

A Picture of Organized Chaos

Kate Fortner

In this Picturing Literate Activity piece, Kate Fortner explores the way her multitasking mindset manifests in her workspace while she practices uptake for her writing research on fanfiction.

As a graduate student at ISU, I do a lot of multitasking, which manifests in the way my workspace looks. In this scenario (Figure 1), it was late evening in late September, and I was practicing uptake for the research I was doing for my *Grassroots Writing Research Journal* article about writing fanfiction. I sat at my desk in my room in my apartment in Normal, and I gathered everything I would need to trace my research, eat dinner, and listen to music. Tracing my research on fanfiction writing is one way to make my writing research visible, which is an example of **uptake**, “the activity we do or experience as we take up new ideas, terms, and/or practices” (“Uptake Terms”). That means the resulting text I was making on paper is an example of an **uptake genre**, one of “the kinds of texts in particular genres that we use to document, trace, and share our uptake of new concepts, terms, and practices” (“Uptake Terms”). Pictured in Figure 1:

1. The chicken tacos I was eating and the strawberry horchata I was drinking.
2. The research mapping I was working on with a piece of paper, a pencil, and two highlighters (one yellow and one pink).

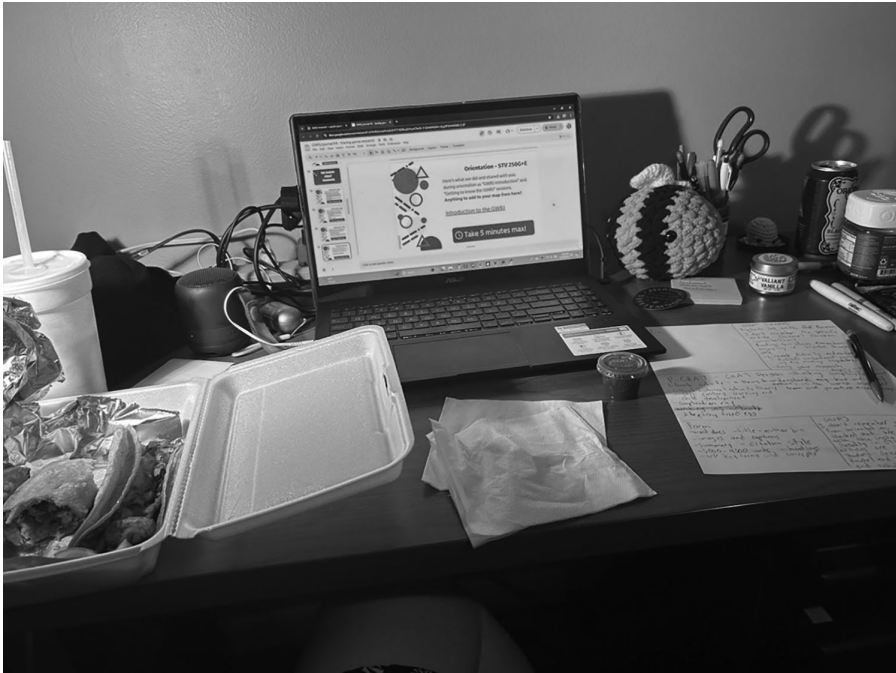


Figure 1: My desk where I organize the chaos of doing GWRJ research uptake.

3. The assortment of knickknacks that live on my desk like the knitted bee and octopus.
4. The laptop I am using to follow the slideshow for the assignment I'm doing.

Also pictured if you look really closely: The Discord notifications from friends I am messaging while I'm supposed to be working, and my leg in the skirt I put on because it was more comfortable to work in.

Not pictured: The music I was blaring from the Bluetooth speaker. The taste of the chicken tacos. The stuffed seal plushie that lives on my desk but is out of frame.

My particular brand of organized chaos may not be advisable for all writing researchers. You might find having too much going on distracting, or you might feel that working on research at the same time as eating tacos detracts from the taco-eating experience. But for me, I work best when I have everything I need around me and I can jump between tasks as they call to me.

Works Cited

“Uptake Terms.” ISU Writing Program, <https://www.isuwriting.com/uptake-terms>. Accessed 4 Nov. 2024.

Kate Fortner is pursuing her MA in children’s literature and women’s, gender, and sexuality studies at Illinois State University. Her favorite books are usually about fairy tales and myths. She refuses to believe Wyoming is a real place, and she’s probably considering taking a nap right now.



Notes



Drawing by Grace Betts