Read the sample introduction below and highlight/underline/mark any transitions, signal phrases, and other coherence "moves" within and between paragraphs. How do these rhetorical moves affect your understanding of how the different parts (or ideas) in the introduction are related to each other?

**Introduction**

The notion that workplace writing is a complex, recursive, intertextual, and collaborative process is widely accepted: It has been demonstrated in numerous studies in different fields and workplaces, ranging from engineering (Winsor, 2003) to banking (Smart, 2006). Yet every discipline and profession has its own way of constructing knowledge, drawing upon different genre configurations, and employing different pat- terns of interaction to achieve its particular goals. This article looks at writing practices in the PR industry, a relatively under-researched area whose textual practices, particularly relating to the construction of press releases, are characterized by what Jacobs (2006) refers to as a special "participation framework" (p. 200). Specifically the article looks at the processes involved in the construction and pitching of press releases, and considers the demands that these processes make on practitioners, particularly newcomers to the PR industry. The central role that the press release plays in the activities of the public relations industry, along with its complexity as a text type, makes it an object of considerable potential interest to researchers of writing practices in that industry. Since Jacobs's (1999) groundbreaking study of the ways in which these texts are preformulated, a small but growing number of studies has appeared investigating the nature of press releases and the processes surrounding their construction.

The complexity of the press release rests in the different communicative purposes and multiple receiver roles that are associated with it as a text type (Catenaccio, 2008). The fact that a press release is intended to meet several communicative goals is dis- cussed by Lindholm

(2008), who cites Jacobs in this regard: "press releases are meant for different audiences and, naturally, they are also supposed to do different things to them" (1999, p. 22). Indeed, the multipurpose nature of the press release has led to considerable discussion as to its exact nature—whether it is a hybrid genre (Catenaccio, 2008; McLaren & Gurău, 2005) or a media channel (Lassen, 2006). As for the issue of multiple readers, this is addressed by Jacobs: Drawing together research in the area, he contends that the genre of the press release is characterized by a special "participation framework," as noted above, whereby the target audience is a "more general reading public" as well as journalists, resulting in "a kind of indirectly targeted, projected dis- course" (2006, p. 200).

Thus the press release, with its different purposes and audiences, presents particular challenges for PR practitioners, warranting research studies that investigate the pro- cesses involved in the writing of press releases and also that consider the demands made on participants in these processes. Much research has focused on the texts and their generic features (e.g., McLaren & Gurău, 2005; Tench, 2003), in some cases alongside the contributing contextual factors (e.g., Catenaccio, 2008; Lindholm, 2008). Other studies have considered specific aspects of press releases: Jacobs (1999), as mentioned earlier, looked at the issue of preformulation, a practice he explains in a later article whereby the language of press releases is worked into "a news style that requires little or no reworking on the part of the journalists who receive them" (Jacobs, 2006, p. 201). Another point of focus is the use of pseudo-quotes (Sleurs, Jacobs, & Van Waes, 2003), the construction of direct speech that is attributed to a participant in the reported process, where the words are "almost certainly not verbalised by the named source" (Bell, 1991, p. 60). Other aspects of press releases that have been examined include the intertextual nature of the process by which they are constructed (Pander Maat, 2008; Sleurs et al., 2003), the influence

of the Internet on the way in which they are formulated (Strobbe & Jacobs, 2005), and how promotional language is dealt with when the releases are reused by journalists (Pander Maat, 2007, 2008).

As can be seen, the focus in these studies is largely on the textual product. Certain more recent studies, however, have turned their attention to the processes involved in writing press releases. Sleurs et al. (2003) explain what they call the "life-cycle" of a press release: the client briefing, the process of writing the release, sending it out to the media, the relationship with the journalist, and how it appears in the media; those studies that have attended to the process of press release production have focused on different stages of this life cycle. In their research, Sleurs et al. investigated the construction of pseudo-quotations and the role they have to play in terms of preformulation. Their case study focused on the activities and insights of a professional writer in a small PR agency, and they employed a multidimensional methodology, combining ethnographic fieldwork with methods associated with cognitive psychology, including think-aloud protocols and the online recording of the writing process. Their conclusions suggest that "pre-formulation plays a double role" (2003, p. 209) in that the writer is trying to anticipate what the journalists will do with his work and to satisfy the expectations of his client.

Other studies have been concerned with later stages in the life cycle of the press release. Pander Maat, working with corpora of press releases, looks at how promotional language is dealt with by journalists (2007) and at the transformations made in the newsroom in the light of the issue of potential genre conflict (2008). Finally, Van Hout and Jacobs (2008), combining ethnography with computer-assisted writing pro- cess analysis, conducted a study with a focus on an individual journalist's activities as he worked on the transformation of press releases into news reports.

There is, then, a growing body of research into press releases, providing insights into both their generic structure and other features, and the ways in which practitioners go about writing them. However, as explained above, the few studies that have concerned themselves with the processes of writing press releases have either focused on very specific aspects of the process, or have looked at activity in the newsroom.

This study follows the course of events as a PR company undertook a promotional brief for a client. It differs from previous research in two respects: firstly, it adopts a broader perspective, examining not just the role and construction of the press release itself, but also the processes leading up to the writing of the press release and the activities involved in pitching the story to the media. Taking the position, alluded to in the introduction, that writing is a complex, recursive, intertextual, and collaborative process, the study seeks to examine how these elements of workplace writing activity play out in a PR setting, looking specifically at the ways in which genres come together to achieve particular goals, the ways in which they are linked intertextually, and the collaborative patterns of interaction that are seen during the process.

Bremner, S. (2014). Genres and processes in the PR industry: Behind the scenes with an intern writer. *International Journal of Business Communication (51)*3, 259–278.