

Faculty Information Literacy Stipend Final Report

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Course: Discourse and Discernment 1313: Inquiry Seminar—Text-mining Leadership

Semester: Spring 2018

Introduction: A few years ago, I collaborated on a study about Amazon reviews of bestselling books. I was looking for sociological research about correlations between gender and language use. I remember being really frustrated because I knew what I was looking for, but I could tell I was using the wrong search terms. If I had known then how to consult the subject headings of publications from relevant fields like sociology, sociolinguistics, and so forth, I could have quickly found lots of productive search terms. This is a skill Rebecca Graff demonstrated and practiced in a workshop in my class. Two class periods later, students had a lexicon of at least ten relevant terms that they could search for that would yield peer-reviewed sources about a leadership topic that interested them. One of the main goals of DISC is to help students develop strong research skills beyond the furtive google query. Students are expected to demonstrate discernment in finding relevant and reliable sources on their chosen topic. The library workshop really helped.

In my professional experiences as a writer and consultant before I came to SMU, I found that one of the most important skills that I practiced daily was tailoring information so that it would be meaningful and useful to audiences with varying interests, expectations, and expertise. The term we used to refer to this skill in our assignment was “code-switching,” which Jonathan McMichael helped my students prepare to practice in their papers about leadership in context. Students in the course were expected to analyze the ways that authority is constructed and contextual at the same time as they expanded their own ethos as communicators in a variety of potential contexts.

Description of the information literacy assignment or activities

Method of assessment

Students in this course were assessed based on the Discernment and Discourse Rubric, which gauges the effectiveness of students’ work in five crucial areas: stating a claim and supporting the claim with relevant, reliable evidence; utilizing cohesive and coherent paragraph structure including introduction and conclusion, crafting sentences with appropriate style, diction, tone, and variation; polishing grammar and mechanics including punctuation, capitalization and spelling; and finally—and VERY importantly—correct use of sources including formatting of quotations, citations, and works cited list.

Assessment of the first and second Information Literacy assignments focused on the elements that involved research and use of sources, and style and tone, respectively.

Students also self-assessed by goal setting at the beginning of the course, both collectively as a class and individually. Students also composed written reflections on their progress toward these goals after completing each major assignment.

Results and impact on student learning:

Below are samples of a few student reflections at the mid-term and the end of the course.

Student Mid-term Reflection Excerpts:

“...I found some really good sources that I think effectively back up my claims about Martin Luther King’s style of leadership. The sources that I found helped guide my train of thought and pushed me to analyze even deeper than I originally had when I first started writing the paper. The

library workshop has proved to be very helpful in finding credible, intelligent sources that often align with the style of papers that I have been required to write this year.

Despite all of these challenges listed above, I am really proud of this paper. I feel like it could be the best paper I have written here at SMU this year. I feel that my paper is strong in source incorporation, introduction, evidence that backs up my claims, and in analysis. I also feel like the way in which I organized my paper in the final submission was a big improvement from where it was in the beginning. I constantly revised this paper and added new and insightful thoughts. It took a lot of my time and in the end I feel like it was very worth it because I came up with my own original thoughts and ideas and was able to effectively back those claims up with strong evidence and analysis that will stick in my readers’ minds. Also, although I used a mixed combination of both primary sources and one secondary source, I felt that it really strengthened my points and validated them. I also feel like my crafting of word choice and sentence structures were very well chosen for the tone and feel of my paper and its message.

I like very slowly going into our papers so that we are not overwhelmed by millions of ideas and are unsure of how to begin the paper. By brainstorming and gathering sources before fully committing to ideas and analysis, we can more effectively organize our paper with ideas and cohesion before we have written our whole paper. It’s also nice to already have sources about your topics before you have written a lot of your paper because then they are easier to incorporate without the transitions feeling awkward and just thrown in there next to the quote. When you already have your quotes, you can analyze them and then write about how they back up your original ideas and how they add onto your argument.”

