**TWR - episode 92**

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Learn more about prolific and sign up for your free two week trial at prolific dot mn/dot Co you're listening to think right revised episode 92. Hey there, and welcome to think right revised a podcast that offers a peek behind the scenes of productive writing life. I'm your host. Dr. Katie Linder.

On this episode I want to talk about why it may be helpful for you to find a model article or a model book or a model piece of writing if you're starting to try maybe a new genre or a new sub-genre in your writing and this is something that I think I first stumbled across in Wendy belcher's book writing your Journal article and 12.

Where she talks about finding a model article and this would have been 10 plus years ago that I probably learned about this trick, but I've used it ever since and I've used it not just for articles but for other pieces of writing as well. So for example, when I recently was working on some edited collections, I definitely looked at other edited collections to see how they were structured what the different choices were the authors were making in terms of how they structure their introduction and conclusions so that I could kind of see what the different options were of how I.

To be approached my own. So the general idea of finding a model article or finding a model text that you can look at or more than one is to not recreate the wheel because a lot of people have done different kinds of structures and things that you can look to as a potential for inspiration for a piece as you're writing it.

Or even just as a template for how they're structuring it and I want to walk you through how you could potentially look at that structure and what are some questions you could ask to try to identify what's going on and I want to be clear. I don't mean that you're copying anything from this particular model article or model piece of writing.

It's really about approaching it with a critical eye to see what you like and what you don't like about what they did in terms of the structure so that you can have a better sense of what you might want to do in your own work. So one of the key times that I did this for the first time years ago was I was writing an article where I had done a textual analysis of seven or eight different books and I really didn't understand how I could introduce those.

Seven or eight different books in the beginning of the article or at what point I should try to give like a brief rundown of what they were doing need to describe the general content of those seven or eight books. It wasn't like doing a textual analysis of one or two where you're doing a comparison.

There was a large body of books that I was looking at and so I went around and tried to find articles that were doing that that we're looking at seven or eight different books and I was able to see the different strategies that the authors were using of how they were introduced. Them and it was just a really helpful thing and ever since then I really tried to figure this out how I could find these model articles and articles are really structured differently an article where you're building theory for example might look different than an article where you're just reporting results from a study.

So kind of starting to pay attention to that structure can be really useful. And I don't think that we always look at structure. We tend to look at the content of these pieces of writing and we don't tend to kind of try to pull apart the different strategies that the authors are using to get that information across.

So I think it's most helpful when you're looking at the structure of a piece of writing and you're trying to think of it could be a model for you is to start at the level kind of the highest level of things like subsections. And what is the role of each subsection in that article and in more traditional articles for reporting results, you might see that there are.

A lit review section a method section A discussion section, but not all articles are organized that way and especially depending on what your discipline is. You're going to see a lot of different possibilities for how you could be organizing your work. And so I think that first looking at the subsections and how they're organized the order of the subsections the length of the subsections and what each one is really trying to accomplish can be helpful.

Then once you look at kind of that larger subsection structure, I recommend going into each of the subsections and asking the question. What is the purpose of each paragraph in the subsection is the paragraph offering additional example, is it offering some context? Is it offering the kind of.

Rationale for a question that got asked in the study but starting to think about what is each paragraph doing what is its role in the larger paper? And then you can ask yourself. How does each paragraph begin and end? What is kind of that opening sentence that's being used and is it really meant as like a transition sentence from the previous paragraph or is it more of a topic sentence?

Like we would have learned about in our earlier education days. And then also how is the how is the paragraph ending? So you can kind of look again at the structure of what is the author doing to open a paragraph and close the paragraph? And do you like it? Do you think it's effective? You can also look specifically at the transitions between subsections or between paragraphs to see what's going on there.

And if it's effective and what are some of the the words that are being used the phrases that are being used to signal that there's a transition happening. I think in certain articles not all of them. You can look for a thesis or kind of a hypothesis and if there is one for that particular article or maybe just a research question or a set of research questions that they're trying to explore and you'll want to try to figure out where is it?

What did they place it? Like in the very beginning? Is it in the first paragraph? Did they place it after the literature review after they provided some context so really trying to identify where that is and the article can be useful. And then you can look at things like the lit review the method section the discussion or other subsections that you find and see how long are they?

How extensive are they how details are they and in what order is the author presenting that information? I also think it's really helpful to look at how the author's close the article are they offering directions for future research. Are they talking about the limitations of their study? Like what are the different kinds of rhetorical moves that they're making their as well?

Now I think this is especially helpful. If you've identified a part of your article structure that you'd feel like you don't do very well. So maybe you really struggle with the discussion section, or maybe you really struggle with the lit review. I would go and look for model articles that are kind of in the structure that you're thinking about using that have.

It's kind of a variety of different subsections that you could look at. So you might pull out for example five different lit reviews and read them kind of outside the context of the larger article, but within the context of the other liver views so that you could see how are they doing it differently or are they doing things the same and you might find that people are using certain phrasing certain words certain kinds of strategies that are pretty consistent in terms of how they're presenting the information.

And you can start to take notes on what are some of those templates for structure that you think might be really useful for you to emulate. So I think that the idea of finding a model piece of writing it's something that has definitely been helpful for me when I'm writing in a new area and I'm just not quite sure how I want to structure it the other way to look at this and this is something I recommend some of my writing.

Is if you go backward and kind of look at the structure of one of your pieces of writing, if you're kind of struggling with it, you can do this same strategy. You can go subsection by subsection and say what is the purpose of this? You can go paragraph by paragraph and say what is the purpose of this paragraph?

Is it in the right order that I want it to be in you can ask how to your paragraphs begin and end you can look at your transitions. You can look at the length in the extensiveness and the detail of your lit review and your methods and your discussion and other aspects of your paper and you can also identify where you put your research questions your thesis statement those kinds of things and really start to ask yourself from a structural perspective does the piece of writing you have makes sense so it can take a little bit of time but I think sometimes looking at our work from that structural level can really help in terms of kind of making it stronger for the reader, but also more.

In our own minds in terms of what we're trying to argue or explain. So hopefully this was a little bit helpful at strategy that you could use. I would love to hear if you're finding model pieces of writing in your own work to emulate. Please. Feel free to email me at contacted Katie Leonard artwork tweet to me at Katie double underscore lender or connect with me on Instagram @ KD underscore lender to let me know if you have used this strategy in the past, or maybe if you're thinking of using it now to see if it could be helpful for you.

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