journal Writing

A **dialogue journal** is an ongoing written interaction between two people to exchange experiences, ideas, or reflections. It is used most often in education as a means of sustained written interaction between students and teachers at all education levels. It can be used to promote second language learning (English and other languages) and learning in all areas.

Wikipedia – *Dialogue Journal*
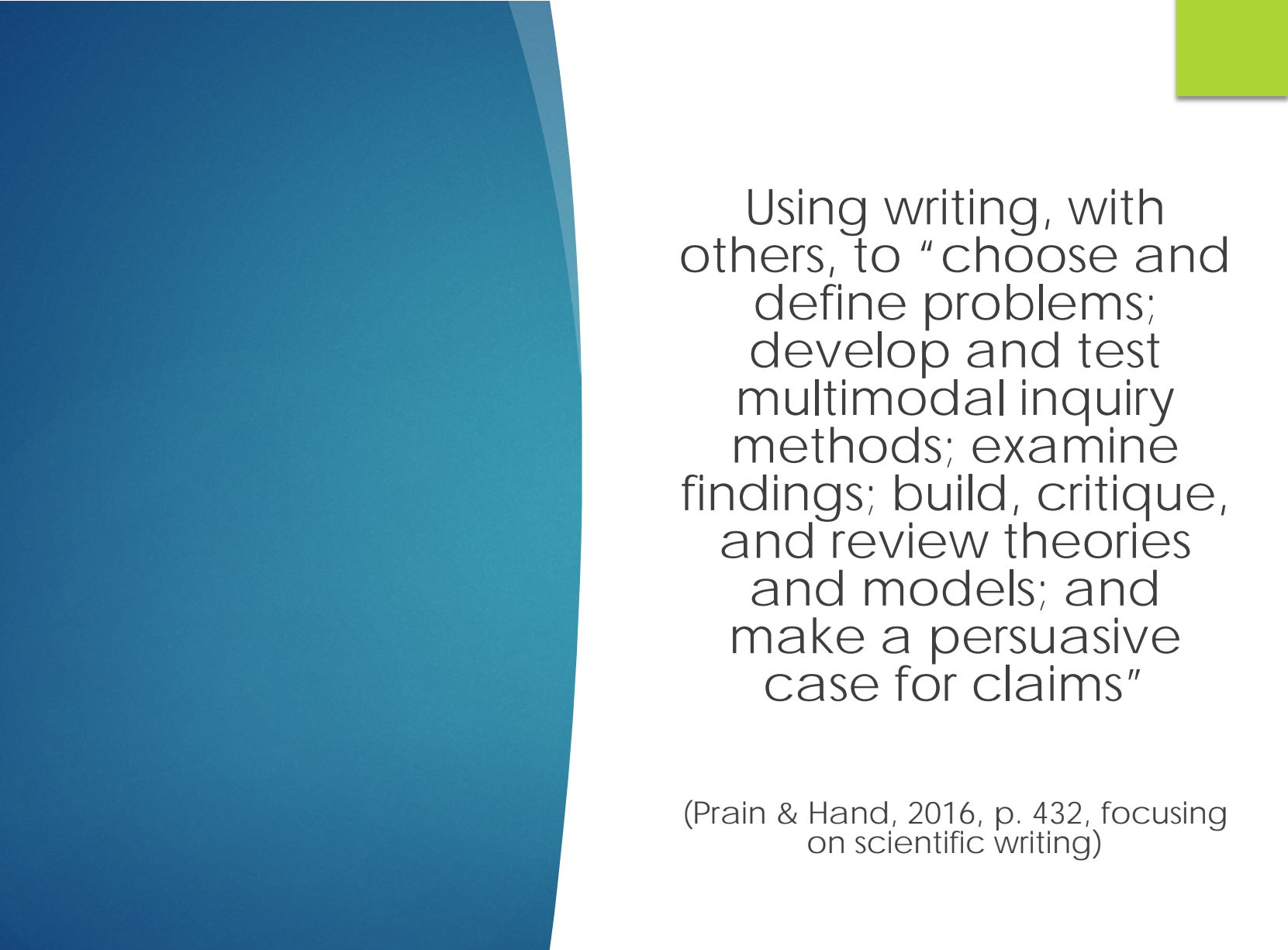https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialogue_journal

Writer/Learner

- ▶ Explore and try out ideas; take risks with ideas and expression
- ▶ Expand on ideas expressed earlier
- ▶ Ask questions
- ▶ Acknowledge confusion
- ▶ Seek feedback and suggestions
- ▶ Express the idea again in a different way

(See also Ashbury, Fletcher, & Birtwhistle, 1993; Lucas, 1990; Walworth, 1985, 1990)

