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# Retrospective

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DANIEL TRUESDELL

Daniel Truesdell's article, "[Constructing Identity in Academic Writing: A Case Study on Rhetorical Awareness in Engineering Discourse](#)," was published in *Stylus* 6.1 in Spring 2015 and earned 1st Runner-Up for the 2015 John C. Hitt Prize for Excellence in First-Year Writing. He also served as assistant editor for Issue 6.2.

Five years ago, I began writing a research paper for my ENC 1102 class and I never would have guessed that it would be the start to a journey that I'm still travelling on. At that time, I was an undergraduate engineering student and figured that a research paper assignment on writing and rhetoric would have little to do with the career path and work that I envisioned myself doing after I graduated. So, I approached the assignment like most others I had done before: do well enough to earn a good grade from the professor. But this assignment was different from the others—there was a journal named *Stylus*, and if I did a good enough job on my paper I could submit it to *Stylus* and maybe have it published! The stakes for my paper were suddenly higher, making it unlike any assignment I had worked on before. I was writing the paper not just for my professor, but also for a group of *Stylus* faculty and student reviewers, and hopefully the academic community of *Stylus* readers. The prospect of publishing my paper in *Stylus* pushed me to dig deeper into the research process to produce something that was bigger than a grade in a class. I needed to develop, investigate, and answer a research question that would matter to my new audience, which turned into a months-long effort that made me realize how much I loved the research process, and how relevant writing and rhetoric actually were to my field of engineering.

My paper ended up being accepted for publication in *Stylus*, and the following semester I served on the student editorial review board. I enjoyed the whole experience so much that I participated in research opportunities in engineering for the rest of my time at UCF, and ultimately decided to attend graduate school to train for a career in research. Now, as a graduate student, my work and career path revolve around conducting, writing, publishing, and reviewing research. Not only did my experience with *Stylus* prepare me for these tasks on a macro-scale, but the details I learned while writing my research paper assignment have carried over to help me communicate my research more effectively by increasing my rhetorical awareness as a writer within the research paper genre. Looking back on the experience, I'm so appreciative of the entire *Stylus* team—editors, faculty, and student reviewers—for providing such a great opportunity to recognize and share the writing produced by UCF's composition students. Having my paper published in *Stylus* was rewarding, but it wasn't the fact that it got published that caused me to start my journey into writing and research; it was the process of writing my paper and the things I learned along the way that inspired me to pursue my current path. So, my advice to UCF students is to use *Stylus* as motivation to treat your writing as more than just a class assignment. You might be rewarded with recognition and a larger audience for your work if you choose to invest the time and effort, and you never know how you might be inspired during the process.

## Daniel Truesdell



Daniel graduated from the University of Central Florida in 2016 with his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. He received first runner-up for the John C. Hitt Prize for Excellence in First-Year Writing for his article in the spring 2015 edition of *Stylus: A Journal of First-Year Writing*. He is currently a 4th year PhD candidate in electrical engineering at the University of Virginia, where he is actively researching on topics related to low-power integrated circuit design for internet-of-things and biomedical applications.