

“Literary Journal Swales Discourse  
Communities Summary”

In Swales’ excerpt on Discourse Communities he initiates the passage by describing what the purpose of a discourse community is and also how this “Social View” of writing came about. Swales then discussed discourse communities as something viable to the well being of particular social group’s knowledge base. Swales concluded the excerpt by going into detail of discourse communities and examples of different types such as non-scholastic and those without a worldly or worldwide view.

“Literary Journal Swales Discourse  
Communities Analysis.”

As I read the beginning paragraph of Swales’ essay, I had a very rudimentary idea of what a discourse community was; my idea was “A group that all are of a specific literacy communicating between each other”. Though this provided me with a very basic understanding of the word I found myself lost of concept. This made reading the beginning of the article quite difficult. Once Swales quoted Hertzberg I took in the concept of discourse communities a little more. He described it as a cluster of ideas that people use language to form a social behavior around these ideas. For example, English scholarly communities gather to exchange thoughts and extend the group’s knowledge base. The definition of discourse communities was explain by Swales as not clearly defined as of yet. There seemed to be many gray areas surrounding new members and old members make things more streamline, tangible, real, or as Swales said reifies particular values or beliefs.

Throughout the middle of the passage the essay became a type of investigation of discourse communities and a call to attention of the public to advocate a better way to as Swales put it “clarify, for procedural purposes what is to be understood by discourse community, and set a criteria that would eliminate the marginal blurred controversial contenders. He explained that “strong criteria” would avoid the circularity problem. To be honest, I was quite sure what the author meant by “circularity problem” however I would

describe it as a flaw in the passage of information. Often times the details of information passed along is skewed as it's rephrased reapplied to different contexts and passed along once again. Swales then elaborated on this as he talked about Speech communities. He specifically discussed the rules and interpretation of speech within a discourse community.

The passage began to become overwhelmingly complex at the end during Swales example of Discourse community. It seemed as if the author now assumed that is readers should be fully grounded in the concept of his subject, discourse community, so he could go and talk about a personal experience and expect the reader to knowledgably follow. I followed to my best ability, but one thing I didn't understand was the both complexity of the concept and it's application to the world as in actual careers and jobs. Basically I got a bunch of explanations about how to make discourse communities more specific and particular and clear but came out, puzzled with all these jumbled explanations.