

ENGL 815 – CompFAQ Wiki Contribution

According to Wikipedia, a *wiki* is “a website whose users can add, modify, or delete its content via a web browser using a simplified markup language or a rich-text editor.” I intentionally use Wikipedia as a source because it is one of the most popular examples of a wiki, if not always appropriate to use as a source in academic writing. In this assignment, you will create a contribution to a wiki about writing, rhetoric, and composition studies. This assignment should help familiarize you with writing studies issues that affect you as a developing professional in the English Disciplines—whether or not you go on to teach writing.

This assignment is inspired by the "CompFAQs" created by scholars across the country (available: <http://compfaqs.org/CompFAQs/Home?from=Main.HomePage>), which offer collecting points for important composition scholarship and pedagogy. As these entries demonstrate and as we have discussed in class, one of the most important scholarly moves is the ability to ask appropriate questions (and to know how and where to find relevant answers). In this assignment, you will develop a significant and relevant “Composition FAQ,” including

- a statement of the question,
- a justification of the relevance / significance of the question,
- a collection of 10 – 15 **scholarly** resources (journal articles, books, web pages, etc.) that address the major points in the question, and
- your own conclusions about the question.

Your questions will be devoted to topics that form the backbone of most writing courses, for example: Audience, Voice, Academic Discourse, Argument, Collaboration, Response / Evaluation, Grammar / Mechanics, Revision & Reflection, ESL Writers, Basic / Developmental Writers, Writing Center Practice, Literature or Creative Writing in the Composition Classroom, or Writing Program Administration. These are, of course, only a few of the major topics in composition. You may also want to focus your question on a topic that intersects with composition studies and your emphasis, and the readings for this week may help lead you to your question as will examining the FAQs already available on the site.

For example, a good question could be “How useful are rubrics in the teaching and evaluation of writing?” Another good example from the CompFAQ wiki is Richard Haswell’s response to the question “What research has been done on placing students in FY [First Year] writing courses?” The link to his response is available here:

<http://compfaqs.org/Placement/PlacementResearch>

His response is a strong one because it

- avoids organizing the paragraphs around articles / authors rather than ideas,
- defines the general topic, issue, or area of concern, thus providing an appropriate context for reviewing the literature,
- points out overall trends in what has been published about the topic; or conflicts in theory, methodology, evidence, and conclusions; or gaps in research and scholarship; or a single problem or new perspective of immediate interest.

- provides the reader with strong “umbrella” sentences at beginnings of paragraphs, “signposts” throughout, and brief “so what” summary sentences at intermediate points in the review to aid in understanding comparisons and analyses.
- groups research studies and other types of literature (reviews, theoretical articles, case studies, etc.) according to common denominators such as qualitative versus quantitative approaches, conclusions of authors, specific purpose or objective, or chronology, for example,
- summarizes individual studies or articles with as much or as little detail as each merits according to its comparative importance in the literature, remembering that space (length) denotes significance, and
- concludes by providing some insight into the relationship between the central topic of the literature review and a larger area of study such as a discipline, a scientific endeavor, or a profession.

You may also want to review the Literature Review handout available on Canvas for further information on writing this kind of document. You may also want to include hyperlinks in your document if appropriate.

You **do not** have to submit your response to the CompFAQ site, but I am more than happy to work with individuals who may want to polish their contribution for submission. It would look quite good on a resume or CV.

Deliverable Date and Format

MLA citation format, approximately 2 - 3 pages *single-spaced*, 12 point font, Times New Roman

Keep in mind that the plagiarism and late policies apply to this assignment. The document is due to Canvas no later than Wednesday, May 1, by 11:59 p.m. I am more than happy to review drafts.