Demystifying

Academic Writing for Research

EDITOR

TAPOSH GHOSHAL

Dev Sangha Institute of Professional Studies
and Educational Research

Dev Sangha, Bompas Town, Deoghar, Jharkhand - 814114

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—Asim Kumar Chatterjee,
Secretary,
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The book is dedicated to

Shrimat Saumyendra Nath Brahmachary

Founder Chairman, Dev Sangha Seva Pratishthan,

to enliven the spirit of enquiry, thinking and writing on a research based foundation.

Preface

Academic writing is a critical aspect of research and is often perceived as a daunting process. Researchers often have difficult times in communicating their ideas effectively in writing academic discourses, and this can be a major obstacle to achieving success in academia. Writing is an innate skill that can be developed with appropriate guidance and practice and it is imperative that academic writing is a specific realm that requires constant honing and finesse.

Considering that academic writing is a specialised ability that can be developed over time, a National Workshop on "Demystifying Academic Writing for Research", was organised at Dev Sangha Institute of Professional Studies and Educational Research, Deoghar recently. The workshop aimed at enhancing the academic writing skills of participants by sensitising them to the fundamentals of writing for research and explore ways to develop skills for writing, literature review, use of IT tools and statistical analysis, develop academic papers, reports or thesis and publishing it in renowned journals and was addressed by eminent professors on the subject. It also covered ethical dimensions of academic writing and the issue of plagiarism in detail.

The valuable discussions on the subject led to the creation of a compendium of thoughts in the form of this edited book, that will help in disseminating the knowledge shared in the workshop by learned resource persons, to a wider audience. Accordingly, the essence of the lectures delivered by the erudite resource persons and other learned speakers were compiled, detailed, and collated in the form of an edited book, *Demystifying Academic Writing for Research.*

The goal of this book is to provide practical guidance for researchers, scholars and teachers who are looking to advance their writing skills. The book describes different topics discussed in the workshop in detail and narrates the nuances on the subject. Drawing on the insights of renowned academics and my own experience as a researcher and writer, the book covers a wide range of topics, including the essentials of academic writing, planning and structuring a paper, writing clear and succinct sentences, incorporating evidence and citations, and revising and editing the work effectively. In addition to providing practical guidance, this book also emphasises the importance of developing a writing practice that works for the scholars. It also provides clear guidance on the various aspects of academic writing, including outlining, structuring, and formatting can help researchers improve clarity, coherence, organisation of their writing.

The book shall provide guidance on how to effectively communicate research findings to a broader audience through conference presentations and journal articles. This can be particularly important for researchers who are seeking to publish their research in high-impact journals or who are looking to disseminate their research findings to policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders.

The book shall be highly relevant for it shall provide useful direction to researchers at all levels, from graduate students to established researchers, teachers as well as students with respect to developing the domain of academic writing.

The book shall be useful individuals who are just starting their academic writing journey or for those who are stressed to write effective research papers. Academic writing is a specialised skill that requires specific techniques and strategies to effectively communicate complex ideas and research findings.

Acknowledgement

The book is a humble tribute to express gratefulness and gratitude to the relentless hard work of one and all who have dedicated themselves to organise the highly educational National Workshop on 'Demystifying Academic Writing for Research' at Dev Sangha Institute of Professional Studies and Educational Research (DIPSER) during March 2023. An anthology on academic writing, the book is a reflection of valuable thoughts, concepts and practices shared by distinguished professors and others at the Workshop and bears definite imprint of the wonderful collaborative efforts put in by one and all in this enriching academic event.

First and foremost, our deep gratitude to Prof. Sudeep Ranjan Ghosh, Chairman, Dev Sangha Seva Pratishthan, Deoghar, for inspiring us constantly to organise a National Workshop on such an important subject and guiding us constantly in all aspects so that the workshop could be organised in the best possible manner. We also wish to extend our sincere gratitude to Shri Asim Kumar Chatterjee, Secretary, Dev Sangha Seva Pratishthan, Deoghar who stood with us always, guiding and supporting us in all possible ways and helping us in planning and executing the workshop so well.

We would like to extend our gratefulness and appreciation to all the erudite speakers – Prof. Samir Ranjan Adhikari, Dr. Subir Sen, Prof. Gautam Banerjee, Dr. Ranjan Chattaraj and others who shared their expertise and valuable insights with us. Their presentations were very informative and engaging and benefited the participants greatly. Our sincere thankfulness for their insights, expertise, and excellent deliberations.

Our sincere thanks goes to Dr. Babita Kumari, officiating Principal, DIPSER for her hard work and dedication in helping the different teams engaged in organising the workshop, bringing together outstanding speakers and participants and supporting all activities related to the Workshop. We extend our gratefulness to Dr. Kalpana Kumari, Asst. Professor, DIPSER for so effectively conducting the workshop and coordinating different aspects very proficiently. Our sincere thanks to Shri Bikash Chatterjee, Senior Public Relation Officer and his team for the excellent hospitality during the workshop.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all faculty members and other colleagues working in different teams for their hard work, remarkable teamwork, interaction, and shared understanding. They deserve all praise for their hard work and dedication and their contribution in shaping the workshop so well.

We would like to thank all the participants who attended the workshop. Their active participation and thoughtful contributions made this event a success. They are the reason the event was held in the first place, and their presence and active involvement made it a success. We thank them for their time and contributions.

We also wish to place our appreciation on record for all the students who participated in different activities of the workshop and worked hard to make the workshop a success and exhibited exemplary discipline, dedication and hard work and presented an excellent image of DIPSER.

Finally, we are grateful to the publisher, Excel India Publishers, New Delhi who worked tirelessly to bring this book to fruition. Their commitment to excellence and professionalism was instrumental in making this book a reality.

Thank you all for your support and encouragement. This book would not have been possible without you.

Taposh Ghoshal

"Academic Success Depends on Research and Publications."

—Philip Zimbardo
[Professor Emeritus at Stanford University]

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DELIBERATIONS

Academic Writing and its Significance

[Adapted from the welcome address by Shri Asim Kumar Chatterjee*]

*Secretary
Dev Sangha Seva Pratishthan, Deoghar

It is said that the art of writing is the art of discovering what you believe! Every secret of writer's soul, every experience of his life, every quality of his mind is written large in his works. This is true in the case of academic writing too. Academic writing is but the culmination of knowledge translated into words and thoughts reflected through expressions and penned down to depict the thinking of a vibrant mind based on logic, discussions and reason.

