

CHAPTER 3

A GUIDE TO THE STYLE GUIDES

Academic writing, like university teaching, is what sociologist Paul Trowler calls a “recurrent practice,” one of the many routine tasks that most academics perform “habitually and in an unconsidered way,” with little thought as to how or why things might be done differently: “It is simply taken for granted that this is what we do around here.”¹ In recent years, with the advent of Preparing Future Faculty programs in the United States and faculty teaching certificates elsewhere, pedagogical training for academics has become something less of a novelty than it used to be. However, many early career academics still experience some version of the situation that I faced two decades ago when, freshly minted PhD in hand, I walked into my new department and was immediately presented with a list of the courses I had been assigned to teach in my first year. With no educational training and no explicitly developed pedagogical principles to call upon, I cobbled together courses that looked more or less exactly like the ones I had enrolled in as an undergraduate, and I delivered them in just the same way that they had been delivered to me, right down to the structure of my lectures and the wording of my exams. Occasionally I glanced around my department to see what my colleagues were up to; reassuringly, their practices mostly mirrored my own. Not until many years later did I discover that my university library was