“My first decision when approaching this paper was deciding which topic to choose and making sure that topic had a simple yet vast variety of sources to choose from in order to back up my claims. I decided to write on Sun Tzu because he only had one book to pull direct quotes from however that book encompassed all my themes and provided sources for any arguments I would be trying to make. The most challenging parts were interpreting the main text itself because it was translated and ancient, so many of the main themes had to be translated not only literally but also in regard to the modern applications. The easy parts were coming up with leadership advice that Sun Tzu had given because they are well known, clear, and iconic. It was fun to modernize his views and teachings to be applicable to today. The in-

class exercises were helpful because it helped me narrow down what I was going to talk about and also mine my corpus for valuable data. As far as my sources, this was fairly straightforward for me because there was only really one source that I pulled from along with an interpretive source written much later.

I would still affirm the mission statement of the class and my personal mission statement after concluding this paper. I do believe that I was able to improve my writing and source-mining during the writing of this paper. My peer review gave me a fresh outlook on my paper in regards to how my reader would perceive what I was conveying. I am most proud of my original ideas in this paper. In future assignments I hope to identify topics for my paper more quickly.”

“For paper two, my topic was Franklin D. Roosevelt. More specifically, I discussed evidence of FDR’s confidence while serving as president. I arrived at this topic by first deciding which leadership trait I thought to be most important. I came to the conclusion that confidence was the most important leadership trait, and I thought the best way to convey this would be through discussing a president, because presidents are leaders in the face of the whole nation, not just a specific audience. This being said, I landed on FDR as my president of choice because he was president during the peak of the Great Depression, and I knew that would require major leadership skills. As I did more research, I noticed that he exhibited these skills well, and a lot of them had to do with his confidence in the nation as well as self-confidence.

The most challenging part of writing this paper was analyzing the quotes from FDR’s speeches to show his confidence. With each quote, I knew that he was confident in what he was saying but for some reason it was difficult to break it down into why and how that showed FDR’s confidence. I was trying to avoid being repetitive and obvious. That being said, the easiest part of writing this paper was choosing which FDR speeches to use. It seemed obvious to me to use FDR’s First Inaugural Address where he was addressing the terror of the Great Depression without even mentioning the words, “The Great Depression.”

I enjoyed writing this paper. The most fun part of this paper was seeing how FDR exhibited self-confidence without straight up saying, “I am confident.” I liked writing about this because it is something that maybe not everyone realized just by reading or hearing his speeches. His confidence was something that required reading between the lines, and I enjoyed getting to analyze his words and seeing how he gave the nation a sense of his confidence without ever directly mentioning it. The in-class activity that helped me with this paper most was when we worked in groups to discuss choosing topics. My group helped me locate sources as well as identify confidence as

the most important leadership trait. As for my personal mission statement for this course, I am happy where this paper has left me. One of my main goals was to learn how to analyze better as well as write a more effective introductory paragraph. I feel that I have improved in both of these areas, especially when it comes to analyzing better. I feel that I summarize less and that I better understand how to analyze the “meat” of the quote and why it’s important to relate everything back to the thesis statement of the paper. I also feel that my transitions between paragraphs have improved, even though that was not part of my mission statement because I did not realize it was a problem that I had. That being said, I would add “better transitions” to my mission statement. Other than that, I feel that I am on track with my mission statement...”

End-of-course reflection excerpts:

“...I really feel like I grew this semester as a writer, especially in the research area. I have had experience using online databases, but I felt like I really got to know how to use them a lot better this semester because they were so important for our papers. They are definitely a really amazing resource but I will continue to use in future papers.”

“...During the semester I also learned how to properly use the library database on the SMU website which has helped me massively in not only this course, but for my history class as well. I am excited that I have an understanding of how to use the tools presented to me by the university as it will surely come in handy in my future classes.”

“This semester I have had made progress in areas of my writing that I did not expect. I had the experience of researching papers to an extent that was further than I had ever done before this semester. I found that my ability to locate and cite my sources and read them prior to creating an annotation to see if they were relevant improved greatly. I believe my experiences in this class were beneficial and the amount of writing I did filled in many of the gaps I had and skills that were weak for me as an amateur writer. The quantity of writing was a big factor in my improvement because the speed of the class was fast and there was a lot of info to absorb in order to write the papers effectively. I believe that I progressed as a writer and definitely am more qualified to do higher level research projects for other classes and possibly future careers. My next goal would be to hone my sentence-level skills and organize my entire papers better. I need to work on transitions and topics that I discuss and make

all the points I make throughout my papers more clear and concise. I hope to do this throughout my career at SMU and to have the opportunity to write a lot because being a skilled writer is becoming more and more important in a age where there is less contact with other people and many of daily interactions are online or over text. For next year I hope to become a better writer and maintain any skills I have learned this semester.”