Academic writing is a crucial part of scholarly work, and its significance cannot be overstated. It allows researchers to share their findings, contributes to the body of knowledge in a given field, and gives direction to students and scholars to develop important premise and sharpen skills that are relevant across a wide range of disciplines.

It is well-known that academic writing belongs to a complex domain that is used in all facets of academics such as the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Fundamentally, the aim of academic writing is to communicate ideas and research findings in a clear, concise, and logical manner. Academic writing is eloquent and is characterised by its formal tone, use of evidence and reasoning, and adherence to specific style guidelines and citation formats. It is characterised by its objectivity, precision, clarity and correctness and thus is an important tool for advancing knowledge and contributing to scholarly discussions within a particular discipline.

Any academic enterprise, much so a deliberation on such a specialised field of knowledge as 'academic writing' is possible only when the combined creative thoughts of academia join together and converse on the myriad dimensions of the subject with eagerness, enthusiasm, and seriousness. The discussions by eminent academicians and scholars and dissemination of their valuable thoughts and ideas shall be the main aim of this Workshop. It is a delight to see so many teachers, scholars and students today, eager to enhance the skills and knowledge on academic writing. This academic exercise has been organised with the purpose of providing the participants with valuable insights and practical guidelines that will help to communicate ideas and thoughts effectively and confidently in the academic world through clear, precise, and logical academic writings. This

workshop has been designed to provide with practical skills and knowledge to improve academic writing abilities. Whether you are a student, scholar, or researcher, effective academic writing is essential for communicating your ideas and research findings.

During this workshop, resource persons will cover diverse topics related to academic writing, including structure, style, referencing, and more. One will have the opportunity to learn from experienced academics and writing experts, who will share their insights and best practices to help you enhance your writing skills. Through interactive discussions and examples, one will learn how to write effectively and confidently in the academic world.

DIPSER, in its quest for academic excellence, has always strive to enhance quality of creation of knowledge and its effective dissemination to the academic fraternity. Established in 2001 by Shrimat Saumyendra Nath Brahmachary, a Gold Medalist from IIT, Kharagpur (batch of 1968), and an eminent thought leader and former Acharya, Dev Sangha Ashram, Deoghar, DIPSER is continuously striving to enhance the quality of academics and this National Workshop is one more initiative in this regard. A leading academic institution for teachers' education at Deoghar, Jharkhand, Dev Sangha Institute of Professional Studies and Educational Research (DIPSER) is located amidst quaint surroundings and provides a healthy, pristine, and spiritual ambience conducive to learning.

The National Workshop shall provide valuable learnings for individuals looking to improve their writing skills in a scholarly context. The workshop shall elucidate specific set of conventions that differ from other forms of writing. These conventions can include using formal language, providing evidence-based arguments, and following a specific structure. A writing workshop shall help participants become familiar with these conventions and learn how to apply them to their own writing. The workshop shall also help in improving writing skills such as techniques for organising ideas, improving grammar and syntax, and effectively communicating their ideas to an audience.

Academic writing often requires a significant amount of research. The writing workshop shall provide participants with tips on conducting research effectively, such as how to locate relevant sources, evaluate their credibility, and integrate them into their writing. In addition, the deliberations shall also provide opportunity to receive feedback on your writing from peers and experts in the field. This feedback can help you identify areas for improvement and refine your writing skills.

The National Workshop shall help to build a writing community also. Writing can often be a solitary activity, but an academic writing workshop can provide

an opportunity to connect with other writers and build a community of support. This community can provide encouragement, feedback, and opportunities for collaboration. Overall, an academic writing workshop is expected to help participants develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to produce high-quality academic writing that effectively communicates their ideas to their intended audience.

It is hoped that by the end of this workshop, participants will feel more confident and empowered to tackle your academic writing tasks with ease. So, let's get started and make the most of this opportunity to improve our academic writing skills. Thank you for joining us today and I wish you all a productive and engaging workshop.

About the Workshop

[Adapted from the Brief introducing the theme of the Workshop]
Dr. Kalpana Kumari*

**Assistant Professor*
Dev Sangha Institute of Professional Studies and Educational Research, Deoghar

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching and research are two important aspects of academia that go hand in hand. Teaching involves imparting knowledge and skills to students, while research involves systematic investigation of a particular topic to generate new knowledge and understanding.

Teachers in academia are responsible for designing and delivering lectures, developing course materials, assessing student performance, and providing feedback to students. They are also responsible for ensuring that their students have a solid understanding of the concepts they teach, and that they are able to apply these concepts to real-world problems.

Researchers, on the other hand, are responsible for generating new knowledge through experimentation, data analysis, and critical thinking. They often work on topics that have not been explored before, and their work can have a significant impact on society. Researchers may also be responsible for obtaining funding, collaborating with other researchers, and publishing their findings in academic journals.

In many universities, there is a close relationship between teaching and research. Professors who are actively involved in research are often better equipped to teach their students about the latest developments in their field. They can also incorporate their research into their teaching, which can make their classes more engaging and relevant

Taking this perspective forward and aligning them as essential aspects of academics, teaching and research complement each other; they should be synthesised to bring in relevance to the academic activity in the research. For undergoing high-quality research and writing good research papers, one requires creation of a new body of knowledge by collecting and interpreting logical arguments and necessary information. The art of drawing coherent conclusions, supported by appropriate research tools and reference citation is vital for quality research work.

ABOUT THE SUBJECT

Academic writing for research is concerned with the creation and dissemination of 'reliable' knowledge, respecting different ways of life, and knowing and safeguarding the freedom of expression. It refers to a style of expression that researchers use to exploration of intellectual vistas of their disciplines and specific areas of expertise.

Academic writing differs from other types of writing such as journalistic or creative writing. In most forms of academic writing a detached and objective approach is required. An academic argument appeals to logic and provides evidence in support of an intellectual position. It is important to present one's opinions in logical order and to arrive at conclusions.

Characteristics of academic writing include a formal tone, use of the third-person rather than first-person perspective (usually), a clear focus on the research problem under investigation, and precise word choice. Academic writing is designed to convey the agreed meaning about complex ideas or concepts that defines newer limits of knowledge.

