
Writer's Statement for "Galaxy-Wide Writing Strategies Used by Official Star Wars Bloggers"

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In Professor Pamela Baker's ENC 1101 class, I was asked to write a research paper on any text of my choosing. As someone who enjoys writing, the flexibility of this assignment was refreshing yet daunting. It was my first time writing a college-level research paper, so I only had the slightest idea of what was expected of the genre. However, I saw the project as a challenge that would help me grow as a writer, and I took it upon myself to write the best essay possible using the knowledge that I had. Above all else, I knew that I needed to be passionate about the subject I was writing about in order to succeed. When Professor Baker mentioned that a blog could be our "text" of choice, I instantly remembered that there was an official blog for *Star Wars* (my all-time favorite movie series).

The blog ended up suiting my assignment perfectly because not only did it give me a lot of material to work with, but it served as a great example of writing concepts we went over in class, specifically discourse community and intertextuality. Once I realized this, I went right to work on gathering extensive data about the blog. I thought that this would be the most difficult step of creating my paper.

But what turned out to be the hardest part of the process was not gathering data; it was choosing what data to include and *not* to include in my draft. At one point, I was going to write a section about the personal biographies of some of the bloggers, but decided against it because it didn't support my argument. The actual argument or purpose of my essay didn't even present itself until later in my research when I saw trends in the data. These trends led me to focus my essay on what techniques successful blog posts used most often, which consequently helped me choose what to cut and keep in my draft.

Making my article accessible to both *Star Wars fans* and non-*Star Wars fans* alike was also a challenge. It forced me to see my essay through the eyes of someone who has no knowledge of the *Star Wars* universe. I knew I needed to take this into consideration because of my assigned audience, which was the *Stylus* editorial committee. This audience was initially hypothetical, but once I submitted my essay to *Stylus*, it became a reality. I took my projected audience a step further and imagined that *Star Wars fans* would potentially read my essay as well. I was sure that the *Stylus* committee would consist of scholarly individuals who were expecting a professional research paper, but I didn't know how many of those readers would be familiar with *Star Wars*. To try and avoid confusing any of my readers, I added annotations for certain terms in my essay that are exclusively used in the *Star Wars* universe (e.g. "Jedi" and "lightsaber"). By doing so, I was hopefully able to achieve my goal of non-fan accessibility while also keeping hardcore fans invested in my piece.

Overall, the process of creating this essay was extremely rewarding and gave me a chance to dip my toes into the world of academic research. Professor Baker was also an excellent instructor to work with on this paper, since the feedback she gave on *all* the assignments I wrote in her class culminated in the creation of this essay. The University of Central Florida, as usual, gave me the opportunity to flex my creative muscles while learning something new in the process.