

# Introduction to Writing in the Disciplines

0:00	<b>Francesco:</b> Hello everyone and welcome to the first installment of our four-part webinar series on Writing in the Disciplines.
0:06	This is brought to you by the Writing Across the Curriculum committee at Excelsior College in conjunction with the Online Writing Lab.
0:14	We are actually working with three SUNY colleges as part of a consortium that is developing training materials for faculty to support writing in the disciplines.
0:26	First, I'd like to start with some introductions here. So, I will begin. I am Francesco Crocco, the director of the Online Writing Lab.
0:35	Amy, would you please introduce yourself?
0:39	<b>Amy:</b> Yes. Hi. This is Amy Erickson. I'm an instructor. I teach in the English Department and also in the Business Department as well.
0:50	<b>Francesco:</b> Thank you Amy. Thanks for joining us. Anna.
0:54	<b>Anna:</b> Hi. I'm Anna Zendell, and I am a faculty program director with the School of Graduate Studies with Health Sciences programs.
1:05	<b>Francesco:</b> Welcome Anna. Thanks for joining us. Ben?
1:08	<b>Ben:</b> Hi. I'm Ben Pearson. I'm Excelsior's program director for the writing classes and my background is primarily actually history.
1:18	<b>Francesco:</b> Okay. Thanks, Ben, for joining us. Candice?
1:22	<b>Candice:</b> Hi everyone. I'm the faculty program director in the School of Graduate Studies for the Masters of Public Administration.
1:32	<b>Francesco:</b> Okay. It's nice to have you Candice. Comar? Dale?
1:36	<b>Dale:</b> Hi. I'm Dale Comar. I'm a faculty adjunct for nursing.
1:43	<b>Francesco:</b> Welcome. Grace? Grace Abby Adan, would you like to introduce yourself?
1:56	<b>Grace:</b> Hello. Can you all hear me?
1:58	<b>Francesco:</b> Yes, I can.
1:59	<b>Grace:</b> I'm with the School of Health Sciences. It's great to meet you all.
2:04	<b>Francesco:</b> Thanks for joining us.
2:06	Michael, you're up. Michael McDonough? Can you hear us? Okay. Maybe he's having trouble hearing us.
2:24	Nicole, would you like to go next?
2:27	<b>Nicole:</b> Sure. Hi everybody. My name is Nicole Helstowski. I'm a faculty program director in the School of Nursing and I primarily teach in the associate degree program.
2:38	<b>Francesco:</b> Thanks for joining us Nicole. Sandye.
2:41	<b>Sandye:</b> Hi everybody. My name is Sandye Adams, and I'm an adjunct faculty in the natural sciences. I teach primarily biology and microbiology.
2:54	<b>Francesco:</b> Welcome Sandye. Tracy, you're up next.

- 2:57 **Tracy:** Hi everyone. My name is Tracy Sipma and I'm adjunct faculty for Excelsior for about eight years. I teach classes in the business side and the [inaudible] side.
- 3:09 **Francesco:** Welcome. Thanks for joining us. Yassir.
- 3:14 **Yassir:** Hi everyone. My name is Yassir Semmar, and I teach for the psychology program. I've been with Excelsior for about nine years now.
- 3:24 **Francesco:** Welcome Yassir. I think some people just hopped on. Diane? Would you like to introduce yourself? Her microphone may be turning on. Diane, if you'd like to introduce yourself, please go ahead.
- 3:44 **Diane:** Okay. Can you hear me?
- 3:45 **Francesco:** Yes.
- 3:46 **Diane:** Okay. Sorry. Hi. I've been teaching in the Health Sciences department for gosh—my anniversary is coming up in a week—10 years. I've been teaching in the undergraduate and graduate bubble.
- 3:59 **Francesco:** Great. Glad to have you. I see that Michael has responded in the chat that he does not have a microphone. We'll just welcome him, and we'll move on.
- 4:10 We have a full house. Again, welcome all to this first part of the four-part series on Writing in the Disciplines brought to you by the WAC group and the OWL at Excelsior College in conjunction with three SUNY colleges.
- 4:28 We're also doing this same presentation on their campuses.
- 4:32 Just a little bit about what we hope to do here—what we're trying to do is to introduce people to the sort of fundamentals of writing in the disciplines, with the hope that we can then implement some of these approaches, these techniques, and improve the way we do writing in our courses, and then do a little bit of assessment in the spring and figure out what kind of impact we're having through this training.
- 4:56 All of this training will be made available online through the OWL.
- 4:59 I am recording this presentation, and it will be available to other faculty who are interested in viewing the training, and they'll also be able to take the training in another format on the OWL.
- 5:13 If you do have to miss one of the four webinars, there is a way for you to recoup that. You can wait until we put it up, and then you can access it there.
- 5:28 Okay. First, I want to talk about the benefits of using writing in your class.
- 5:34 A lot of people wonder: What's all this WAC business about? How does it help?
- 5:39 It helps in several ways.
- 5:41 One is rhetorical. It just helps the students in their long-term development of their writing skills.
- 5:45 There have been a lot of studies done on writing across the curriculum.
- 5:49 It's been around for a number of decades.
- 5:52 One study found that in the first year of a community college program involving Writing in the Disciplines, 63% of the students writing scores improved after taking a

writing intensive class compared to only 39% of students who were not taking a writing intensive class.