Unlike other forms of writing, the overall structure of academic writing is formal and logical. It must be cohesive and possess a logically organised flow of ideas; this means that the various parts are connected to form a unified whole. There should be narrative links between sentences and paragraphs so that the reader is able to follow your argument.

Academic writing, when used appropriately, presents a polished and professional image and encompass strong composition, excellent grammar, and a consistent stylistic approach, providing proper credits and references. This workshop is designed for students, young scholars and independent researchers in teachers' education, humanities and social sciences who wish to enhance their academic writing skills necessary for excelling in the field of academics.

ACADEMIC WRITING AND ITS NUANCES

This need to enhance academic writing skills of students and scholars being an important facet of academics, a conscious attempt is made to expose them to formal exercise in this area. This is done by engaging them to prescribed academic writing usually by sensitising them to the essentials of writing for research that would help them to advance their academic writings, the ultimate goal being to further propagation of knowledge through quality research papers/dissertations/ academic papers.

There is always an attempt by the academic fraternity to continually enhance their knowledge and academic writing presents a potent means to purse the quest for learning very effectively. Inputs on academic writing not only would provide a good forum for sharing one's own research or exploratory studies, it would also help to evaluate issues and arrives in an objective manner; a position that focuses on and is informed by research and reasoning rather than personal feelings and opinions.

THE FOCUS AREAS

This workshop aims to explore the ways of developing skills for presenting a convincing and cohesive argument, creating a logical structure, and achieving coherence and interconnection between and within the text. Structure your ideas to write clearer sentences and more cohesive paragraphs. The book will be helpful to the readers in honing their academic writing style characterised by precise, concise, and formal language and write more persuasively and with nuance. The workshop also aimed at enhancing the academic writing skills of participants by sensitising them to the fundamentals of writing for research that would help them to advance their academic writings, the ultimate goal being to further propagation of knowledge through quality research papers/dissertations/academic papers. This workshop sought to explore the ways of developing skills for presenting a convincing and cohesive argument, creating a logical structure, and achieving coherence and interconnection between and within the text. Structure your ideas to write clearer sentences and more cohesive paragraphs.

The workshop presents and evaluates issues to arrive at an objective position that focusses on the nuances of academic writing based on research and reasoning rather than personal feelings and opinions. The objectives of this workshop are:

- To develop writing skills for research by integrating writing and thoughts in a rational manner.
- To acquire concepts, principles and vocabulary of reasoning and argumentation and use, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation to advance arguments.
- To acquire the correct sense of format, syntax, grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Choice of the topic, methods and models, analysis and empirical results, limitations, reference, formatting MLA/APA style, and Plagiarism

These objectives of the workshop have been set to enable the participants to explore the means to choose the area of interest for writing, collect literature from different bibliographical sources, communicate manuscript to the journal, and reply to the reviewers' comment, use IT tools and statistical analysis in research

most effectively. The Workshop also seeks to share inputs about preparation of research papers, reports or thesis. The workshop is being attended by research scholars, B.Ed. and M.Ed. students, members, and professionals from teachers' training colleges and faculty members and students of the college, teachers of Dev Sangha National School and over one hundred participants from Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, and Delhi who also registered for this mega academic event.

It is expected that through writing scholarly articles/research papers, scholars shall be able to develop writing skills for research by integrating writing and thoughts in a rational manner and acquire concepts, principles and vocabulary of reasoning and argumentation and use, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation to advance arguments. Academic writing also enables students to acquire the correct sense of format, syntax, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and help choose appropriate topics, coherent methods and models and provides tolls and techniques for objective analysis for reaching at empirical results. It will also shed light to the limitations that one can encounter while writing a good academic paper.

It is felt that the thoughts of resource persons shall enable delegates to explore choose the area of their interest in a better manner, collect literature from various bibliographical sources more judiciously, write the paper more objectively, communicate the manuscript to the publishers more effectively and reply to reviewers' comment more instinctively. It is also hoped that at the end of the workshop, participants would also be able to use IT tools and statistical analysis in research with more proficiency.

Academic Writing: An Overview

[Adapted from the Lecture on "Academic Writing: An Overview" by Prof. (Dr.) Taposh Ghoshal*]

**Ex Dean, School of Management Sciences*
Central University of Jharkhand, Ranchi
Currently, Principal Mentor, Astra Knowledge Foundation, Ranchi and
Advisor, Dev Sangha Institute of Professional Studies
and Educational Research, Deoghar

INTRODUCTION

Academic Writing is a formal style of writing that researchers and educators use in scholarly publications. It focuses on evidence-based discussions and follows logical reasoning to guide a reader's understanding of a subject. Different from other types of writing, academic writing is generally formal, objective, impersonal, and technical. Being formal, it avoids conversational language, such as contractions or informal vocabulary and is colloquial language. Also, it is impersonal and objective and circumvents direct reference to people or feelings, and instead emphasises objects, facts, and figures.

Academic writing refers to the style of writing that is commonly used in academic disciplines such as science, social science, and humanities. It is a form of writing that is meant to convey information and ideas in a clear and concise manner, using formal language, evidence-based arguments, and logical reasoning.

Technically, Academic writing is methodical and uses vocabulary specific to the discipline. Different disciplines of knowledge have different styles and structures of writing. In some disciplines, such as in humanities, there could be longer paragraphs and have sentences to show how the argument is structured. In other disciplines, for example in the sciences, there are short paragraphs and contain precise and factual information.

Academic writing is characterised by a specific set of conventions, which include:

- **Formal tone:** Academic writing is formal in tone and uses language that is precise, objective, and free from slang, colloquialisms, and contractions.
- **Use of evidence:** Academic writing relies on evidence to support arguments and claims. This evidence can come from research studies, experiments, and other scholarly sources.

- **Clear structure:** Academic writing is organised in a clear and logical manner, with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion.
- **Citations and referencing:** Academic writing uses citations and referencing to give credit to the sources of information used in the paper. This helps to avoid plagiarism and gives readers the ability to locate and verify the information used.
- **Objectivity:** Academic writing aims to be objective and unbiased, using logical reasoning and evidence-based arguments to support claims.