Coach/Teacher/Mentor/Leader

▶ Read, understand, and reflect back

▶ Explain and expand concepts and expressions; say them in a new way

▶ Question ideas and declarations

▶ Give feedback on the level of ideas/concepts

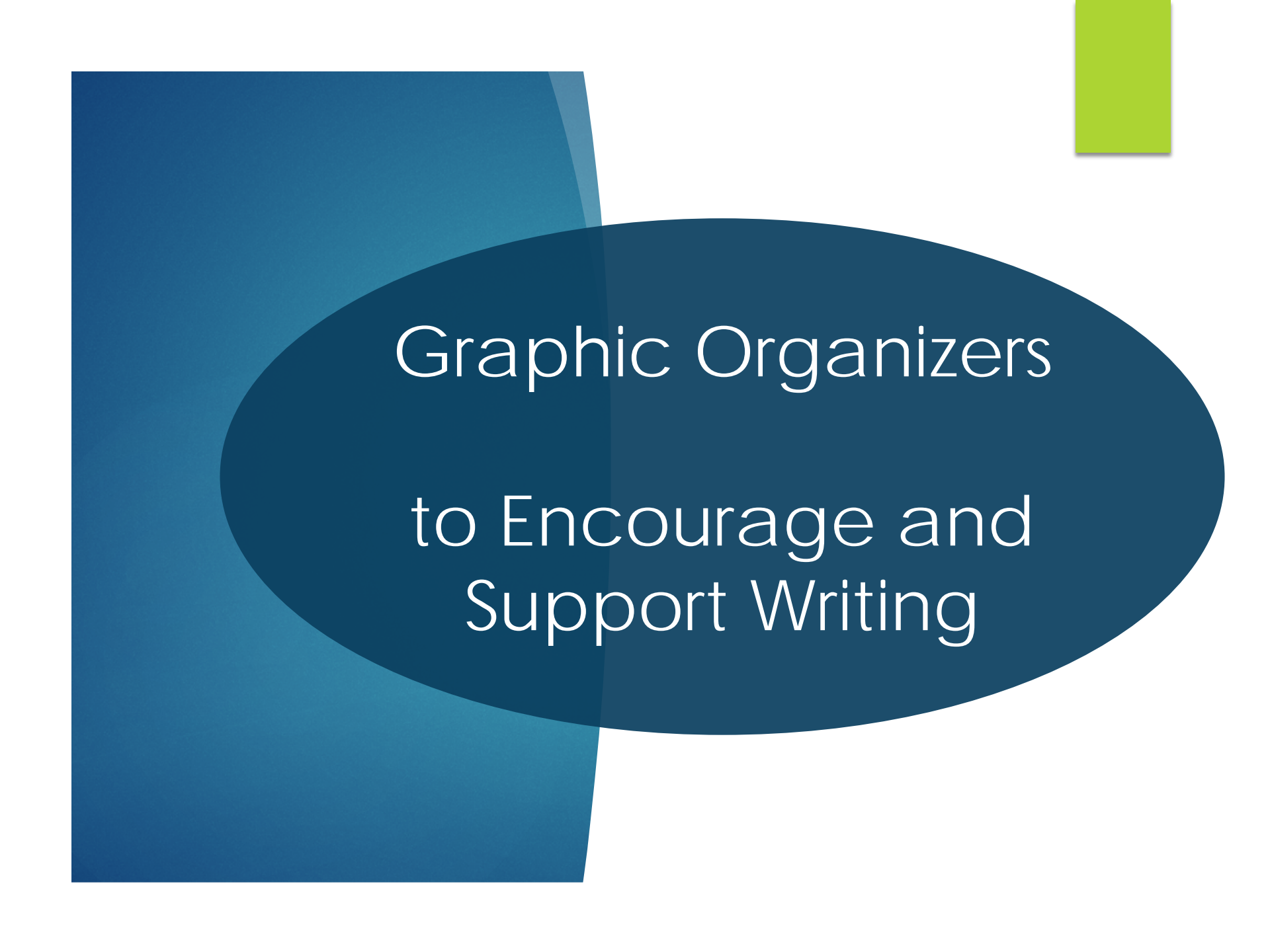▶ Provide resources relevant to critical questions