6:11	That's just one of the studies. There are several studies like that to show that using writing effectively in the classroom can help improve student learning.
6:23	Cognitive. There's a cognitive improvement, not just an improvement in the rhetorical skills and writing skills, but also in their cognition—their understanding of the content. So, the writing helps them understand the content.
6:35	Engagement. It helps to engage the student—understand what they're thinking, what they know, what they don't understand.
6:42	Whether you're lecturing or not, doing something more small groups or whatnot, using writing assignments helps you to get a better understanding of what the students are thinking.
6:53	Then inclusion in the academic community, so building the student confidence as they write their writing.
7:01	Hopefully they are writing in genres that are relevant to their academic community, whatever their community is, whatever their discipline is, and it helps them to build that sense of confidence of being part of that community and also build their academic vocabulary.
7:16	What are the benefits of using writing in your class for instructors? Those were the benefits for students. Instructors. Of course, some of this overlaps.
7:25	One is genre specialization. You are teaching writing genres that are pertinent to your discipline. That's one.
7:32	The other is again content acquisition. You're helping the students learn your content by using writing to improve their cognitive and metacognitive skills.
7:45	Trouble-shooting—so you can identify what the students know or don't know.
7:50	Then engagement in involving the students.
7:53	There are a lot of benefits to using writing in your classroom, both for yourself and your students.
8:01	Now in going into this webinar series, we asked you to take a short survey, and I just wanted you to know that we are paying attention to that survey and we wanted to report back some of what we learned from that survey.
8:12	In fact, we're using parts of that survey to identify topics for the upcoming webinars.
8:17	So, we really care about what you said in the survey. We are paying attention.
8:22	One thing we saw was that many of you are using a lot of graded, formal writing assignments.
8:29	Sometimes we call these "high stakes" writing assignments because they are graded.
8:35	41.5% of you responded that you assigned seven or more writing assignments that were graded.
8:44	Now compare that to the ungraded, or what we call informal, writing assignments on the other side.

8:52	53.7% said they assigned only one or two informal writing assignments.
8:59	We consider these low stakes writing assignments—writing assignments that are intended to help students maybe reflect on their writing.
9:05	They're not graded.
9:07	Maybe they're part of a process approach to writing, part of a scaffolded approach to writing.
9:14	Maybe it's an entrance or exit slip, or a discussion starter. Most of the respondents are using very few of these, and we'll talk about why that's important later on.
9:26	In fact, a large number of you said that you are using no informal writing assignments.
9:30	So, that's something that we want to talk about more in our upcoming webinars.
9:36	Peer Review. A lot of you said that you are not using peer review.
9:41	68.3% said that you are not using peer review in your courses.
9:46	On the other hand, in grading rubrics we see a lot of people using grading rubrics; 95.1% are using grading rubrics.
9:53	That's probably a topic that is something that you understand pretty well. You understand what a rubric is and how to use it.
10:00	I know at Excelsior we use grading rubrics pro forma in all of our courses. So that is definitely something that is understood here.
10:10	What were the biggest barriers to assigning writing according to you?
10:15	The two main things that came up were one – that writing assignments take too much time—that is scaffolding, supporting, assigning, responding to grading the assignment takes a lot of time in your course.
10:32	A lot of times faculty will say that they feel like they have to give up time devoted to content in order to support the writing.
10:43	The other thing is that people responded that students are resistant or not prepared to write.
10:50	So, there we have resistance from the student.
10:53	Those are the two biggest barriers, and we'll want to talk more about that as we get deeper into this webinar series.
11:00	Some topics that you would like to see.
11:02	A lot of you said you want to talk about creative writing assignments—creating effective writing assignments.
11:08	A lot of you talked about wanting tips on how to provide effective feedback and how to use peer review.
11:14	So, those are the things we'll talk about.
11:16	Then some specific assignment types that you wanted to learn more about were collaborative writing assignments and digital or multi-modal writing assignments.
11:26	Those are again topics that we'll come back to in some of the webinars.

- 11:33 Okay, so now we're going to talk about terms and concepts, and I just wanted to take a minute to open the floor here because if you were a good student we did assign a couple of readings for you to look at.
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- 11:44 One of them was from the very well-known WAC clearing house online which had a number of definitions for WAC which stands for Writing Across the Curriculum.
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- 11:54 WTL which is Writing To Learn and WID—Writing In the Disciplines.
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- 11:59 We also assigned a reading that had to do with a study showing the effectiveness of writing—particularly, not so much the quantity of writing, but the quality of the writing and how it improves student learning.
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- 12:11 A lot of those assignments actually had to do with informal writing assignments.
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- 12:16 I just want to pause right now and just ask you: How do you define WAC? What is your definition of it? Please remember to unmute yourself.
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- 12:35 Do we have any adventurous spirit out there who wants to try and provide a definition of WAC?
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- 12:54 Okay. Well how about Writing to Learn? Anyone want to take a stab at that? We will go through all three of these in a moment.
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- 13:09 **Nicole:** Okay. This is Nicole Helstowski. I'm going to take a stab at this. I was hoping somebody else would speak up, but I don't want there to be uncomfortable silence.
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- 13:22 Writing to learn is the application of putting down words to be able to express maybe perspective, viewpoint, help you see things in a different lens and it may help with some of the students that learn best by application of writing.
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- 13:47 That's, I think, my thoughts on that.
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- 13:51 **Francesco:** Okay. That's a really good definition.
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- 13:54 I think it helps to compare it to WAC.
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- 13:57 Writing across the curriculum often focus on assigning writing throughout the disciplines in order to improve the student's writing, right?
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- 14:09 It's about having more opportunities to improve writing. It's about learning to write in a way, right?
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- 14:16 Writing to Learn is the opposite, right? Its focus isn't so much on the writing itself as final product.
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- 14:22 It's not on demonstrating good writing skills but actually on using the writing as a sort of a medium to help them learn the content.
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- 14:30 So, I think you were right on there.
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- 14:32 How about writing in the disciplines?
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- 14:38 [crosstalk]
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- 14:41 **Diane:** I'm sorry. Someone else was trying, so, let them go.
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- 14:45 **Yassir:** No. Go ahead Diane.
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- 14:46 **Diane:** You sure? I mean mine is really simple. I mean I guess I think of that as they're writing using a standard of writing, or a type of writing, that is familiar to the discipline or the area of practice that they're going to be going into.

