



Revision Practices

Content in this presentation is taken from Chapter 8 of *Thriving as a Graduate Writer* by Rachel Cayley (2023)

Editing While Writing and Letting Time Pass

Try not to edit while writing.

Instead, when you notice something that might confuse you later, something that is incorrect, something that is missing, etc., make a note about it either in the text or in a comment bubble beside the text.

Let writing be exploratory, but don't leave yourself dead ends or mysteries that you have to unravel when you come back to the draft, hopefully after a little while as explained below.

After you finish a piece of writing -- a draft of a chapter, a literature review, a full paper -- let some time pass before you return to it. The longer you leave between writing it and revising it, the more

Use a Reverse Outline

Rachel Cayley in Chapter 8 of *Thriving as a Graduate Writer* gives a great explanation for how to work your way through a reverse outline, and why such a thing is useful when revising long pieces of writing, like chapters.

Your first round of revision should always be structural: *What is this piece of writing doing? What needs to happen in this piece of writing, and where does it need to happen?*

“By doing a reverse outline, you can learn what you *have* in order to reshape it into what you *need*.”

Reverse outlines show you the gaps in your organization, the balance of your ideas, and the any accidental divergences of your chapter’s focus, among many other things.

This is a time consuming practice, but following it will guarantee that you know exactly what is happening in your document and where, and is invaluable in figuring out if you are succeeding in getting across what you intended to get across.

Steps to Reverse Outlining

(be honest; if a paragraph has multiple topics, record that — this outline is only useful if it accurately reflects what exists in the draft)
(expect this list to be messy)
note things like poor ordering of topics, digressions away from the key topic, addressing