



### **Discussion Sections in Research Articles (RAs) in English: A Rhetorical Moves<sup>1</sup> Model.**

(Adapted from: Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; and Hopkins, A. & Dudley-Evans, T. (1988). A genre-based investigation of the discussion sections in articles and dissertations. *English for Specific Purposes*, 7(2), 113–121.)

NOTE: In RAs that use the IMRaD macro-structure to organize the research article (Introduction-Methods-Results-and-Discussion), the moves often occur in cycles. Keep in mind that the IMRaD structure and cyclical moves seem to be discipline specific.

#### **MOVE 1. Background Information.**

This move can occur at any point in the cycle and may include a return to key concepts and terminology, theoretical frameworks, or technical information introduced earlier in the RA. Sometimes writers make this move to help readers transition between sections (e.g., from Results to Discussion).

#### **MOVE 2. Statement of Results.**

*This move is obligatory* and often starts a cycle: writers often report the most significant results in the first cycle and less significant results in subsequent cycles.

#### **MOVE 3. Reference to Previous Research.**

In this move, writers compare results with those reported in the literature. Two common sub-types of reference to previous research are *comparison* of previous research with present research and *support* of previous research for present research. That said, keep in mind that writers refer to previous research in RAs for multiple and complex reasons and those reasons vary depending on the section of the RA.

#### **MOVE 4. Explanation.**

Here, writers may suggest reasons for a surprising result, or reasons for a result that differs from those reviewed in the literature.

#### **MOVE 5. Exemplification.**

In this move, writers give an example to support or exemplify the explanation. NOTE: In this course, according to best practices, the discourse analytic methods compel you to provide sufficient data extracts to support explanations, analysis, and findings.

#### **MOVE 6. Hypothesis.**

In this discipline-specific move, the writers may make a generalizable claim arising from results.

#### **MOVE 7. Recommendation.**

Here, writers suggest future research. While the current research responds to the research gap/knowledge deficit or problem identified in the Introduction, in this move writers identify a new research gap. As a way to identify future research possibilities, consider the relationship between the study's limitations.

#### **MOVE 8. Justification.**

In this move, writers justify the need for future research. In some disciplines, this may occur as a call-to-action, and the call-to-action might take the form of an obligation on the part of the research community to carry out future work (e.g., “future research *must* address x, y, and z”).

<sup>1</sup> The term “move” refers to a segment of text (e.g., background context; literature review; research question, problem, or hypothesis; and so on) with a particular purpose or function.