Using writing, with others, to "choose and define problems; develop and test multimodal inquiry methods; examine findings; build, critique, and review theories and models; and make a persuasive case for claims"
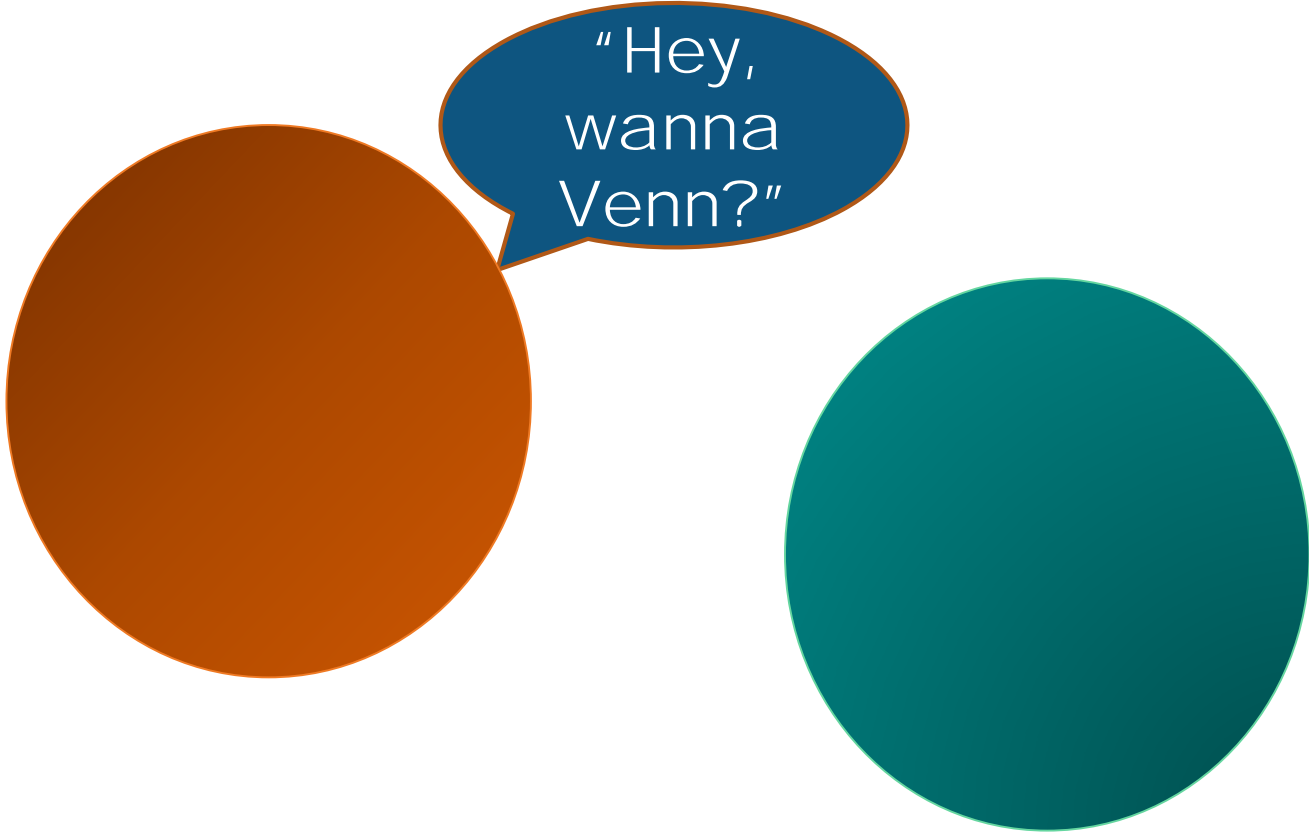
(Prain & Hand, 2016, p. 432, focusing on scientific writing)

Dialogue Journal Writing: Questions to Ask

- How much written interaction do writers engage in about the topics they are writing about?

- At what level do these interactions occur?

- How engaged are both parties in the interactions?

- What if *I* engaged, as an academic person, a thinker, in *supportive interactions* about the topics that I am developing?

- How can I manage these interactions in the contexts in which I work, with the students I work with?

Graphic Organizers

to Encourage and Support Writing

Bob Mankoff, *Washington Post*, 4/29/17, "A discerning toon-smith's last hurrah"

Beginning ESL Literacy Low Beginning ESL

Conversation Grids

	Name	Name	Name	Name
Question				
Question				
Question				
Question				

Into the Box, Out of the Box -- Grids, Graphs, and ESL Literacy

Janet Isserlis and Heide Spruck Wrigley

http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/sites/default/files/GridsSurveys.pdf

Intermediate Levels

Multilevel Classes

RAFT

- **R** = Role (Who am I as a writer?)
- **A** = Audience (To whom am I writing?)
- **F** = Format (What form will the writing take?)
- **T** = Topic (What is the subject?)