Overall, academic writing is a form of communication that is used to share knowledge and ideas within the academic community. It requires a strong understanding of the conventions of academic writing, as well as the ability to critically analyse and synthesise information from various sources

ACADEMIC WRITING: CATEGORIES

There are different categories of Academic Writing as is depicted in the following diagram.

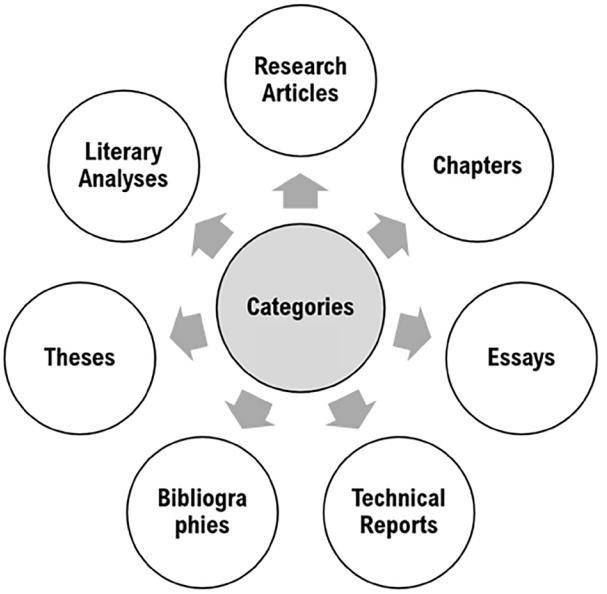

Figure 1: Categories of Academic Writing

A brief description of each of these forms of academic writings are given below.

Research Articles

Research articles are a common form of academic writing used to communicate the results of research studies to the academic community. This form of academic

writing provides an in-depth detail of the author's research. It explains the processes and methods and shows how they arrived at a conclusion. It usually references other data and resources to reinforce the findings of the research. These articles are submitted to academic journals for publications.

These articles are typically written in a specific format, follow a specific structure and generally includes the following sections:

- **Introduction:** This section provides an overview of the research question, explains why it is important, and outlines the research objectives.
- **Literature review:** This section summarises the existing research on the topic and identifies gaps or limitations in the current understanding of the subject.
- **Methodology:** This section describes the research design, including the sample selection, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques.
- **Results:** This section presents the findings of the research, often using graphs or tables to illustrate the data.
- **Discussion:** This section interprets the results and places them in the context of the existing literature. It also highlights the implications of the research findings and identifies areas for future research.
- **Conclusion:** This section summarises the main findings and their implications.
- **References:** This section provides a list of sources cited in the article.

Research articles are characteristically written in a formal and objective tone and use a technical vocabulary specific to the field of study. They are usually peer-reviewed, meaning that they are evaluated by other experts in the field before publication.

Chapters

Chapters are another form of academic writing usually used in books and dissertations. Also called 'Book Chapters', these are authored by scholars who may submit chapters for an edited volume or collection, which features submissions from different authors. Chapters provide a way to organise and present information on a particular topic or theme in a structured and cohesive manner. The structure of a chapter can vary depending on the type of academic writing and the specific requirements of the author or publisher. Book Chapters can offer different viewpoints on a single topic or idea. Chapters can also include other elements, such as case studies, interviews, or examples to illustrate the concepts presented in the text.

Essays

Essays are yet another form of academic writing used to present and study information and ideas on a particular theme in a concise and structured manner. Essays are typically shorter than research articles or chapters, and they focus on a specific topic or question. Generally, an essay is a short piece of writing, usually between 1,500 to 2,000 words, that presents an idea or argument using research and analysis.

The structure of an essay can vary depending on the type of essay and the specific requirements of the instructor or publisher. However, most essays from three parts – Introduction, Body, and Conclusion. A typical essay may include the following elements:

Introduction: This section provides an outline of the topic and presents the objectives of the essay. It may also include a thesis statement, which is a sentence that abridges the main argument of the essay.

Body: This segment presents the main points or arguments of the essay. Each paragraph should focus on a single idea or topic and provide evidence or instances to substantiate the arguments.

Conclusion: This section recapitulates the main points of the essay and restates the thesis statement. It may also provide recommendations or suggest areas for further research.

References: This part provides a list of sources cited in the essay.

Essays are typically written in a formal and objective tone and use a technical vocabulary specific to the field of study. They may also require the use of academic citation styles, such as APA or MLA, to properly attribute sources.

Overall, essays provide a way to present and examine data and/or thoughts in a clear and concise manner, making them an important tool in academic writing.

Technical Reports

Technical reports are a form of academic writing used to communicate technical information and research findings to a specific audience, such as engineers, scientists, and policymakers. They typically focus on a specific technical problem or issue and present solutions or recommendations based on research and analysis.

The structure of a technical report can vary depending on the specific requirements of the audience and the purpose of the report. A technical report explains the progress or results of technical research. It may include recommendations based on the results of the research. These documents rarely go through a peer-review

process. Hence researchers often use these reports as a primary draft that they can later refine before submitting their work to scholarly publications.

Technical reports are typically written in a formal and objective tone and use a technical vocabulary specific to the field of study. They may also include technical drawings, diagrams, or other visual aids to help illustrate the information presented in the text.

Bibliographies

A bibliography is a list of sources used in research, writing, or a project. It is a comprehensive list of sources on a topic that includes brief descriptions or evaluations of each source. It summarises these sources, usually in a paragraph format, so that a reader can understand the general context of each one.

Theses

A thesis is a document that summarises the author's research on a specific topic. Typically, those pursuing an advanced degree, such as a master's degree or doctorate, submit a thesis at the end of their programme as a requirement for graduation. It usually builds on existing research to contribute new knowledge or theories on the topic and consist of 6,000 and 20,000 words.

Literary Analyses

Literary Analyses evaluates a literary work, such as a book or collection of poetry. Authors of a literary analysis persuasively communicate their interpretation of an idea or concept in the literature. This analysis often provides enough background and context of the work to support the author's argument.