Summary and next steps

As a result of Rebecca Graff’s database workshop, students garnered proficiency in working with databases across disciplinary lines. I was really pleased to see students branching out from limited thesaurus-derived synonyms and finding a broader, interdisciplinary picture of a leader’s talent profile. For example, different fields use different terms to refer to concepts like empathy and self-assurance. The students whose reflections are sampled above had to look for additional evidence of the leadership trait or practice they were looking for by searching beyond that word itself. As the first student noted, she found a number of sources via searching for subject headings rather than limiting her search terms to one reductive idea only. Informed by Mary Stall’s presentation of Clifton StrengthsFinder, Students learned to interpret leadership attitudes or patterns of thinking from primary texts written by leaders themselves, such as Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War*, Andrew Carnegie’s autobiography, or FDR’s speeches. Sometimes leaders’ writings announce their attitudes toward leadership, but not always. As one student describes, she had to “read between the lines” because FDR never says outright, “I am confident,” yet confidence seems consistently inherent to his speechmaking. Another student reflected that he enjoyed trying to interpret the ancient teachings of Sun Tzu to emphasize their relevance to contemporary leaders. Students also appreciated Rebecca Graff’s Annotated Bibliography guide, available on the CUL site.

Students really captured Jonathan McMichael’s workshop about context and code-switching which introduced them to an equation that expresses the relationship between context and leadership: “context(leader)=message.” Then, to prepare students to research for the Ted Talk, I continued to refer to this equation to illustrate how code-switching for a specific audience means reconsidering our own message in the context of its new audience. I’m looking forward to teaching this assignment in future 1313 classes. A scheduling conflict prevented our class from meeting at Hamon Library to participate in a live demo of OneButton Studio, which would have helped students who are not comfortable seeking out one-on-one help to feel more confident with their recordings. Some students found it more expedient to record themselves at home or in their dorm room with their own camera interfaces. In future, I also will include at least one short writing assignment in which students practice analyzing the conventions of their favorite TedTalks or other informational shorts.

Appendix

Language Analysis Prompt:

For this assignment, you will develop a lexicon of leadership-related terms that may be employed differently in the contexts of different discourse communities. This lexicon then may be used to analyze the written work of specific leaders. You will choose a primary text (or texts) to analyze. You will develop and answer your own research question about your leader using your lexicon. For example, what evidence of "charisma" can I find in the early letters of Benjamin D'Israeli?

Task: Write a 4-5 page thesis-driven paper analyzing the use of specific strength-related terms in a primary text or texts of your choice.

To prepare for this paper, a library workshop will help you create a lexicon of terms synonymous with one of the Clifton StrengthsFinder strengths, as that strength is described in a number of field-specific library databases.

Feel free to include graphics in your paper. These will not count toward your page count.

Student Example 1:

Charismatic Leadership as Seen Through Martin Luther King Jr.

Many people know Martin Luther King Jr. as a historical icon. Probably from his "I have a dream" speech, which was widely publicized and highly influential. He was courageous, outspoken, passionate, and compassionate. He is most well-known for his transformational and charismatic style of leadership, which was displayed through his immense messages and following. King sparked interest and influence among many cultures, people, and populations when he bravely gave his famous speeches and wrote letters to spread influence. His "I have a dream" speech features evidence of charisma through oral presentation as well as through his

writing. Across these two texts, both the language and the persuasion tactics are generally consistent with few differences. Both texts accurately depict King's style as a leader and his personality. UC psychology contributors, Sy et. al, authors of "Charismatic leadership: Eliciting and channeling follower emotions," describe charismatic leaders as people that "elicit strong emotions from followers which encourage devotion and action, and these emotions mediate the relationship between charisma and its effects" (Sy, Thomas, et al). They credit the emotions evoked by the leader as having as more to do with the response of the people rather than the charisma of the person. In terms of specific followers, his audience for his "I have a dream speech" was civil rights supporters, and "Letter to Birmingham jail" was his written for his "fellow clergymen". Martin Luther King Jr. embodies charismatic leadership through his following in the beloved brotherhood movement, his values as a pastor and as a prejudiced African American, his hand gestures during speeches, and the diction and tone of his "I have a dream" speech and "Letter from Birmingham" jail.

