

This is transcript for Nancy Small's interview for Inventio in 5, published in *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*, 28(1), available at <https://kairos.technorhetoric.net/28.1/inventio/index.html#small>

Small Inventio in 5 Descriptive Transcript

0:05

Rich Shivener

Hi, everyone, I'm Rich Shivener.

[Title slide reads: "Inventio in 5: A Kairos Mini Series. Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy"]

0:07

Liz Chamberlain

And I'm Liz Chamberlain. We're co-editors of Inventio. We're serious about the "how" of digital media scholarship. In Inventio, authors interrogate how their digital scholarship came to be.

[A split-screen Zoom shows Rich Shivener and Liz Chamberlain in their home offices. Each waves at the camera.]

0:16

Rich Shivener

And as Inventio editors, we invite you to participate in this series. Reach out to us anytime at the Kairos email listed below. We also plan to reach out to more authors as the series continues. Until then, thanks for watching.

[An introductory title slide features a brief description of Nancy Small ("Nancy Small is an Associate Professor for the English Department at the University of Wyoming. Nancy studies how everyday storytelling constructs our shared lifeworlds.") and a screenshot from her Kairos webtext, "Reading for the Weaver."

A question slide says, "What did the prep stage look like?"]

[Then, on a recorded Zoom, Nancy speaks to the camera. She is wearing a black sweater and is seated in an office with a bookcase and several pieces of art behind her.]

0:50

Nancy Small

So for the prep stage particularly for this article for Kairos, for "Reading for the Weaver," it was complicated beyond the typical phases of the process.

Of course there was lots of research, and it was across multiple areas.

And a lot in terms of research ethics, so I was trying to keep my mind in lots of different places at once as I prepared the article.

[At "lots of different places at once," she draws a circle with her hand in the air.]

But I think one of the things that made writing it most challenging was my status as an outsider

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within. And so, to begin with, I was a visitor in the cultural spaces that I was studying, because I'm white, Western, so I tried just to live in a space where I can't forget that.

[At "white, Western," she raises both hands, fingers outstretched, palms facing herself, and gestures down her face and upper body.]

I really wanted to do all I could to honour the women weavers themselves that I talk about in the article, so it was trying to juggle all those things, plus, I was so privileged to work with my friend and my kind of mentor in these spaces, a gentleman named Riyaz Bhat.

[At "so privileged," she brings her hands together, first clasped, and then in prayer.]

He has a whole page about him in the article itself.

[Video cuts briefly to a screen recording scrolling the page from the article about Riyaz. The page features a photo of Nancy and Riyaz together in front of a rug, as well as a written pattern for the rug they were holding.]

So I spent lots of time sitting with him. I would just be listening and learning. So I was very much a student, not just in the areas of scholarship, but in like the whole big topic that I was covering.

So it was more than a typical kind of research project. It was complicated for me.

[A title slide reads, "How did working with another person affect your process?"]

2:24

Nancy Small

I moved to Wyoming from Qatar in 2016, mid-2016, and so Riyaz and I were then separated by all this time and distance, so I had consulted with him.

My goal was always *Kairos*. That was my first, like, "this is where I want it published," and it's because I just think it's a beautiful online journal. But I knew that it might not get accepted, so he knew I was going to write something, a webtext, or an article, and so then, I think, because he also there's a reciprocal respect there, it wasn't collaborative writing in the sense of us sending manuscripts back and forth during development.

I sent him one late in the process, when it was out, I think, for second tier review, just to make sure that I hadn't misrepresented anything in a kind of nuanced way.

So in terms of the writing process with him, he was very gracious. So we're more collegial rather than hierarchical in that kind of way.

[At "collegial," Nancy brings her hands in front of her body and interlaces her fingers. At "hierarchical," she curls her fingers in a C-shape and lifts one hand above the other.]

[A title slide reads, "What does your composing environment look like?"]

