Building a Revision Process CRIS Faculty Writing Accelerator

Rachael Cayley Graduate Centre for Academic Communication November 22, 2023

Reconceptualizing Writing

Three Key Writing Principles

- > Using writing to clarify your own thinking
- > Committing to extensive revision
- > Understanding the needs of your reader

Writing as Thinking

Rather than a way of **capturing** what we think, writing can be understood as a way of **grasping** what we think.

"How do I know what I think until I see what I say?"

E.M. Forster

Writing as Iterative

- If we write in a more exploratory vein, we will need to make a substantial commitment to revision.
- Committing to extensive revision requires ...
 - ➤ that we invest time
 - ➤ that we learn strategies

Writing as Audience-Driven

Engaging in extensive revision necessitates that we understand the needs of the reader.

Those needs must be understood at both a macro and a micro level:

- Genre conventions: The broad types of writing you will need to produce
- Writing patterns: The optimal organization of sentences and paragraphs

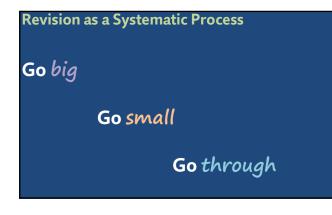
"We write the first draft for ourselves; the drafts thereafter increasingly for the reader."

Joseph M. Williams, Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace, Third Edition (Pearson Longman, 2009), p. x

Revision as a Complex Process

Revision is the active reading, rearranging, and reconstructing of your work.

Because this task is so complex, we all need a revision **process** that allows us to work through a draft in stages, concentrating on a different issue each time.



Building a Revision Process	
Revision Stage	Goal
Drafting: Clarifying Intent	A draft that makes enough sense to allow structural revision
First Draft: Tackling Structure	A coherent draft
Next Draft: Tackling Sentences	A coherent draft + effective sentences
Next Draft: Tackling Movement	A coherent draft + effective sentences + good flow
Next Draft: Tackling Technicalities	A coherent draft + effective sentences + good flow + overall consistency
Final Draft: Letting Go	A submitted piece of writing

Revision Stage	Goal
Drafting: Clarifying Intent	A draft that makes enough sense to allow structural revision Strategies: Blocking out regular times during drafting to clarify intent Using a <i>for-your-eyes-only</i> font to narrate ongoing concerns

Revision Stage	Goal
First Draft: Tackling Structure	A coherent draft
	Strategies:
	Working with a full draft
	Letting time elapse
	Using reverse outlines

Using Reverse Outlines

- 1. Number your paragraphs.
- 2. Identify the topic of each paragraph.
- 3. Arrange these topics in an outline.
- Analyze this outline, assessing the logic (where elements have been placed in relation to one another) and the proportion (how much space is being devoted to each element).
- 5. Use this analysis to create a revised outline.
- 6. Use this revised outline to reorganize your text.
- Return to your paragraphs to do an initial check for topic sentences and cohesion.

Revision Stage	Goal
Next Draft: Tackling Sentences	A coherent draft + effective sentences
	Strategies:
	Engaging physically with your text
	Checking the beginnings of sentences
	Highlighting sentence structure
	Thinking about little words
	Lessening attachment
	Recognizing your own patterns

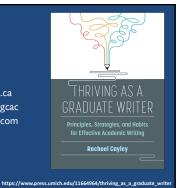
Building a Revision Process	
Revision Stage	Goal
Next Draft: Tackling Movement	A coherent draft + effective sentences + good flow Strategies: Checking for orienting-informing pattern Evaluating the presentation of lists Balancing long and short sentences Assessing signposting

Revision Stage	Goal
Next Draft: Tackling Technicalities	A coherent draft + effective sentences + good flow + overall consistency Strategies: Distinguishing between revision and proofreading
	Finding ways to focus on technicalities: letting time elapse reading aloud treating material out of order stopping at the end of every paragraphs using a ruler searching for one element at a time

Revision Stage	Goal
Final Draft: Letting Go	A submitted piece of writing
	Strategies:
	Accepting the anxiety associated with sharing writing
	Being aware of diminishing returns
	Embracing the risks and rewards of making your work public

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- For more detail, visit my blog: https://explorationsofstyle.com/
- Three Key Writing Principles:
 - ≻ Using Writing to Clarify Your Own Thinking
 - Committing to Extensive Revision
 - \succ Understanding the Needs of Your Reader
- Five Key Writing Strategies:
 - ≻Reverse Outlines
 - ≻Paragraphs
 - ≻Sentences
 - ➤Transitions
 - ≻ Metadiscourse
- The Craft of Revision:
- https://explorationsofstyle.com/2014/12/18/the-craft-of-revision/

Books on Academic Writing

- Howard S. Becker, Writing for Social Scientists (University of Chicago Press, 2008).
- Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph Williams, The Craft of Research (University of Chicago Press, 2008).
- Claire Kehrwald Cook, Line by Line: How to Edit Your Own Writing (Houghton Mifflin, 1985).____
- Eric Hayot, The Elements of Academic Style (Columbia University Press, 2014).
 Stephen B. Heard, The Scientist's Guide to Writing (Princeton University Press, 2022).
- Inger Mewburn, Katherine Firth, and Shaun Lehmann, How To Fix Your Academic Writing Trouble (Open University Press, 2019).
- Pat Thomson and Barbara Kamler, Detox Your Writing (Routledge, 2016).
- Joseph M. Williams, Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace, Third Edition (Pearson Longman, 2009).

Online Resources

Doctoral Writing SIG:

www.doctoralwriting.wordpress.com Writing for Research:

www.medium.com/@write4research

Patter: www.patthomson.net

Research Degree Insiders: www.researchinsiders.blog

The Thesis Whisperer: www.thesiswhisperer.com