In "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," King writes, "Never before have I written so long a letter. I'm afraid it is much too long to take your precious time. I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else can one do when he is alone in a narrow jail cell, other than write long letters, think long thoughts and pray long prayers?," which evokes a sense of guilt and sympathy from the reader, which is perhaps what King was trying to achieve through that long line. (King). His ability to draw the audience in and engage them through pathos tactics such as recognizing the importance of the author's time and talking about the sad circumstances which he finds himself in is a characteristic of a charismatic leader. While his writing was very convicting, the power that his words had when writing was paired with speech was even greater.

His words “creative,” and “transformed” reflect charisma or leading with a charismatic mindset. His diction was a key way that King showed his personality through his speeches, but that was not the sole way. He also expressed it through tone, inflections, implications, volume, movements, and hand gestures. All of these things combined made up his leadership style and made him a truly impactful and influential leader. His vivid language and the tone and inflections in his voice when he says, “The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges” and “We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation” serve as persuasive lines that drive the audience to stand by his side as he pushes for change. His tone inflections, as his voice goes up and down in volume and octaves keeps the audience engaged and gets them excited as he speaks. Martin Luther King Jr. was a master at tone inflection and manipulating the volume of his voice to emphasize important words and phrases that he wanted the audience to hear loud and clear. His final line, “I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream,” ends the speech on a surprisingly high note that coincides with his charismatic personality and drives the audience crazy with the taste of equality. (King 1).

Aside from hearing how his tone and inflections shaped his charismatic style of leadership, his followers also spoke about ways in which they were struck by his evident charisma, as seen in the quote by Wasielewski, “Followers of both Martin Luther King, Jr. indicated that they heard the message-and felt the emotion-through their actions in response to these men. And certainly one speech does not establish a leader as charismatic” (Wasielewski 217). For a leader to be described as charismatic, they must build up that reputation through multiple appearances and insights into their character. Only over a period of time, in which

messages are repeatedly conveyed in this manner, does the definition of a leader as charismatic arise. Over time the consistency of such performances may yield enough followers to establish a leader as charismatic in the public eye.” This article accurately points out the importance of consistency in leadership. A good, reliable leader is one whose core views and teachings stay consistent and unchanging over time. Not only does this establish them with credibility, but it shows their strong moral character. The emotional basis of credibility is strongly linked to charisma.

King’s leadership is apparent through the charisma he embodied while in a position of power that was gained through the movement. This is particularly evident when he claims, “We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence,” because it builds up a good reputation of the protest at hand and encourages them to keep the protest civil and on harmful to others. this shows his humanity and his care for others. It also shows his character and his charisma because he was not allowed violence as a means for achievement. And when he proclaims, “I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice,” he solidifies these ideas and claims. (King 1). Martin Luther King Jr. opposed violence and oppression and wished for equality in the world. In an article titled “The Emotional Basis of Charisma,” by Patricia L. Wasielewski, sociologist and anthropologist at the University of Redlands, states,

“...King... attracted thousands of followers interested in social change; still, [he] was not identified primarily as a leader of a formally organized group. Although King’s affiliation with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference... [was] acknowledged, [he] reached and represented many individuals beyond these groups (in fact, [he] had [a] large

personal following prior to achieving [this] official positions). As such, [he] can be viewed as possessing personal charisma” (Wasielewski 214).

The fact that he had a large personal following before achieving any official positions portrays his charisma because of how much people liked him before he had any official organizational power. It was more of power gained through the movement and his widespread influence during that time. Even to this day, King has the power of influence. The fact that he is still studied in schools and praised for his leadership in the civil rights movement makes evident the fact that his power only grows with time. His lessons and beliefs are timeless and universal and can still be applied to situations in the modern day. Following both his “I have a dream” speech and his “Letter to Birmingham” letter, he received much support while his following stayed strong and remained intact. This is a result not only of his speeches directly, but of the style with which he led. He led with conviction, courage, and captivism that gave him power for longer than he ever could’ve imagined.