ACADEMIC WRITING: CHARACTERISTICS

Academic writing has several important characteristics that distinguishes it from other form of writing. Some of the significant characteristics of Academic writing are as follows.

a. Academic writing should have a clear structure. Well-structured means that it should be coherent, it must have a logical progression of ideas, it should be cohesive i.e., different parts should be clearly inter-connected and it must have a clear focus. This means that it should be able to make others understand what the author is writing about and why?
b. Academic writing should be evidence-based. It means that observations, arguments, and opinions should be supported by objective evidence which connotes facts, reasons, for examples, statistics and citations.

c. Academic writing should be critical. It should be understood that academic writing simply does not describe. The information/data explained in the writing must be analysed and evaluated before the writer arrives at some conclusion. Thus, academic writing should should involve careful judgment and as such, it should be based on judicious evaluation of facts.

d. Academic writing should be balanced. This means that while engaging in academic writing, the author should give consideration to all facets of the issue and avoid bias while developing the content. The content should be supported by objective evidences also. Besides, the writer, in developing the content should suitably use 'hedges' and 'boosters'.

   Examples of hedges and boosters are given below.

   Hedge: Evidence **suggests** (hedging) that more safety controls are needed. Or this **could** (hedging) be caused by lack of education.

   Booster: **Clearly** (booster), there is a need for more safety controls.

   Research **indicates** (booster) that lack of education is to be blamed.

e. Academic writing should be OBJECTIVE. This underlines that any kind of academic writing should be devoid of any kind of subjectivity and should be based purely on facts, duly substantiated by supported by evidences. Thus, here the emphasis is on arguments and information rather than that of the writer.

   Here, it is also to be remembered that sentences should be in Passive Voice rather than in Active Voice. Also, the structure should be of 'Impersonal Nature'. The following example would elucidate the point.

   Instead of 'I heated the water' the apt sentence would be 'The water was heated'. Also, instead of 'In my opinion', the correct sentence could be 'It can be seen that'.

f. Academic writing should be FORMAL. Contractions should be avoided and vocabulary to be used should be academic in tone and tenor. For example, instead of 'This isn't the case', one should write 'This is not the case'. Similarly, sentences like 'There are lots of reasons' one should write 'There are a significant number of reasons'. Likewise, instead of 'Conditions changed a lot', sentences like 'There was considerable variation in conditions'.

g. Academic writing should be PRECISE. Academic writing should have clear and precise language. This includes the use of technical (i.e., subject-specific vocabulary). Sometimes such language needs defining especially if the term is not commonly used by experts.

MAKING ACADEMIC WRITING 'ACADEMIC' AND CHALLENGING

It is necessary to comprehend that compared to everyday writing, academic writing tends to be more formal, dense, abstract, objective, rigorous, and tightly knit. A brief explanation of each of these six issues that makes academic writing academic and challenging are described below.

a. **Formality:** Academic writing uses a unique set of grammatical means that helps the author achieve precision and informativity, avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation, and establish authority and credibility.
b. **Density:** Academic writing uses language that often carries a heavy load of information into the sentence.
c. **Abstraction:** Academic writing deals principally with concepts, ideas, generalisations, and interpretations, instead of concrete individuals or tangible things.
d. **Objectivity:** Academic writing foregrounds ideas and arguments and backgrounds the author who presents the ideas or makes the arguments.
e. **Rigor:** In academic writing, the author is expected to be meticulous in both word choice and logic of argument. Ideas or arguments are presented with care and then restated, clarified, explained, exemplified, and reasoned.
f. **Tightly-knit:** Academic writing presents information and develops arguments in a highly structured way. Sentences and paragraphs are woven together to create an information 'flow' and a smooth texture within the text.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR ACADEMIC WRITING

Academic writing is a crucial skill that is necessary for success in almost every scholarly pursuit. Whether one is writing an essay, a research paper, or a thesis, academic writing presupposes a specific set of skills. Here are some essential skills for academic writing:

Clarity: The writing should be clear and concise. It is suggested to avoid using complex vocabulary or complicated sentences. It is also necessary to keep writing simple and easy to understand.

Organisation: The writing should have a clear structure/format with an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Each paragraph should have a clear topic sentence that supports the thesis statement.

Research: Academic writing necessitates extensive research. One should be able to identify credible sources and evaluate the information one gathers. One should also be able to integrate the research into the writing effectively.

Analysis: The author should be able to analyse and evaluate the information he finds during his research. This involves critically thinking about the information and drawing his own conclusions.

Proper citation: Academic writing requires proper citation of sources. One should know how to cite sources correctly in the appropriate format, such as APA, MLA, or Chicago style.

Editing: Editing is an essential part of academic writing. One should be able to revise and edit his work to ensure it is error-free, comprehensible, and well-organised.

Time management: Academic writing often involves long-term projects, such as research papers or theses. One should be able to manage time effectively and plan the work to meet deadlines strictly.

By developing these skills, one can become a proficient academic writer and produce high-quality work that meets the standards of the academic field.

WHERE TO PUBLISH PAPERS

Publishing is an integral aspect of Academic research. Publishing a research paper or getting it published in an academic journal can be one of the most fulfilling accomplishments in one's academic career. After spending countless hours learning, researching, thinking and writing, sharing knowledge with others is highly satisfying. However, it is essential that knowledge in your article is precise, reliable, reproducible, and also actionable.

Once the paper is ready, it is important to choose a journal that is relevant to your research and aligns with your research objectives. It is necessary to review the journal's guidelines and submission requirements very carefully before submitting your paper. Some journals may require a cover letter, while others may require a submission fee.

Once your paper is submitted, it will go through a peer-review process where experts in your field will review your work. You may be asked to make revisions or resubmit your paper. It is important to be responsive and timely in your communication with the journal.

Acceptance: If your paper is accepted, congratulations! The journal will notify you of any further steps required, such as proofreading and signing a publication agreement.

Publication: Once your paper has been accepted, it will be published in the journal. Make sure to promote your paper to increase visibility and impact.

It is to be remembered that the publication process can take time and may require patience and persistence.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A GOOD ACADEMIC JOURNAL

Academic journals are those journals that are sources for trustworthy, valid, and reliable information from subject experts. These are journals for different domain, providing you with a great base for research in any area.

Academic journals are different from other sources, mainly because of the high quality of information they provide and the process of content quality control. Academic journals purpose is to reveal the latest scientific advancement and commit to the research continuation and development in different fields.

Researchers, scientists, and the academic community choose to publish their work results in scholarly sources. In this way, every scholar explores the related literature to identify the gaps or areas to develop further. Therefore, academic journals are more than just a platform for publications. They are forums for scientific conversations and cooperation.

