Voice in Writing

What is Appropriate in My Discipline? How do I know?

Discussion Questions

• Passive vs. active voice?
• What is at stake, rhetorically, in this voice?
• Using others’ research – whose voice is privileged: source or writer?
• How do we integrate that research?

Bring representative article/homework assignment that reflects these strengths, and discuss as class.
Audience

To whom am I writing? What are their expectations?

Non-Expert Layperson

- What can I reasonably expect this person to know?
- What gaps might I have to fill in?
- Is there anything I’m assuming about my reader?
- Should I follow a different format to appeal to my reader?

Expert

- Am I practicing advanced, scholarly research?
- Am I missing any sources that an expert would expect to see?
- To what extent should I mirror the structure, voice, and norms of the research articles I’m reading?

Students tend to write more clearly when they have a specific reader or a “real world” audience in mind. Who is the reader that you expect your students to address? Discuss together when you go over your assignment.