15:02	<b>Francesco:</b> That's right. That's exactly it. Was that Yassir? Would you like to step in?
15:06	<b>Yassir:</b> Yes. I just wanted to say that I can think of it as being analogous to WAC, and I had experience with both when I was teaching at Cal State Long Beach in the late 1990s.
15:24	I taught a writing preparation exam course and we had to deal with a nightmare because we had students who were failing the writing exit text and they could not graduate with their undergraduate degrees until they passed that writing exit text.
15:42	It was at that time when we introduced Writing in the Disciplines and WAC across different departments.
15:52	We had students from engineering, from the health sciences, but they were excelling in all of their courses, but when it came to passing that writing test at the end prior to the graduation, they were stuck.
16:07	The school had to deal with that for 15 years, and so it wasn't until we started integrating writing into all the different disciplines and majors, then we started to see a real improvement in the rate of students who passed that exit test and were able to graduate.
16:27	That was my experience with WAC that I had encountered in the late 1990s when I taught there.
16:34	<b>Francesco:</b> Okay. Thank you for sharing Yassir.
16:37	<b>Yassir:</b> You're welcome.
16:43	<b>Francesco:</b> Sounded like someone else wanted to speak?
16:49	Okay, well I'm going to move on to our slides here that further define these three concepts.
16:59	Again, we are going to focus on WID in this presentation, but all of these are relevant.
17:06	What is WAC?
17:07	The International Network of Writing Across the Curriculum Programs defines WAC as a comprehensive program in which writing is an integral part of the learning process throughout a student's educational journey—not just in their required English 101 course—but across the entire curriculum.
17:26	At many universities, of course, writing is a part of every class in some way shape or form. It certainly is for us at Excelsior.
17:37	A lot of the transactions that happen between student and teacher are through the writing medium.
17:43	The WAC goes far beyond writing in specific courses. It's about designing a program of study that helps faculty use writing as a learning tool and provides students with opportunities to write in meaningful ways.
17:55	Some of those ways are in writing in the disciplines as people talked about.
17:59	Another way to look at WAC is who does WAC?

- 18:03 Well, everyone can do WAC because faculty in every discipline are proficient. They're the experts in their writing conventions. They're the ones equipped with the skills that actively teach content-based writing skills to their students.
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- 18:18 A lot of people think that writing is something that only English professors can teach and so on and so forth, and I can tell you as an English professor for close to 20 years, that we know how to teach English genres, MLA conventions very well, MLA research, literary analysis, and theoretical applications from that perspective.
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- 18:42 We do not know how to teach in APA style a research paper. That is not our forte.
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- 18:50 The folks in the STEM fields, they can do that very well.
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- 18:54 If that's the type of writing that we expect of our students, then that expertise is not in the English department. It is in the Biology department. It's in the Natural Sciences department. It's in the Nursing department.
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- 19:06 That's why WAC really tries to acknowledge the reality that writing is across the curriculum.
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- 19:15 A brief history of WAC, and you can sort of tease this out from some things I've said.
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- 19:20 The English department in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we get our subject matter specializations, we get our department specializations.
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- 19:31 We have disciplines that are forming and they have to define themselves very clearly.
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- 19:37 The English department gets defined as a kind of service-oriented department charged with teaching college-level writing—particularly the mandatory freshman or first year composition class.
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- 19:48 From there on, for a while, it was considered the course that was supposed to teach writing.
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- 19:54 Well, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that begins to get sort of reassessed, and analyzed, and critiqued.
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- 19:59 By the 1970s in Britain, you have a reform movement that was called the "Language Across the Curriculum" movement which basically acknowledged that this wasn't working—this single department teaching writing for all.
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- 20:11 This wasn't working.
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- 20:12 This led to the US Writing Across the Curriculum movement—what we call WAC.
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- 20:17 That movement expanded though the 80s and 90s and really became institutionalized at the various colleges and universities in the US, and, of course, we have a writing across the curriculum group as do many other colleges.
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- 20:33 What are some key principles of writing across the curriculum? One is that it's a program; that there are people who are consciously trying to promote and develop WAC across the curriculum.
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- 20:45 This is informed by the idea that writing cannot be learned in a single course. It requires time to master.