Academic journals have a high degree of legitimacy. First of all, rarely a non-professional can decide and publish work in an academic journal. Its main stakeholders, both as publishers and readers, are people from academic fields with a solid educational and professional background. The expertise of authors is the first point for the quality of publications.

Besides, the materials you read in academic journals are usually peer-reviewed, which means other specialists in the field reviewed and approved the content for publication.

Academic journals correspond to the predefined standards of both research and the presentation of final results. Particularly, all the provided facts should be either a result of original practical research or a full citation to a reliable source. Also, academic articles should add a new word to the existing base of knowledge in the field.

Academic journals provide good quality research articles. Usually, the articles contained within academic journals are peer-reviewed. This means that experts in the field have reviewed the article and decided whether it is fit for publication, or it requires further refinement. This ensures that only the best quality articles are published.

Articles in these types of journals are particularly good to use as supporting evidence in your assignments.

- Reputation of the journal and the publisher as the reputation of the publisher, journal, editor and editorial board can give an indication of the quality of the journal.

- Scope and focus of the journal also signifies the quality of the journal. The scope and aim of the journal shall give an indication of the profile of journal's readers limited to a specific area of research or with a multidisciplinary focus. The article should also suit the style of the journal.
- It is also important to be aware of the publication lag i.e., the length of the review process. This means the average length of time from submission to acceptance or rejection - from acceptance to publication and the frequency of publication.
- Before publishing article, the scholar should also see if the journal is included in prominent indexes. This means that one should explore whether articles from the journal indexed in journal databases relevant to your field, or in citation databases.
- Longevity is yet another factor necessary attribute of a good academic journal. The number of years the journal has been around can be an indication of its stability and its interest to academia.
- The competence of a journal's editorial board can influence the success or failure of an article immensely. Writers should make sure that the "Instructions to Authors" are easily accessible and that they explain clearly what is expected from them. It should also be seen whether the journal is sensibly produced and has a professional appearance. The quality of paper, printing and typographical errors must also be observed.
- Acceptance rate is another factor to measure the strength of a journal. The acceptance rate provides an indication of superiority of the journal. Journals with a low acceptance rate are considered to be amongst the most respected ones in their field, the assumption being that only the very best articles are selected.
- Scholars and researchers should be aware that some journals charge either a submission fee, an acceptance fee, page fees or fees for use of colour images or other special media formats. Journals asking for monetary benefits should be avoided.
- Type of publication is also to be ascertained by the writers. Some journals only accept certain types of articles for publication. A clear understanding of the specific type of journal which publishes articles in your subject area will be better for publication.
- Details with respect to copyright information and author rights should also be searched carefully before selecting a particular journal.

IMPACT FACTOR

The impact factor is a measure used to assess the relative importance of a journal within its field of study. It is calculated by dividing the number of citations received by articles published in a journal during a specific time period by the total number of articles published during that same period of time. The resulting number is a measure of the average number of citations received per article published in that journal during that time period.

Impact factor is widely used as a way to evaluate the quality and influence of journals, and it is often preferred by researchers, and academic institutions as a yardstick for appraising the productivity and impact of individual scholar and research groups.

Impact factor of a journal is often considered when selecting a journal to publish in, especially in academic writing. Researchers may seek to publish in journals with a high impact factor to increase the credibility and reach of their work. This can be particularly significant for researchers as publishing in high-impact journals can help demonstrate the significance and impact of their research.

It is however imperative that the impact factor should not be the only factor considered when selecting a journal for publishing an article. Other factors, such as the relevance of the journal to the research topic, the quality of the peer-review process, and the intended audience should also be taken into account. Additionally, researchers should not prioritise publishing in high-impact journals at the expense of conducting rigorous and meaningful research.

In any case, impact factor can play a role in academic writing, but it should be considered in conjunction with other factors when making decisions about where to publish. The quality and significance of the research should always be the top priority.

CONCLUSION

As has been discussed, academic writing is a type of writing used in academic disciplines that aims to disseminate ideas and research findings to a scholarly audience. It is characterised by its formal and objective tone, use of evidence and data to support arguments, and adherence to established academic conventions, such as proper citation and referencing.

In academic writing, the author typically presents a thesis or research question and supports it with evidence from scholarly sources. The writing style should be clear,

concise, and well-organised to effectively convey complex ideas and arguments. Academic writing can take many forms, including research papers, literature reviews, essays, and dissertations.

Effective academic writing requires strong critical thinking skills, careful attention to details, and a thorough understanding of the subject matter. It is often used to contribute to scholarly conversations, advance knowledge in a particular field, and important policy decisions.

The Writing Process

**[Adapted from the Lecture on "The Writing Process"
by Prof. (Dr.) Samirranjan Adhikari*]**

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INTRODUCTION

Academic writing is a specialised form of writing used in academic disciplines such as science, engineering, and humanities. It is intended to communicate research findings, theories, and arguments to a scholarly audience. It is often characterised by a formal style, use of specialised terminology, and adherence to strict formatting and citation rules, and is a critical component of higher education, requiring students to demonstrate their knowledge, analytical skills, and ability to communicate complex ideas effectively. The academic writing process involves a series of steps that include researching a topic, organising ideas, writing a first draft, revising and editing, proofreading, and submitting a final draft. Each step of the process is essential to producing a high-quality academic paper that meets the standards of academic writing.

Academic writing is a means of producing, codifying, transmitting, evaluating, renovating, teaching, and learning knowledge and ideology in academic disciplines. Being able to write in an academic style is essential to disciplinary learning and critical for academic success. It is a crucial skill for students and scholars alike and involves the ability to communicate complex ideas in a clear and concise manner. Being a complex process, it requires careful planning, research, and attention to detail. The writing process involves understanding the assignment instructions and researching the topic thoroughly. This involves gathering information from various sources such as books, articles, and academic journals and organising the ideas to create an outline or a mind map. This helps to ensure that the paper is well-structured and that the ideas flow logically.