The ways in which Martin Luther King Jr. displayed charisma serve to teach people about what it means to be charismatic and a leadership sense. Great leaders are intelligent and strong, yes, but they need to possess more than just those two qualities. A great leader is someone that can easily relate to people. Someone that knows how to get their message across and an effective way depending on who their audience is. With those things, an effective leader must also establish consistency and credibility in his words and actions. Martin Luther King Jr. possessed every single one of these qualities. One of the main reasons that he had such a strong and large following was because of his profound ability to communicate his message effectively and in a way that people would remember not only for that day, that year, or that decade, but for centuries to come.

Works Cited

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Student Example 2:

Andrew Carnegie: An Analysis of his Entrepreneurial Talents in his Writings

The skills necessary for a man or woman to be a good businessperson can be difficult to obtain, but if learned, can result in remarkable success and long-lasting legacies. These skills include, but are not limited to, entrepreneurship, confidence, and the ability to take charge. One example of a successful entrepreneur that demonstrates these skills was Andrew Carnegie. After being born into a poor, Scottish family, Carnegie was able to work his way up to leading the expansion of American Steel Industry. After obtaining his wealth, he wrote two books, *The Gospel of Wealth* and the *Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie*, and spoke about himself and the methods he used to gain his steel empire. His word choice within his writings speak to the mindset he has. The mindset he contains involves different components that show what an entrepreneur must have. The writings of Andrew Carnegie display an entrepreneur as someone that is focused on success, ambition, and mastery.

In his autobiography, *The Gospel of Wealth*, Carnegie proves his intelligence and explains the methods used to obtain great wealth and success from his own business. Even though he never directly stated himself as one, Carnegie was a fantastic entrepreneur because of his success, and as shown in his writing, he focused on the aspects of his business that worked and did not work and why. However, he used the word success in his writing and portrayed his brilliance as an entrepreneur this way. For example, he said, “The great manufacturing or commercial concern which does not earn at least interest upon its capital soon becomes bankrupt. It, must either go forward or fall behind: to stand still is impossible. It is a condition essential for its successful operation that it should be thus far profitable, and even that, in addition to interest on capital, it should make profit” (*The Gospel of Wealth* 4). Although Carnegie does not directly include the word entrepreneur within his writing, he includes words, such as success, that display his entrepreneurial talent. He discusses the ways to obtain success within his certain type of business. He speaks with knowledge and experience providing himself with credibility for the people. He explains that his business is either going to fall behind or move ahead. It cannot stand still because it a business that is consistently changing and either improving or failing. It is implied in his writing that he is an entrepreneur with the word, success, because with the use of that word and the knowledge he provided about his business, he was able to prove his entrepreneurial talent.

One way of achieving success as an entrepreneur is by having ambition from an early age. Ambition is one of the strongest characteristics that a business person, or any person, can have. The interesting thing about ambition is that it is self-developed. Ambition is a unique characteristic because anyone can have it, yet many people don't. As Carnegie said, “It was from my own early experience that I decided there was no use to which money could be applied so

productive of good to boys and girls who have good within them and ability and ambition to develop it, as the founding of a public library in a community which is willing to support it as a municipal institution” (*Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie* 47). His idea of ambition revolves around the fact that if someone really wants to accomplish a goal, then it is entirely on themselves to achieve that goal. Because this a self-developed trait, he believed that everyone can have this trait, but knows that not everyone will have the motivation to do this. Carnegie was fortunate to be one of those people that had ambition and goals that he strived to accomplish. In his autobiography, he told a story about a time that he had an ambition that he went on to complete. The story began with Carnegie being invited to spend a night with a friend of his, Mr. Stokes. Carnegie claimed, “It was an odd thing for Mr. Stokes to do, for I could little interest a brilliant and educated man like him. The reason for my receiving such an honor was a communication I had written for the *Pittsburgh Journal*. Even in my teens I was a scribbler for the press. To be an editor was one of my ambitions. Horace Greeley and the "Tribune" was my ideal of human triumph” (*Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie* 81). Carnegie, from an early age, had an ambition to become an editor. Because of his ambition to become an editor of some sort, he was asked to stay at the house of a friend he admires as a person. This was an opportunity that Carnegie was very excited about because Mr. Stokes was a “brilliant and educated man” and Carnegie was very excited to the point where he called this opportunity an honor. This happened because of his ambition to become an editor because he strived to become an editor from a youthful age. An editor, in some ways, is similar to an entrepreneur because they both are their own boss and have the ability to make edits to their work however they want. Although not directly related to be an entrepreneur, having his ambitions of becoming an editor ultimately led him to want to become an entrepreneur.