20:50	The idea of 8 or 16 weeks and the student knows how to write well—that's an artificial construct that is an academic semester that is not something that is part of the actual learning timeline or time frame of the individual.
21:07	Students need general writing and disciplinary writing skills.
21:11	They need to know how to write your traditional five paragraph academic essay, but they also need to know how to write in the genres and modes that are specific to each field, particularly to their field of study.
21:23	Stakeholders across the institution have to cooperate to make this happen. You can't have WAC without people really supporting it across the institution.
21:32	Opportunities for student writing need to be mapped out across the institution's curriculum. Again, so an intentional approach to this.
21:39	Also, opportunities for student writing need to be sequenced from class to class so that we provide opportunity for revision and growth.
21:47	So, not just thinking about writing in one class as a one off, but how can we sequence that from an intro level course to the next level course, to the capstone, and so on.
21:58	Writing Across the Curriculum should be tied to learning outcomes at the program level, the institution level, and of course, the course level.
22:07	Also successful WAC programs they just need buy-in, and they need support. Without that support, it would be difficult to do that kind of work.
22:24	Let's switch to Writing to Learn.
22:26	Writing Across the Curriculum is focusing on improving those student writing skills in the various genres—academic genres.
22:34	Writing to Learn is about using writing to support learning as we talked about earlier. It's a subset of WAC.
22:41	Because the focus isn't so much on writing as a finished product, but on cognition and metacognition—things we all want to support in our classes whatever content we teach—the writing activities tend to be short, they tend to be informal, and they tend to be low-stakes, or ungraded.
23:00	These writing activities are all about connecting and clarifying ideas, thinking critically about ideas, remembering content, reflecting on what you do or don't understand.
23:17	A couple of quotes here to help sort-of distinguish between WAC and WTL.
23:21	"Writing as a tool for learning rather than a test of that learning." That's number one. That gets at the informal sort of cognitive and metacognitive elements of this.
23:32	Two, "writing ... to order and represent experience to our own understanding." Through writing we make sense of the content that we're learning.
23:42	Here's some activities that can be grouped under Writing to Learn.
23:46	We have reflective writing assignments. Things like reading journals, response papers, discussion starters, entrance and exit slips and even discussion board posts. These are all opportunities to reflect on what we're reading and learning about in the class.



23:59	Graphic organizers – Venn diagrams, tree charts, flow charts, cycle diagrams, concept maps. These are all visual ways of mapping out information that we’re reading about or learning about in the class.
24:12	Note-taking – The popular Cornell notes system, annotating texts, creating outlines for the content we’re reading.
24:19	Process Writings – Taking a larger paper or a product, a research paper and breaking it down into steps that may or may not be graded; might be informal. So, having a brainstorming step, a prewriting stage, a drafting stage, a peer review stage, a revision stage, editing, and final publishing of that product.
24:42	Problem-solving tasks – Giving a student a problem statement or a short answer question.
24:48	Summaries – Have the student do a literature review or an annotated bibliography, again to help them engage the content and move towards mastery.
24:59	Then syntheses. Synthesizing what they’ve learned.
25:02	Analytical writing and creative writing. These are all examples of writing to learn activities.
25:09	Now we’re going to move on to Writing in the Disciplines.
25:11	Writing in the Disciplines is about teaching students how to write using the conventions and genres of a specific discipline. Every discipline has its own conventions and genres.
25:25	So, writing in the disciplines is important because writing is not a generic skill. It’s not the same in all areas and all subjects, all disciplines.
25:35	It is always specific to a context. What we call sometimes a rhetorical situation, right? There’s a speaker and there’s someone listening.
25:46	In terms of writing, there are certain conventions and rules that need to be followed in order for that transmission to occur effectively.
25:55	If you’re writing a research paper in APA style, then you need to know what those conventions are; otherwise, your message won’t get across clearly to the intended audience.
26:07	Writing is learned through participation in what they call a “discourse community”—a community of people in discussion.
26:16	Writing is also a form of professionalization. As we dig into the specific genres of a field or discipline, we’re bringing the students closer to writing the type of stuff that they will need for their careers.
26:31	We’ve talked about genre, and I just want to dig a little deeper into what is a genre.
26:38	A genre is—and this is a quote from Soliday here—“a recurring response to a rhetorical situation.” It’s recurring because it’s the same, it follows the same rules or conventions, and it’s applicable to a specific situation.
26:53	The rules and conventions of writing developed within a specific community and context. That’s another definition of a genre.

27:02	Genres have different rules for what counts as research, what counts as evidence, how information is presented, what form it takes, and also the stylistic conventions—when it's appropriate to use metaphors or complex terminology, subheadings, and so on.
27:24	I want to take a moment to think about what genres are relevant to your field. I'm going to start with my field here—this is literary studies.
27:33	As a professor of English and literature, I'm very conversant with books, particularly books that are novels, or collections of poetry, or plays, and, of course, also nonfiction books—books that are literary analyses, secondary sources, theoretical books, biographical books.
27:59	One of the genres I might teach in the class, in addition to those, might be a short story, and those tend to be fictional.
28:04	I might also teach articles—journal articles written for the humanities.
28:11	I might expose the students to bibliographies.
28:16	Then there are new multi-modal types of writing: web sites, blogs, social media. Those things might be genres that fall within my field.
28:24	And, of course, proposals and abstracts.
28:26	As a scholar, I'm writing proposals and abstracts all the time.
28:29	Those are different from the types of proposals and abstracts that someone in the natural sciences or the social sciences might write.
28:37	Now, if we look at biology, we have different genres that a biology professor might be writing or wanting to teach their students to write.
28:46	Maybe instead of teaching them about how to read and write a novel, they're looking at things like lab reports, or research papers, or how to write a grant, or a scholarly article or book, or even a popular book that popularizes some of the hard science, maybe even a poster.
29:05	Social sciences. Again, very different genres. We have reports, we have case studies, research papers, grants, again scholarly articles and books probably formatted differently from the hard sciences and differently from the humanities.
29:19	Popular books. Again, books that are popularizing some of the research that social scientists are doing.
29:25	These are different genres that are relevant to this field that someone in the social sciences might want to teach in a course.
29:32	I want to pause right here and ask you to give us an example of a genre in your discipline. What's the discipline? What's the genre?
29:40	Then also start to describe some of the basic features of that genre. What are they? What's the purpose? Who's the audience? How is it laid out or structured or organized? What kind of research requirements are there? Style manuals do you use? Things like that.

