

Citation sandwich: The thicker the bread around the meat, the stronger and more authoritative your writing.

(1) After describing her fourth grade son’s humorous and somewhat subversive response to an assignment and his teacher’s lack of acknowledgement for his response, Pratt draws a connection to the lack of response Guaman Poma received from the King of Spain. **(2)** She then poses a question for her audience: “What is the place of unsolicited discourse, parody, resistance, critique in the imagined classroom community?” (366) **(3)** The phrase “imagined classroom community,” of course, is an extension of Benedict Anderson’s utopic concept of “imagined communities.” Pratt borrows this concept to contrast with her notion of the contact zone. She seems to suggest that there is no place for responses like Manuel’s and Guaman Poma’s when the educational goal is a homogenizing assimilation of “others” into the dominant discourse. In borrowing Anderson’s concept of imagined community, she also shows that such attempts to create this community might be futile, since such a community can never really exist. **(4)** Pratt then asks her audience (who were most likely university professors at the time) to consider who wins and who loses when we try to mold our students to our ways of thinking and acting. In other words, what happens when we try to impose the ideology of an “imagined” community on to the very real space that is the contact zone? She wonders if teachers really feel “more successful” when they have “united the social world, probably in their own image” (366). **(5)** Obviously, Pratt believes the answer to this question should be “no.” Rather than seeing the classroom as some kind of imagined community where everyone (should) share the same perspective, Pratt argues that we need to see the classroom space as a contact zone, where many kinds of perspectives are possible and where everyone—no matter what their position of power—can potentially learn from everyone else. In this space, everyone’s perspective has the potential to be ratified. At the same time, every perspective is equally at risk of being questioned and transformed through a process of “transculturation.” **(6)** She defines transculturation as a “process whereby members of a subordinated group select and invent materials transmitted by a dominant or metropolitan culture”(361). She has illustrated what this process looks like with her examples of her son and Guaman Poma. Manuel makes his teacher’s assignment his own and Guaman Poma selectively borrows from Spanish culture in his letter to the King of Spain and then re-shapes that information for his own purposes. **(7)** Pratt’s ideas are in contrast to the kind of classroom that Mark Edmundson imagines in his essay, “The Uses of a Liberal Arts Education.” Edmundson is critical of the “uses” his students make of the information he wants them to learn. . . **(8)** And so on. . .

1. *Lead in to the citation. Often it’s helpful to situate the citation in terms of the larger essay. What is the context for Pratt asking this question? I’m assuming I already introduced the name of the essay and Pratt’s full name earlier, so I only need to use her last name here.*
2. *I introduce the actual quotation with a colon because it’s a formal introduction and the quote forms its own complete sentence.*
3. *I establish my authority by showing my careful reading of Pratt and explaining what she means and how I am reading this passage. This part also serves to enlighten readers who may not be as familiar with the texts I am citing. (And I furthermore try to impress the teacher for showing her I have recognized the forwarding moves Pratt is making ☺).*
4. *Rather than quote the second question in its entirety, I weave bits of Pratt’s language into my own sentences and paraphrase the rest. (If this were the first time that I had mentioned “contact zone,” I would need to define the term).*
5. *Here I am coming to terms with Pratt’s overall idea in this essay, suggesting what I see as her ultimate point . Notice that I also borrow concepts from the Reading as risk and ratification handout and extend their use to this context.*
6. *I have to define transculturation for my readers and then show that I understand the concept.*
7. *Now, I am going to bring Pratt’s ideas in conversation with some of the ideas in Edmundson’s essay. I would go on to give specific examples from Edmundson’s essay that shows the differences I see.*
8. *After showing the distinctions I want to highlight, I can then go on to add some ideas of my own. Perhaps talking about why Edmundson and Pratt see things differently (e.g., what do their different perspectives make visible? Or maybe Edmundson’s reluctance to put his own views at risk) Then, perhaps I can use these distinctions to add something new to the conversation. I can discuss what I can see from my cultural perspective and how that perspective opens up some new line of thinking for readers. . .*