3:28

Nancy Small

So what I've learned is, it has to be super quiet and still. It's really easy for me to

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get distracted, so I turn off everything.

I turn off email, social media. I put my phone on silent. And I really love to work for long stretches when I can get them. 6 to 8 hours is probably ideal. 4 hours is okay, but 10 hours, if I'm well fed and well rested, then 10 hours is really awesome.

[Title slide reads, "How has your composing process evolved throughout the years?"]

4:02

Nancy Small

One of the major ways that my process has evolved as I've become this, you know, like reasonably sufficient but I totally don't think myself as an expert, is I've had to learn a lot about the difference between graduate school writing and inhabiting that space of expert.

[As Nancy searches for the words "reasonably sufficient," she gestures with one hand, palm down, in circles on the side of her body.

At "expert," she makes air quotes with her index and middle fingers.]

I use the quotes because that doesn't mean I feel like an expert, but it means when people are reading me, I assume that they're like viewing me in that way. Otherwise I wouldn't be published.

It's been liberating to learn the difference between writing as a grad student where you have to basically trace almost everything you say, unless you're analyzing fresh data, to previous conversations.

Whereas, when you start to write as an expert, what you're really doing is you're cultivating your source engagements a lot more carefully, which is as I said, it's liberating, but it's also a bit of a of a political process which can feel fraught like.

Like who am I citing? Why have I chosen these people? How am I gonna amplify and elevate them? Or who am I responding to and what's the tone with which I'm doing that?

So, my process, I think, has evolved from one of not ticking the boxes, but one of making sure I'm accountable to my professors and the discipline, into thinking more about how I'm broadly ethical and accountable to the conversation.

[Title slide reads, "Is there anything that you'd do differently concerning composition?"]

5:33

Nancy Small

I think right now I would say no. I feel like it developed with some really key input from the reviewers which made me super happy. So my development process it's hard to imagine pre-review, it being any different, and then the reviewers were just so wonderful.

So through their help, as well as trying to be very purposeful and careful in my crafting, I'm pretty happy with how it went. What will be interesting will be if I'm lucky enough to have other scholars engage with my work over the next few years, and see how it has been received by those readers, which is also a powerful position to be the readers.

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Then ask me in 3 or 4 years, and if I'm lucky enough to have had engagement, I might be like oh, I can see now what I should have been doing a little differently.

[Nancy smiles and laughs as she finishes this sentence.]

[Title slide reads, "How did organizational considerations fit into your process?"]

6:35

Nancy Small

That part of the arrangement and organizing process... I wouldn't say it was hard, but it was of those like "can I make sure I'm not leaving something out?"

[At "arrangement and organizing," she gestures with palms face down, as if moving things in the air.]

Like if I kind of come up with these page containers like, Riyaz needs a page because I definitely wanted to foreground him and not just have him woven in. Well, the method, you have that IMRAD structure—introduction, methods, results and discussion, and then conclusions.

[She punctuates the name of each IMRAD section with a face-down palm gesture, as if slotting the sections into a filing system.]

That's kind of the basic thing that's there.

But then there were parts like, there's the lit review of being a maker of material culture, of material rhetoric, of material technologies, like the section where I mentioned Angela Haas and her work, and so it's like you had to take the lit review and kind of break it into there's this, but then there's also the lit review about tribal rugs as a commodified, documented thing through tribal rug books, and then the information about the tribes.

So in some ways I didn't realize this when I was so focused on Kairos, I focus on Kairos because of the beautiful visual nature of the online journal.

But it also liberated me to fully account for those areas of knowledge that I needed as the kind of foundation before I could move forward.

I tried hard to make it where you could read it in different orders, and as your curiosities were different.

It gave me the space to be accountable for a lot, but then I had to ask, like invite the reader to be accountable for a lot too.

[Closing slide reads: "Edited by: Leah Ciani, Chante Douglas. Music credit: 'Lo-Fi Chill Hip Hop | Chilling' by Alex Productions"]