- 29:59 Do I have an intrepid soul out there who can start us off here? Give us an example of a genre in your discipline and just describe briefly some of its features. Maybe you've taught a genre in a course that you teach and so you can use that as an example.
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- 30:20 Please remember to unmute yourself before speaking.
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- 30:34 **Nicole:** Frank, since you brought up lab reports and I've been asking for an OWL resource for lab reports forever, we can talk about lab reports.
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- 30:44 **Francesco:** Please go ahead. Talk about lab reports.
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- 30:51 **Nicole:** I have my students write a lab report more like they would see reflected in a research journal.
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- 30:59 I do a lot where I have my students look up research journals and write reports on them or use them for background information.
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- 31:06 They need to give me a hypothesis.
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- 31:08 They need to explain to me what methodology they're using. Whether or not it's a lab they're actually performing or a hypothetical one.
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- 31:17 That requires research into journal articles.
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- 31:21 I encourage my students to actually look at PLOS journals because even when they finish their degree, if they're interested, they can still keep up on the latest research that's going on.
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- 31:32 Then, of course, present your data graphically or in a table and then a conclusion.
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- 31:41 **Francesco:** That's great. The last point you made about presenting their data graphically, this is something that I, in an English course, I would never teach them how to do that.
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- 31:50 That's not something that I'm that familiar with or that is part of a genre in my field, but in a lab report it's absolutely essential being able to read and to create tables and figures.
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- 32:03 **Nicole:** Right. It has practical applications in a lot of different career fields. I'm not making them do it just for fun.
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- 32:10 **Francesco:** Absolutely. Thank you.
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- 32:13 Can someone else give an example of a genre in their discipline and what some of the basic features are?
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- 32:19 **Ben:** Frank, one of our people in the chat mentioned in Health care administration there's a quality improvement effort.
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- 32:26 I don't know what that is, but I just wanted to bring that up.
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- 32:29 **Francesco:** Thank you Ben. Yes, I see that Michael brought that up. Michael are you still having trouble with your microphone, or can you explain a little bit about what that genre is?
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- 32:45 He may still be having trouble with the microphone, but...another genre there: quality improvement efforts in health administration.
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- 32:53 Do we have another genre? Can somebody give me an example of another genre in your discipline?

32:59	<b>Lisa:</b> This is Lisa, and I can also talk a little bit about the quality improvement initiatives that are in health care and also in HR—maybe policy manuals that are specific to health care.
33:15	What else? There's something on the top of my head.
33:19	Any kind of records, of course, in the clinical end of it. You have patient records. Clinical talk.
33:26	<b>Francesco:</b> It sounds like a lot of these genres you're listing are also genres that would be relevant for the student after they graduate. Right?
33:37	<b>Lisa:</b> Absolutely.
33:38	<b>Francesco:</b> In their careers.
33:39	<b>Lisa:</b> Important things that they would really do need to know.
33:43	<b>Francesco:</b> Great. So that's one of the benefits of writing in the disciplines is that not only are they demonstrating learning in the classroom but then that's applicable after they leave.
33:54	Okay. Any other genres?
34:03	Do we have some non-health care or non-science related disciplines out there that we can draw from?
34:28	Okay, well I will end the uncomfortable silence and I know it's a hard time in the afternoon here. Let's move forward to the next slide then, and if you do want to share a genre, please just stop us and share.
34:44	Thank you for sharing those genres.
34:45	Breaking it down. If we want to teach the elements of a genre, we want to look at a few different things.
34:54	One is the purpose of the genre. What is the goal of the genre? Okay? Is it to inform? Is it to persuade? Is it to request funding maybe, if it's a grant?
35:07	In a lab report, maybe it's to describe the methodology? Describe the hypothesis, right? Describe the experiment and draw some conclusions.
35:21	Who is the audience? Is the audience a panel of peer reviewers at a journal? Is it a patient? Is it an administrator? Are you writing for the public—some kind of public health statement or announcement? Think about that. Who are your intended readers?
35:41	Then, of course, the structure. How is it structured? What are the parts of the genre? Where do you state your thesis? Is there an abstract? What are the sections and sub-sections?
35:55	What kind of language is appropriate for this genre?
35:57	I'm going to pick on the English people again. We love language. We love figurative language. We love metaphors, similes, hyperbole. We love rhythm.
36:10	Those are not necessarily things that are valued in other genres, and actually could count against you for writing poetically.