RAFT

R	A	F	T
News reporter	College-educated adults	News article	Global warming
Astronomer	First graders	Travel guide	Journey through the solar system
Acute triangle	Obtuse triangle	Letter	Differences among triangles
Jackie Robinson	Hall of Fame audience	Acceptance speech	My life in baseball
Tornado tracker	Weather reporter	Interview	Facts about tornados
Hermione Granger	Harry Potter	Dialogue	Why are you so suspicious?
Rosa Parks	Historians	Diary entry	The boycott

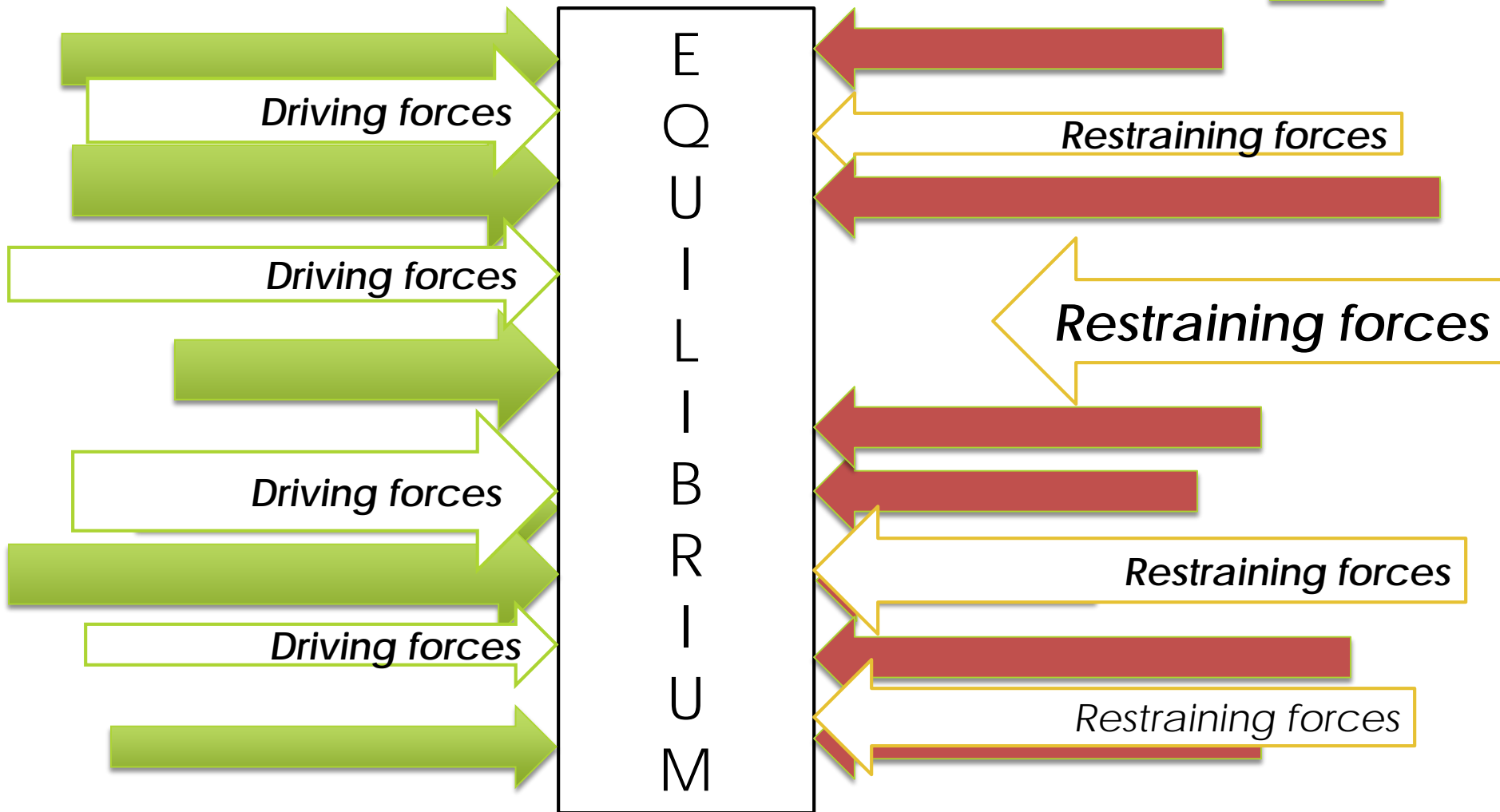(Calderon, Carreon, Slakk, & Peyton, 2015)

