

CSC: CoR: Chapter 10: Acknowledgement and Responses

The 10 salient sentence strings presented below are lifted from the chapter as is, without modification (except, perhaps, for a bit of punctuation here or there). They are presented in order of appearance in the chapter.

Ten Salient Sentence Strings

1. To craft a successful argument, you must do more than assemble a sound edifice of claims, reasons, and evidence; you must also position those claims as contributions to and ongoing conversation in which your readers are invested.
2. They may question its *intrinsic* soundness by challenging the clarity of your claim, the relevance of your reasons, or the quality of your evidence.
3. They may question its *extrinsic* soundness by asking you to consider alternatives – different ways of framing the problem, evidence you have overlooked, or what others have written on your topic.
4. For this exercise, you may want to suspend your conception of argument as collaborative inquiry and imagine it not quite as warfare, but as something close to a warm debate. View your argument through the eyes of someone who has stake in a different outcome, someone who *wants* you to be wrong.
5. Show readers that you put your arguments through your own wringer before they put it through theirs.
6. Acknowledge too many and you distract your readers from the core of your argument; acknowledge too few and you seem indifferent to or even ignorant of their views. You need to figure out how many acknowledgments will feel “just right.”
7. If you discover a flaw in your argument that you cannot fix or explain away, try to redefine your problem or rebuild your argument to avoid it.
8. Experienced researchers and teachers understand that no argument is unassailable and that any one version of the truth is complicated and always contestable.
9. Only experience can teach you how to find this balance. So notice how experts achieve it and do likewise.
10. You have to decide how blunt your response should be. If an alternative seems obviously flawed, say so, but focus on the work rather than the person.