36:19	What are the kinds of language that are appropriate in your genres? Is it okay to use the active voice or is the passive voice preferred? Is it okay to use jargon? Technical terms? Are you expected to use those terms?
36:37	Finally, citation. We know that there are different citation styles, citation manuals.
36:44	What constitutes research and how do you cite documents?
36:49	Where do you do your research? Is it appropriate, for instance, to do research on the internet or primarily in databases of scholarly articles?
36:59	Or does this genre require you to do interviews?
37:04	Some kind of location-based research maybe?
37:08	Are you doing archival research?
37:10	What are the methods and conventions and expectations for research and citations in this genre?
37:18	Knowing these things and making these things explicit will help the student to understand how to not only write the genre, but also read the genre.
37:31	I want to just model a genre briefly here. This is taken from the OWL.
37:37	We do have a couple of genres that we talk about there that are health care related and one of them is called a <i>Care Plan</i> .
37:45	If you take a look at the OWL, we talk about things like What is the Care Plan? This talks about its purpose—describing services and support here, patient centered, evidence based, and so on.
38:00	Who uses it? This is again focused on the audience. You see here there is a variety of people who use it. So, just making these things explicit, right?
38:09	If you're teaching a genre to your students, you want to model that genre. You want to make these things explicit. Maybe have them read an example of a care plan and then talk about it together. Okay? Then point out some of these things.
38:27	You've talked about its purpose. You've talked about the audience. Now how is it structured?
38:34	What are the parts of a care plan? What goes into making one? Maybe here you want to have them annotating or give them an annotated copy of a care plan.
38:46	Talk about the language choices, the diction. Is the language supposed to be simple and straightforward because it's going to patients, relatives, family members, whatever?
38:59	Or, should it be full of complex terminology to show off the higher learning and advanced awareness of the field?
39:09	What kind of language decisions are you making when you write a care plan?
39:14	If there is research involved in the genre, talk about what kind of citation style, what kind of expectations for research and so on go into that genre.
39:26	I want to end here with some teaching tips for genre-based writing assignments.
39:33	Some of these are backtracking from things I've already said.
39:36	One is give them some exemplars.

39:38	Give them some examples to read and discuss in your class.
39:41	I think we do this often, right?
39:44	We assign examples of different genres that we expect them to understand and be able to synthesize in the course as a way of communicating the content, teaching the content.
39:58	Maybe just stop and pause and talk about those exemplars, right?
40:02	Model the genre. Make the elements of the genre explicit by breaking down the structure of these exemplars.
40:08	Talk about its purpose. Talk about the audience. Talk about its structure. Talk about the kind of language in the text.
40:16	This doesn't need to take a lot of time.
40:18	Just pause to reflect on it with them.
40:21	Then do some kind of guided group practice where you have the students either in class, or outside of class, and preferably together, talk about the genre.
40:31	Analyze the genre.
40:32	Maybe give them an assignment.
40:34	There's a lot of research to show that meaning-making is social. It's a group activity.
40:39	Having them do this as a group in some kind of informal way really helps them to engage the content.
40:47	Afterwards, they can do some kind of independent practice where maybe you have them draft something.
40:53	Maybe they're practicing writing an abstract or some part of the genre.
41:00	This can be part of a scaffolded approach that leads to some demonstration of learning where they're actually creating a final product that is an example of that genre.
41:10	In spending time at each of those stages through the process to help them produce that.
41:17	Through that process, they learn how to become experts in that field, in that genre.
41:24	They can don the lab coat, so to speak, and understand, really, what it means to create a lab report.
41:31	Not just to write it, but to read them.
41:34	They now understand the field better.
41:40	So, I'm going to open up the floor here for some questions or comments.
41:43	We do have plenty of time to have a discussion here, and then I'll end by talking about looking ahead and where we're going next.
41:56	<b>Pam:</b> Hello? Can you hear me?
41:58	<b>Francesco:</b> Yes.
41:59	<b>Pam:</b> Okay. This is Pam. I pose my question.
42:03	I teach physics.
42:05	<b>Francesco:</b> Okay.

42:05	<b>Pam:</b> The lab reports, do you think it should be written in a passive voice and third-person speech?
42:12	Because I always find students find it very hard.
42:16	They would even answer the science questions with “I, we, you” kind of a stuff.
42:22	What do you say here?
42:24	<b>Francesco:</b> Well, not to be evasive, but I would say that you are probably the expert at that.
42:29	I know that APA, which is used in physics, I know that APA is moving towards the active voice...
42:37	<b>Pam:</b> Okay.
42:37	<b>Francesco:</b> ...and a lot of the manuals are moving towards the active voice.
42:41	The style is not something that stays still, right?
42:44	However, if it’s still the case in your specific field that these reports are written in the passive voice, then I would teach that way.
42:55	<b>Pam:</b> Okay. All right. Because students, they resist a lot. They just cannot switch over.
43:00	They’re so used to using the active voice, so I just wanted to clarify that.
43:06	But, somehow, does it sound like I’m being old-fashioned?
43:11	Because if the report is written in first-person speech, I find it very non-scientific and unprofessional.
43:20	<b>Francesco:</b> I see. Well, I mean I do think that those are expectations that are established over time, but if they’re changing, I would say if they’re changing, then you may want to make it clear to them that we’re in a moment of transition and that the passive and the active is considered acceptable.
43:39	If it’s not the case, if the passive is still the rule of thumb, then I would teach them the passive and just point out to them that its difficult, but this is the way that it’s done in this field.
43:50	<b>Pam:</b> Okay.
43:55	<b>Francesco:</b> I think that’s a great opportunity to talk about what active is and what passive is.
43:58	I don’t think that our students even think in those terms.
44:01	<b>Pam:</b> They have no idea.
44:02	<b>Francesco:</b> Yes. Maybe if you want them to master it in a passive voice then give them a fun example of an active voice and say, “Okay. What’s different about these two documents?”
44:14	<b>Pam:</b> Yes.
44:15	<b>Francesco:</b> Maybe one is like a text message and the other is a paragraph from...
44:20	<b>Pam:</b> Yes, but these are the students of Excelsior, and I’m an online instructor. I just have a few weeks with them you know. Six labs and six week long course.
44:31	There’s barely any time.