THE WRITING PROCESS

The Writing Process is a cycle of activities that you complete as you generate ideas, compose those ideas into a document or presentation, and refine those ideas. It is a recursive process, meaning that at any one stage in the process, you may find

that you have to return to previous steps to review and refine your methods. It is the series of actions taken by writers to produce a finished work. Writers, educators, and theorists have defined the writing process in many different ways, but it generally involves prewriting tasks, writing tasks, and post-writing tasks. More specifically, these tasks include planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing, in approximately that order.

The Process of Academic Writing

This process applies to essays, reports, dissertations and other writing projects, with tweaks to adapt it to the required product and involves several steps, from gathering research materials to finalising the polished draft. In this essay, we will explore each step in the academic writing process in greater details.

The first step in the academic writing process is pre-writing. This involves brainstorming, research, outlining, and organising ideas. To begin, one needs to pick up a topic and identify the research question. One may need to do a literature review to get an idea of what other scholars have said about this particular topic. This can help to identify gaps, if any, in the research and provide a foundation for argument for writing the research paper. You may also need to conduct primary research, such as interviews or surveys, to gather data.

Once you have a clear plan and a solid foundation of research, you can begin to draft your paper. The drafting phase of the writing process involves putting your ideas into a coherent and structured form. Your draft should have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion, and each paragraph should have a clear topic sentence that relates back to your thesis statement. It is important to remember that your thesis statement should be a clear and concise summary of the main argument of your paper.

After one has a draft, one will need to revise it to improve clarity, coherence, and flow. Revising involves re-reading your work with a critical eye, and making changes as necessary. You may need to restructure your paper, add or remove content, or clarify your arguments. It's also a good idea to have someone else read your paper and give you feedback.

Once one is satisfied with the content and structure of the paper, one will need to edit it for grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. One should also check the formatting and citations to ensure that they meet the guidelines of the chosen citation style. It is important to remember that accuracy is key when it comes to citing sources.

Finally, one should proofread the paper carefully to catch any remaining errors or typographical errors. It's a good idea to read your paper aloud to yourself, as this can help you spot mistakes that you might otherwise miss.

In conclusion, academic writing is a complex process that requires careful planning, organisation, and attention to detail. Each step in the process is important, from pre-writing to proofreading, and each requires its own set of skills. With practice and dedication, however, anyone can become a successful academic writer.

The benefits of following the Writing Process can be stated as under:

- The ability to revisit previous work completed to find new ideas or refine existing ones.
- A more organised finished product.
- A less stressful experience, which is one of the causes of writer's block.
- Less time spent in the drafting stage.

A careful look at the following aspects would be useful for a scholar in writing a research paper/article and make it academically strong, logical, trust worthy, and meaningful.

Choice of the Topic

The choice of topic is critical in academic writing because academic writing is often more formal and focused on specific subject matter than any other form of writing. Here are some reasons why the choice of topic needs special attention in academic writing:

Firstly, the relevance of the topic is to be ascertained very carefully. Academic writing is often related to a particular field of study, so the choice of topic should be pertinent to that field. The topic should also align with the article's purpose and objectives to provide valuable insights or answers to the research question.

Secondly, the topic should be original and not a replication of previous research work or commonly studied themes. The paper should bring something new to the field of study and contribute to expanding the knowledge base of the subject matter.

Thirdly, it is to be ensured that the topic should be significant and adds value to the domain of study. Academic writing aims to advance knowledge and understanding, so the topic should be impactful and meaningful to the academic community.

Fourthly, it is to be seen that the topic should be controllable, signifying that it should be possible to explore it further through research and analyse its different aspects of within a given time frame and resources. A manageable topic warrants that the article is finished on time and meets the essential standards of academic writing.

Literature Review

A literature review is an assessment of the existing research on a particular topic or subject. It involves a systematic review and analysis of published and unpublished material such as books, journals, articles, and conference proceedings that are relevant to the research question or area of interest. The goal of a literature review is to provide a comprehensive overview of the research that has been done on a topic, identify gaps in the existing literature, and highlight areas where further research is needed.

The literature review is an important part of the research process and is used to establish the context for a study, identify key concepts and themes, and inform the research design and methodology. It is also used to develop hypotheses or research questions, and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of previous research on the topic.

A well-conducted literature review involves a thorough search of multiple sources to identify relevant studies, critical appraisal of the quality of the research, and synthesis of the findings from different studies. The process of conducting a literature review requires careful planning, organisation, and documentation, and should follow a systematic and transparent approach.

Overall, a literature review is a critical component of any research project, providing a foundation for the research question and methodology, and helping to ensure that the study is situated within the context of existing research

Chapterisation

Chapterisation is the process of dividing a book or a longer work into separate chapters or sections. The purpose of chapterisation is to organise the material in a logical and controllable way that helps readers navigate the content more easily.

When chapterising a book, there are several factors to consider, including the overall structure and flow of the work, the main themes and topics covered, and the intended audience. In general, chapters should be structured to provide a clear and concise overview of each main topic or theme, and should be arranged in a logical sequence that builds upon the previous chapter and leads into the next.

Basically, there are four common strategies for chapterisation either of which are adopted in academic writing. The most common approach is to have chapters in a chronological order which means that chapters are organised in the order events occurred or in a linear timeline. This approach is commonly used in memoirs and biographies. Though chapterisation in a book can vary based on the author's preference and the type of book, a common way to organise chapters in a book is in chronological order. It is to be remembered that the actual chapterisation can vary depending on the author's preference and the focus of the book.

Another way of chapterisation is to follow the thematic order. The thematic order of chapterisation refers to the process of organising the content of a book or document by grouping related topics together based on a common theme or idea. The purpose of this is to make the material easier to understand and navigate for readers. Here, chapters are organised around specific themes or topics. This approach is commonly used in academic works and non-fiction books.

The third way in which chapterisation can be done is by geographical order. Here, chapters are organised around specific geographical locations or regions. This approach is commonly used in travel books and works that explore different cultures. Geographical order of chapterisation is a mode of organising data or content based on the physical location of places, regions, or countries. This method can be used to present information in a logical and systematic manner, making it easier for readers to understand the relationships between different places.

The fourth method in this context is what is called as the character-focused order. In this method, chapters are organised around different characters in the story, their motivations, and their interactions. This approach is commonly used in novels and fictional works. Character-focused order of chapterisation is a method of organising information or content based on the characters or individuals in a story, narrative, or biography. This method can be used to present information in a way that highlights the development, growth, or evolution of characters throughout a narrative.

