

Reading response: swales the concept of discourse community and wardle essays exa...

[Business](#), [Management](#)



In Swales' "The Concept of Discourse Community," he reiterates the differences between the speech community and discourse community. As he discusses his position on discourse community, Swales makes it clear that a discourse community is characterized by several inherent characteristics. These characteristics include "agreed set of common goals" (Swales, 471: 11), which may be defined in documents such as organization constitutions. Other characteristics include "mechanisms of intercommunication" (Swales, 471: 12), "participatory mechanism" (Swales, 472: 14), and a member has "relevant content." In Wardle's "Identity, Authority, and Learning to Write in New Workplaces" she discusses the intricacies of communicating in a new "workplace." In this discussion, she explains a "workplace" as a community of members with clear goals, effective intercommunication mechanisms, participatory mechanisms, as well as having members with relevant content. Therefore, terms such as community; intercommunication and participatory mechanisms; and members' knowledge of the relevant content will be useful in making connections between a genre of writing and the community of people who participate in and produce the genre.

These terms will be helpful in thinking about dialogues in discourse genre in community-like settings. The discourse genre has been researched widely especially in relation to oral and written domains. As Wardle discussed in her essay, it is important for any new member of a certain community to learn the "complexities associated" with writing in that new community. Without the proper knowledge of the new comer's position and authority in the community, communication is bound to fail. According to Wardle, the neophyte should learn the "writing conventions of that community." These

conventions portray the community's " goals," as suggested by Swales. Since speech (whether written or oral) is divided into discourse genres that are based on the contextual environment, it is important for any person entering a new community (whether a workplace or a new neighborhood) to understand the goals of that community. Further, the intercommunication and participatory mechanisms have been shown to affect the dialogue of members of a certain discourse community. Intercommunication mechanisms such as emails, telephones and others may determine the response of a member in a certain community. In addition, particular communities expect different people in certain positions to participate differently in community activities. Wardle has shown the necessity of this by describing the experience of Alan, who despite having authority could not maintain proper communication. The difficulties encountered by Alan were as a result of participatory mechanisms that were not acceptable to the community members.

In discussing dialogues in workplaces and other discourse communities, the understanding of the community is paramount. It will establish the type of dialogue or discourse genre to be expected among the members. In addition, the understanding of the intercommunication and participatory mechanisms within the community will help understand the effects of the dialogues and other communications. In understanding the " common goals" of the community, one will understand how to communicate effectively with the necessary goals in mind. The terms, as used in Swales' and Wardle's articles, have demonstrated the importance they have in dialogues of particular communities. In the case of Alan, Wardle concludes that proper enculturation

did not take place hence the difficulties in Alan's acceptance in the workplace. For Swales, he describes the characteristics of discourse communities pointing out the need to align with the new community's values.