44:33	Time and again they keep sending back active voice, although I give them such strong instructions all the time.
44:42	They just can't wrap their heads around it.
44:46	<b>Francesco:</b> Well, again, I'd encourage you to read the study that was linked to this webinar, the one that—I think it was AAC&U—that found that it was quality not quantity of writing that helped to move the students forward.
45:02	It may be the case that if you sort-of cut out some of the repetitive writing assignments and instead sort of just build in and use maybe some of those reflective writing pieces that they might get it faster and you'll have less resistance.
45:17	Something to try.
45:18	<b>Pam:</b> Okay. Thank you.
45:20	<b>Attendee:</b> I don't know. I agree with her completely. We move really fast. When I'm teaching science and writing at the same time, which I'm totally fine with them doing lab reports and research papers, but I find that they don't make changes or incorporate my comments and I think it's because they're not going to have to see that paper again.
45:42	<b>Francesco:</b> Yes.
45:42	<b>Pam:</b> Yes.
45:44	<b>Attendee:</b> To me, it's also more important that they get the concepts and can critically think about science rather than if they used the correct voice in that paper. Does that make sense?
45:57	<b>Pam:</b> Yes. It does. I'm still not able to decide: What is the norm here? What is the rule?
46:06	<b>Attendee:</b> Well, I don't know for your specific assignments, but for my lab report, they actually do a germination lab report at home for two weeks, and so I allow either voice.
46:16	Again, though, it's more important to me that they understood what they were doing, got the background of the other research that's been done, and can explain to me what hormones are involved, you know?
46:31	<b>Pam:</b> Okay.
46:32	<b>Francesco:</b> Well, I think different faculty can have different priorities. I think that's fine.
46:37	I can tell you that we spent a lot of time studying the APA manual as part of putting together the APA Refresher in the OWL, and one of the videos is on style, and we cover voice in there.
46:50	The manual, from what I read, it sounded like they were promoting the active voice, and it was clearly something that was contentious and changing in the field.
47:02	That's why I emphasize that if in your field it's still the case that passive is preferred, then I would continue to teach them that voice.
47:13	Make them aware the that active voice, it is changing, it's not...
47:17	<b>Pam:</b> Right.
47:19	You still don't see active voice in research papers.
47:22	<b>Francesco:</b> Right.
47:23	<b>Pam:</b> I've never seen...



47:23	<b>Francesco:</b> It's slow to change. It's true. I think it varies by discipline too.
47:28	<b>Pam:</b> Okay.
47:29	<b>Francesco:</b> I think it's more the case in the social sciences, but I'm a humanities person, so I'm sort of watching from the outside.
47:39	As far as the teaching, I think teaching one offs all the time—and I've done this, I have courses like that—it gets frustrating because they're not scaffolded, right? So, they're not intended to be sequenced.
47:53	They're sort of constantly practicing the same thing with a different assignment.
47:59	Again, I think maybe thinking about the quality of the writing—slowing it down, not grading at all, and giving them opportunities to reflect—might make that A-Ha moment happen where they say, "Oh! That's what she needs. Now I get it." You know?
48:14	<b>Attendee:</b> Yes.
48:19	<b>Amy:</b> I think Pam was also bringing up another point.
48:22	Maybe I was confused, but Pam it sounds to me like you are trying to avoid the informal writing of using personal pronouns.
48:30	<b>Pam:</b> Yes.
48:31	<b>Amy:</b> Absolutely. Yes. I teach research and writing courses and students have to write lab reports and they constantly want to use I, we, us, you, they...
48:41	<b>Pam:</b> Right.
48:41	<b>Amy:</b> ...and it doesn't sound very professional.
48:43	I don't allow that at all. Yes.
48:47	<b>Pam:</b> Yes.
48:48	<b>Attendee:</b> ...be interesting.
48:50	<b>Amy:</b> Yes. It totally sounds informal. It sounds like a blog post. I think a lot of students...
48:53	<b>Pam:</b> Yes. Exactly.
48:54	<b>Amy:</b> ...they read informal work more than they read formal works so...
48:57	<b>Pam:</b> Exactly. Yes.
48:58	<b>Amy:</b> ...I tell them to really dive into their research articles they're reading and to absorb that tone and bring that with them when they start their own writing and to leave that kind of informal bloggy stuff.
49:09	<b>Pam:</b> Yes.
49:10	<b>Amy:</b> Another thing, if you're interested Pam, there's a resource called the Hemmingway app and that helps students...
49:16	<b>Pam:</b> Can you type it out, so that I have it on the screen?
49:18	<b>Amy:</b> You bet. You bet. It costs about \$15, but it helps students avoid passive voice.
49:24	<b>Pam:</b> Okay.
49:24	<b>Amy:</b> So, I'll just type that in right now. I'll mute myself but thank you.
49:29	<b>Pam:</b> Thank you Amy.
49:32	<b>Francesco:</b> Thank you to both of you for this conversation.

