

Report & Portfolio Development

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Entry TC-003 — YouTube: Dr. Alianna J. Maren

Source Metadata

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Title	Three Keys to Crafting a Compelling Research Paper: Series Intro
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Curator	Dr. Alianna J. Maren / Claude (Anthropic) — see Assessment below
Themesis Cross-Reference	Program overview for TC-002 through TC-009. Follows TC-002 (series opener). Directly supports AI Portfolio Coach Gates 3–11. (Writing Your Research Paper playlist). Directly supports AI Portfolio Coach Gates 3–11.

Curator's Assessment

This assessment was developed collaboratively by Dr. Alianna J. Maren and Claude (Anthropic) on March 5, 2026, in the context of building the Themesis Report & Portfolio Development repository. It represents an informed but not exhaustive reading of the transcript and should be updated as the repository evolves.

"There's this little hidden code book of tips, techniques, and little tricks that make your paper stand out, gain reader attention, and establish you as a very respectable, authoritative person in your field — and maybe nobody's been telling you."

What This Video Gets Exactly Right

This two-and-a-half minute video is not a content lecture — it is a framing device, and it performs that function with precision. Dr. Maren opens by naming the frustration that most research writers feel but rarely articulate: the sense that there is a hidden code governing what makes a paper taken seriously, and that no one has explicitly shared that code with them. That opening is immediately disarming and motivating. It positions what follows — the entire Writing Your Research Paper series — as an act of insider knowledge transfer, not academic instruction.

The three-part structure introduced here is pedagogically well-designed: organization, visual communication, and references. These are not arbitrary categories — they map directly onto the three ways a reader encounters a research paper before they read a single word of the body text. A reader first scans structure (does this paper know what it is doing?), then visuals (is there something here worth stopping for?), then references (does this author know their field?). The sequence is the reader's sequence, not the writer's sequence — and that distinction matters.

The framing device of storytelling as the unifying theme across all three areas is exactly right, and it is the key insight that elevates this series above conventional academic writing guidance. Organization is story structure. Visuals are story illustration. References are story context. A research paper that fails to tell a story is a research paper that fails to be read — and most research papers fail in precisely this way.

The acknowledgment that this framework applies not just to students but to anyone seeking journal publication, grant funding, or professional recognition is also important. It signals to students that they are not learning a school skill — they are learning a professional skill that will serve them for the rest of their careers.

Where Additional Nuance Is Warranted

As a series introduction, this video is appropriately brief and does not develop any of its three themes in depth. The curator's note here is simply that the three themes — organization, visuals, references — must be understood as deeply interdependent, not as sequential tasks. A student who completes the organization gate and then treats visuals as a separate later problem will produce a paper where the visuals feel appended rather than integrated. The storytelling frame is the connective tissue, and it should be invoked explicitly in each Gate conversation to remind students that every decision they make is in service of the same narrative arc.

The video was produced in August 2020 — prior to the current AI portfolio context. The guidance is entirely durable, but students should understand that the professional stakes described here (making yourself credible to colleagues, clients, and employers) are heightened in the current AI landscape, where the ability to produce clear, well-structured technical communication is itself a professional differentiator.

Relevance to the AI Portfolio Coach Gate Framework

TC-003 is the program overview that contextualizes all subsequent content Gates. Its primary value in the repository is threefold:

- It establishes the storytelling frame that should be invoked throughout Gates 3–11, giving Claude a consistent vocabulary for connecting individual section-level feedback to the larger arc of the paper.
- It names the three pillars — organization, visuals, references — that map respectively onto Gates 3–8 (organization and content), Gate 11 (visual storytelling), and Gate 4 (Literature Review and references).
- It can be referenced directly in Gate 3 onboarding to orient the student: before we look at your Introduction, let's establish the frame we'll use throughout all our content sessions together.

CURATOR'S NOTE — Update trigger: *This entry is a series introduction and is unlikely to require content updates. Review if the Gate framework is significantly restructured or if the three-pillar organization/visuals/references model is revised in subsequent Themesis content.*

Full Transcript

Transcript captured from YouTube auto-captions. Timestamp markers preserved. Minor punctuation added for readability. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mIPEV8vKqp0>

Opening — The Hidden Code Book [0:00]

Are you developing a research paper? It could be a thesis or dissertation, it could be a paper to publish in a journal, it could be something that's due as a class project. And are you finding yourself frustrated by that sense that you have — knowing that there's this little hidden code book of tips, techniques, little tricks that make your paper stand out, gain reader attention, and just establish yourself as a very respectable, authoritative even, person in your field — but maybe nobody's been telling you? If so, stay with me.

Introduction — Dr. AJ and the Series [0:36]

I'm Dr. Alianna J. Maren, otherwise known as Dr. AJ. This video series is typically artificial intelligence focused, but right now we're taking a short sidebar into developing research papers. Now, you know if I show up wearing black it means one of two things — we're either discussing COVID mortality statistics, or we're looking at the rubrics guiding grading. And this is not just for students. This actually is something that's in the back of the minds of editors and reviewers when you're putting together a journal paper, or something that would be read by somebody that you're trying to convince to accept your work, to grant you funding, to take your work to the next level — that kind of thing. So it's very important.

The Three Keys — Organization, Visuals, References [1:29]

There are things that will help you. So in a series of three videos we're going to discuss: first of all, organization of your report or paper; secondly, we'll look at what can you do visually to capture your audience's attention and keep them moving along; and third, how do you use references. In each of these cases, the key theme that holds all of this together is the notion of storytelling.

The Series Structure [2:00]

We'll address each of these in a series of short videos — a whole series dedicated to each. We'll look at report organization, gaining your users' attention with great visuals, and creating a community perspective and context for your work using references. Thanks for joining me — see you in the next videos.