

# Representation in the Scholarly Conversation

## Purpose

The research process can very easily become an echo chamber of ideas and experiences. It is a place where unconscious bias has historically (and still to this day) limits what information is published, considered accurate and credible, and made readily available. (This isn't to say that we shouldn't consider credibility or accuracy; just that we should do so with an awareness for our unconscious biases)

In this assignment you are going to seek out information on how an under-represented or marginalized group is affected by your topic. You should also consider Kimberlé Crenshaw's principle of intersectionality.

## Course Goal

2. Apply key rhetorical concepts (writer, audience, subject, purpose, and context) in order to analyze and compose a variety of texts.
3. Analyze texts as purposeful responses to a variety of situations and contexts as well as products of social identity (e.g., gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and social class).
5. Demonstrate information competency by locating, reading, and evaluating a diverse range of primary and secondary research materials (both scholarly and popular) in order to synthesize original ideas with those from appropriate sources.
6. Quote, paraphrase, cite and document sources appropriately in a consistent documentation style to maintain academic honesty and intellectual integrity.

## Module Goal

Identify how ideas and information are shared, co-created, and valued.

## Antiracist Goals

As researchers and writers, we bring our identity into our work. In this assignment you are going to consider the many ways that may be the case by seeking out marginalized voices, considering if your unconscious bias may or may not influence your research process, and reflecting on how credibility is determined.

## Task Instructions

### Step One: Research

As a class we will discuss research methods and strategies so that you are able to do the following during class:

- Find at least two sources that discuss your topic as it relates to an underrepresented or marginalized group.
- Find at least one source on your topic written by someone who identifies as a member of an underrepresented or marginalized group (you may need to conduct some quick research on the author to verify this).
- Find at least one source on your topic written by someone from a dominant group or group of privilege.

*Note: If for whatever reason you aren't able to find a source that meets these requirements, that's okay! In your reflection (step 3) you could consider why this may be the case.*

### Step Two: Read the Sources

Read the sources you found. As you do, consider the following (from our discussion on rhetoric<sup>1</sup>):

- Why is the author writing on this topic? What in their life, in their family, in their communities, or in the world around them prompted them to write on what they did? (Exigency)
- What overall argument and sub-arguments are they trying to make via the text? Arguments are often the "claims" the author is making in the text. Some are large and overarching (thesis like) and apply to the entire text, while others are smaller and may only apply to a portion of the text (sub points that in some way develop your overall argument). (Argument)
- What does the author want their readers to "get out of" this text? In other words, what do they hope this text will achieve, its ultimate goal? In sum, what do they want their readers to walk away thinking, feeling, believing, re-evaluating, or doing etc. (Purpose)
- To whom did the author write the text? What individuals or groups of individuals might benefit most from engaging with the piece and in what ways? Why did they choose these as their audiences? Are you the primary audience? What are the potential secondary or unintended audiences and why/in what ways? (Audience)

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<sup>1</sup> These questions are reimagined from Ali Walker-Stromdahl

- In an attempt to reach their audiences, convey their message, and fulfill their purpose, navigate constraints, adhere to genre conventions etc, what choices did the author make or strategies did they use? These are also sometimes called "moves." If you are struggling with these, they really are just the choices or decisions the author made about the text. (Rhetorical Choices )
- What are some constraints they experienced when writing this text? What did they have to take into consideration when writing this text with regard to its genre, their audience, their subject matter, choices they made, their topic, their purpose, their writing environment, their process, their life etc? How did they “navigate” or address this constraint? Explain a bit. (Constraints )

Step Three: Reflect (for submission)

Reflect in any way that makes sense to you (e.g. write, make an audio or visual recording, doodle or draw, etc.). In your reflection, you could consider the following questions:

- What unconscious bias do you bring to the writing and research process? How does this influence your work on your chosen topic?
- What unconscious bias (if any) do you see reflected in the sources you have found thus far?
- Are there group(s) of people who are disproportionately affected by your topic?
- What voices (if any) are missing and from the conversation surrounding your topic (AKA the research you've conducted so far)? Why do you think that is?

Submit your reflection to complete this assignment.

## Completion Criteria

Submit your reflection to complete this assignment.