

Exercise 1: Situating Your Work

Our first exercise is designed to help you discuss how the work you've already done fits in with the work of other researchers and scholars. Ideally, you have read a decent number of academic articles related to your project, and have begun situating your project in response to this specialized discourse. This exercise will help you clearly explain exactly how your project fits in with what other academics are talking about.

1. Get into groups of three.
2. Each member of the group should spend 2-3 minutes describing their project to the other group members. Remember, your group's members are scientifically literate, but they probably aren't experts in your specific field, and they're probably not at all familiar with your project. The listening group members should not take notes on what the speaking group member has said.
3. After everyone is done with their descriptions, take 2-3 minutes to write down the things you remember mentioning while describing your project—list the details you included, and explain your logic behind including them. Write your response in the space below.

4. Now that a few minutes have passed, it's time to attempt to describe the *other* projects in your group. Going clockwise, group member should spend 1-2 minutes summarizing the project of the person sitting closest to him or her. The person whose project is being described is not allowed to give any hints or explanations during this description!

After your project has been described to you, take 2-3 minutes to explain how your group member described your project. What features did she think was the most important? What parts did she forget to mention, or get flat-out wrong? Write your explanation in the space below.

5. As a group, spend 2-3 minutes talking about the concerns you have regarding your group members' description of your respective works. Pay special attention to any misconceptions your group members may have had, and try to figure out how you could have adjusted your initial description to help avoid such misconceptions.
6. With the remaining time, write 2-4 sentences in response to the following questions:

How is your research similar to previous work? That is, does it build onto another project or take over where other projects have left off? This could include using methodological or theoretical frameworks that were established by other researchers.

How does your research differ from previous work? That is, does it disagree with any other researchers or fill in any gaps that previous researchers didn't address?

Who would be interested in the kind of work that you're doing? You could also consider why they would be interested in this work. It might also be helpful to think about who *should* be interested in your work, but probably won't be.