Carnegie was considered a master in the steel business. He started out with basically nothing and built up his steel empire purely because he knew everything there was to know about it. He is an entrepreneur because he was able to start an entire empire. As his autobiography describes,

This is neither the time nor the place to characterize or eulogize the maker of "this strange eventful history," but perhaps it is worthwhile to recognize that the history really was eventful. And strange. Nothing stranger ever came out of the *Arabian Nights* than the story of this poor Scotch boy who came to America and step by step, through many trials and triumphs, became the great steel master, built up a colossal industry, amassed an enormous fortune, and then deliberately and systematically gave away the whole of it for the enlightenment and betterment of mankind (*Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie* vii).

Carnegie started at a very low point with all odds against him in terms of achieving the American Dream. However, with his determination and education, he was able to fight his way out of his low-income situation by moving to America and getting an education. In addition, he took initiative and came up with a brilliant invention, learned everything there was to know about steel and how to best implement it into the economy, and took those ideas and what he's learned and turned it into a successful business. He was not just a master in the steel business, he was a master entrepreneur because he was able to do what most people can only dream of doing.

Through his writings, Andrew Carnegie displays himself as an entrepreneur because of his word choice. By using words like success, ambition, and master, he conveyed his entrepreneurial talents because they're included in a lexicon for entrepreneurship. This lexicon is a list that includes 10 different words that directly relate to entrepreneurship. These words were chosen from his writing because in addition to being on this list, they were found within in

Carnegie's writings. Andrew Carnegie had one of the most successful businesses of his time. In addition, he was an extremely ambitious child and set big goals for himself. Because of his determination, he was able to become a mastermind in the steel business, and as a result, changed his financial and living situation and created a better life for himself and his family. He was one of the most famous entrepreneurs and his writing reflected that. This is important to know because anyone looking to create something new can look to Carnegie as an inspirational figure that made a significant impact on the world we have today.

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Paper 3: Context Analysis Prompt

The Context Analysis assignment builds on your previous paper in which you used a lexicon to analyze how a leader writes about a concept. For this paper, you'll evaluate the "information ecosystem" of a leader; that is, you'll consider the intellectual preparation that made a particular leader the appropriate person who resonated with their audience about a particular goal. Your paper will answer the question, "What is leadership in this context?"

Research for this paper may explore history, psychology, and sociology sources that are relevant to understanding your leader's intellectual preparation in the context of his or her environment. You may use evidence from primary documents and/or secondary sources to support your thesis and explore the significance of the events that shaped your leader's perspective.

Task: Write a 6-8 page thesis-driven paper in which you analyze and interpret a leader's "information ecosystem" to explain why they resonated with their audience about their particular goal. Use specific evidence from 8-10 scholarly sources to support your argument, including at least one source from a print book from the library.

Paper 4: Ted Talk Prompt

Task: Transmediate your research paper argument into a Ted Talk-style video presentation of about 10 minutes' running time. In your video presentation, you will practice the art of "code-switching" as we have discussed it in class by tailoring your Paper 3 argument for two very different types of audiences. You will prepare one talk that makes your argument interesting and accessible to your two diverse audiences. You are encouraged to use OneButton Studio, the videography software available on campus at Hamon arts library. We will each select two hypothetical audiences in class together. You will inform this talk by finding at least two scholarly sources about your audiences' unique interests and expectations.

Student Example 3: Ted Talk Link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IG96-PjbyE&feature=youtu.be>