- 49:34 Is there anyone else out there who has a question or a comment related to the topics we talked about or maybe teaching genres in your field, or how to address some of these particularly difficult problems with student writing?
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- 49:53 We do have a few more minutes.
- 
- 50:04 **Pam:** Amy? This resource which you're sending me, the students can download this for free, or I think you said it costs something.
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- 50:14 **Amy:** I think it's about \$15.
- 
- 50:16 **Pam:** Okay. How does it work? They just put in their sentences and the voice is changed, or how does it go?
- 
- 50:24 **Amy:** I believe so. I believe it's a lot like Grammarly where it will tell them when there's awkward sentences. Let me see if there's a... I can grab a website for you and throw it in (distorted audio).
- 
- 50:33 **Pam:** All right.
- 
- 50:36 **Francesco:** Okay. Thanks for sharing the site. I definitely want to check that out too.
- 
- 50:39 Unless there are any other questions or comments, I'm going to move on to *Looking Ahead*.
- 
- 50:48 There's that beautiful roadway there.
- 
- 50:52 We do have three more installments of this webinar series, and they will be offered through the fall and next spring.
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- 51:02 This fall we hope to do another webinar focused on creating effective writing assignments, and these writing assignments will focus on, particularly on, creating genre-based writing assignments.
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- 51:14 We've been talking a lot about what a genre is and how to teach one and we'll be focusing on that in the next webinar.
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- 51:22 The emphasis will be on sort of preparing for course design or maybe course revision by coming up with some good writing assignments.
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- 51:30 We'll talk about integrating reading and writing.
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- 51:35 This is a big topic, and it's something I think we do innately—that we teach writing, and then we teach reading, right?
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- 51:43 We let them read a lab report and then we assign a lab report, but how can we make that explicit and make a connection between the reading and writing?
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- 51:51 Using exemplars again—the writing samples that we give—and modeling from that example how to write that genre.
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- 51:59 Providing really clear writing expectations.
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- 52:03 I think it's hard sometimes to identify when our assignments are not clearly written and so we create problems for the students not understanding what's expected of them.
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- 52:17 Scaffolding the assignments. Okay, so taking a process-oriented approach maybe, including some informal writing along the way to build up to that formal, graded writing assignment.
- 
- 52:30 When and how to use peer review effectively.

52:33	Then just drafting and revision, right?
52:36	Are we offering opportunities to revise so it's not a one off, so that we're teaching the student that in the sciences when we submit an article, we get feedback, right?
52:47	Most people don't get published on the first try.
52:50	We get feedback.
52:51	They want us to revise.
52:52	This is part of the natural process of writing.
52:55	We revise.
52:56	How do we revise effectively?
52:58	Then we resubmit.
53:00	That's going to be part of that fall—November probably—webinar.
53:06	That will be webinar number two.
53:09	Parts three and four will be offered in the spring, and we are considering them more just-in-time type webinars, where you'll be teaching a course that maybe you've had an opportunity to revise and throw some of these activities, these writing assignments, into.
53:23	Now the emphasis will be on how do we respond to student writing.
53:28	It'll be on maybe developing a rubric, if you don't already have one, and then how to use a rubric effectively.
53:35	The next one will be on providing effective feedback.
53:39	What kind of feedback should we be providing the students?
53:43	Should we be marking up the whole paper? Parts of the paper?
53:46	Are there resources we can lead them to?
53:49	How can we couch our feedback so that the student is listening and is learning from what we're saying and able to implement that feedback too. Right?
54:00	Do they have opportunities to learn from that feedback, maybe by revising or whatnot?
54:06	These topics will come up in the spring.
54:09	Okay. So that takes us...
54:11	<b>Pam:</b> What is the scaffolding?
54:13	<b>Francesco:</b> Excuse me?
54:13	<b>Pam:</b> Scaffolding?
54:15	<b>Francesco:</b> Scaffolding. It's a metaphor.
54:18	If you think about when they put up a skyscraper, right?
54:23	<b>Pam:</b> Yes.
54:22	<b>Francesco:</b> They create sort of a metal structure on the outside to build the skyscraper.
54:27	The same thing with writing.
54:28	We want to scaffold that final product by creating a process around it, steps, a sequence.
54:36	<b>Pam:</b> Okay.

- 54:36 **Francesco:** Maybe you have them write the abstract first, and then you have them create an outline, and then you have them do the research, and submit some kind of written evidence that they're doing this work.
- 
- 54:48 This doesn't have to be graded.
- 
- 54:50 This could be informal—just a check system, right? Check, you did it or you didn't.
- 
- 54:57 All this is building towards a final draft of a paper. Whatever it is.
- 
- 55:04 I will say that through my years of doing WAC this is actually a very effective way to discourage plagiarism.
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- 55:12 When we assign a student to submit a paper in three weeks, or four weeks, or eight weeks, it gives them eight weeks to plagiarize. Essentially, right? They go out and find a paper.
- 
- 55:22 But if we say to them, "You have five different assignments that you have to produce on route to creating that final paper," it's going to be a lot harder for them to plagiarize.
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- 55:32 Scaffolding has a lot of different advantages.
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- 55:34 That's what that is. Is that clear?
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- 55:38 **Pam:** Yes. Thank you.
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- 55:39 **Francesco:** Great. Okay. This is what's coming up.
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- 55:43 I thank you all again for joining us today. We've reached the hour, and I really hope you enjoyed this. Look for it on the OWL. We'll be posting a live recording of this on the OWL along with some resources.
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- 55:56 Again, thank you for your time today, and we hope to see you at the next one.
- 
- 56:01 **Many attendees:** Thank you.
- 
- 56:09 **Pam:** Are you sending us a recording of this webinar?
- 
- 56:12 **Francesco:** Once I have it ready, I can share the link with you.
- 
- 56:14 **Pam:** Okay. All right. Good.
- 
- 56:20 **Francesco:** Bye everyone.