RAFT Writing Rubric

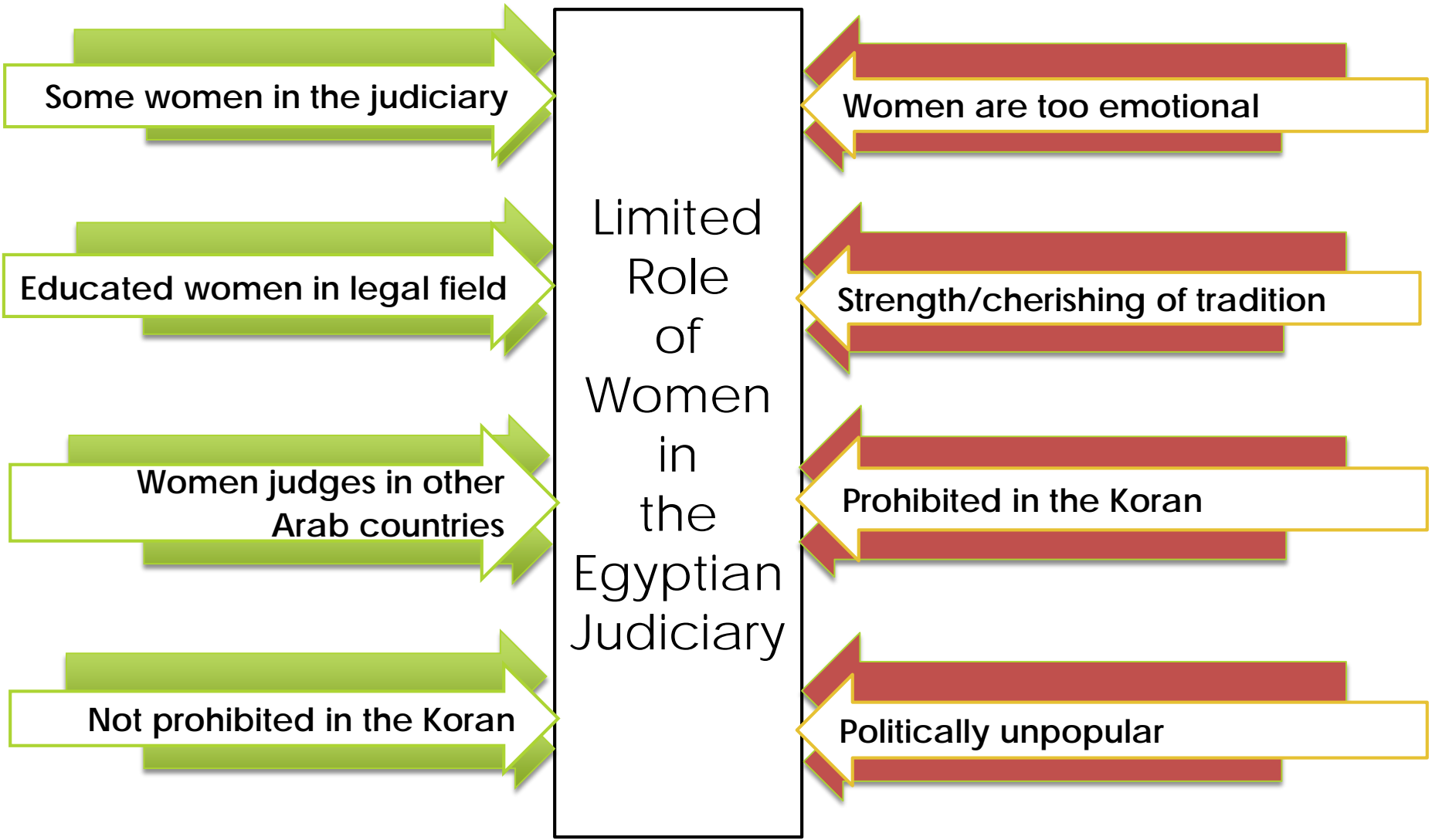|	
Role	Audience
Format	Topic
Writing Piece	

Advanced Classes

Force Field Analysis

(Diana Van Bogaert, 2017; building on Hurt, 1998; Lewin, 1951)

Force Field Analysis:
Idea Generation and Organization

Limited Role of Women in the Egyptian Judiciary

Driving Forces	Restraining Forces
Some women in the judiciary	Women are too emotional
Educated women in legal field	Strength/cherishing of tradition
Women judges in other Arab countries	Prohibited in the Koran
Not prohibited in the Koran	Politically unpopular

(Diana Van Bogaert, 2017)

Future Directions for the Field

▶ Continue to identify and disseminate promising practices in line with student and teacher needs

▶ Develop professional development opportunities for teachers that describe these practices, with academic writing as a focus

▶ Focus more on academic and professional writing in local, state, and national initiatives

▶ Create resource collections on specific topics or for specific levels?

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