Ultimately, the most effective chapterisation strategy will depend on the specific content of the book and the preferences of the author. The objective should be to create a structure that is clear, logical, and easy to follow for the reader.

Data Chapters

"Data chapters" is not an explicit term or concept in the field of data analysis or research methodology. However, it is possible to relate this term to chapters in a research report or thesis that present data analysis and findings.

In general, data analysis chapters in research reports or theses provide detailed descriptions and explanations of the methods used to collect and analyse data, as well as the inferences of the analysis. These chapters may include tables, graphs, and other visual aids to help convey the findings, and may also include discussion and interpretation of the results in light of the research questions or hypotheses.

The exact format and content of data analysis chapters can vary depending on the research design, methodology, and specific research questions being addressed. However, common elements of a data analysis chapter may include a section called introduction, which may provide a brief overview of the research questions or hypotheses being addressed and provide an overview of the methods used to collect and analyse the data.

Data analysis methods is the next section may describe in detail the methods used to collect and analyse the data, including any statistical techniques or software used.

Results form the next part of a paper which presents the findings of the data analysis, including any statistical analyses, in the form of tables, graphs, or other visual aids in the form of a synthesis and crystallises the essence of the study.

Discussion is the next part which provides an interpretation of the findings, discussing their implications for the research questions or hypotheses and any limitations or potential confounding factors.

In a nutshell, data analysis chapters are an significant constituent of research reports, theses, and all other forms of academic writings as they provide a detailed and systematic presentation of the methods and findings of a study.

Referencing/Citation/Style/Bibliography

Referencing, citation, style, and bibliography are a crucial part of any academic writing and form the integral part of any scholarly paper. Each of these aspects have their own relevance and as such shall be described as under.

Referencing

Referencing is an important part of academic work. It is the act of citing sources used in an academic work, such as an essay, report, or research paper. The purpose of referencing is to give due credit to the original authors or sources of information, ideas, and data used in the work, and to enable readers to find and verify the sources for themselves.

It puts one's work in context, demonstrates the breadth and depth of his/her research, while acknowledging other people's work in the area. Referencing is

about how one acknowledges the source of information one has used (referred to) in his/her work. It helps to make clear to the reader how one has used the work of others to develop his/her own ideas and opinions to write the paper.

Style

There are different referencing styles, including Harvard, APA (American Psychological Association), MLA (Modern Language Association), Chicago, and Vancouver, among others. Each style has its own rules and guidelines for formatting citations, which usually include the author's name, title of the work, publication date, publisher, and page numbers, among other details.

It is important to follow the appropriate referencing style for your academic discipline and to ensure that all sources used are properly cited and referenced in your work to avoid plagiarism and to give credit where it is due.

- The Harvard referencing style, also known as author-date referencing, is a popular citation style used in academic writing. In this style, citations include the author's surname and the year of publication of the work being cited, which are placed within parentheses and interleaved into the text, usually at the end of a sentence before the period.
- The APA (American Psychological Association) referencing style is another commonly used citation style in academic writing, particularly in the social sciences. In this style, citations include the author's surname and the publication year, which are placed within parentheses and inserted into the text, usually at the end of a sentence before the period.
- The MLA (Modern Language Association) referencing style is a widely used citation style in the humanities, particularly in literature and language studies. In this style, citations include the author's surname and the page number(s) of the source being cited, which are placed within parentheses and inserted into the text, usually at the end of a sentence before the period.
- The Chicago referencing style is a citation style used in academic writing, particularly in history and the social sciences. There are two main versions of the Chicago style: the notes and bibliography system and the author-date system.
- In the notes and bibliography system, citations are indicated in the text by superscript numbers, which correspond to footnotes or endnotes that provide the full bibliographic information for each source. The first time a source is cited, a full citation is provided, and subsequent citations can be shortened.

- The Vancouver referencing style is a citation style that is commonly used in medicine and science disciplines. It is named after the city of Vancouver, Canada, where it was first used at a meeting of medical journal editors in 1978. The Vancouver style is a numbered citation style, which means that each reference is assigned a number in the text, and the full reference is then given in a numbered list at the end of the document.

In the Vancouver style, in-text citations are marked by a number in comments, which refers to the corresponding reference in the reference list. The references in the list are numbered in the order in which they are cited in the text.

It is important to follow your institution's guidelines or the publication it is submitting to determine which style is to be used.

Citation

A citation is a reference to a published or unpublished source that is used in a piece of writing to support a claim or idea. It typically includes information such as the author's name, the title of the source, the publication date, and the location of the source (such as page numbers or a URL). Citations allow readers to find and verify the sources that a writer has used, and they help to give credit to the original authors or creators of the ideas and information used in a piece of writing. The format and style of citations can vary depending on the citation style used, such as MLA, APA, Chicago, or Harvard. It is important for writers to follow the guidelines for the citation style used in their field or discipline to ensure accurate and consistent citations.

Bibliography

A bibliography is a list of works (such as books and articles) written on a particular subject or by a particular author. It is a list of sources used in researching a particular topic or project. The format of a bibliography can vary depending on the style guide being used, but typically includes the author's name, title of the work, publication information, and date of publication.

A bibliography should list all of the sources one has used (whether referenced or not) in the process of researching the work and should include the authors' names, the title of the work, the names of author(s) and publication. Also known as a list of works cited, a bibliography generally appears at the end of a book, report, online presentation, or research paper. A bibliography, along with correctly formatted in-text citations, is crucial to properly citing one's research and to avoiding accusations of plagiarism. In formal research, all sources used, whether quoted directly or synopsised, should be included in the bibliography.

STAGES OF THE WRITING PROCESS

The following 5 steps are considered helpful in writing a good quality academic writing.

1. **Prewriting:** This is the planning phase of the writing process, when students brainstorm, research, gather and outline ideas, often using diagrams for mapping out their thoughts. Audience and purpose should be considered at this point, and for the older students, a working thesis statement needs to be started.

   Important considerations in this stage include knowing, what kind of assignment is it; what are the audiences' expectations; what is the core topic; how well does the writer know his topic, and where can he find out more about the topic to write an exemplary article.

2. **Drafting:** Students create their initial composition by writing down all their ideas in an organised way to convey a particular idea or present an argument. Audience and purpose need to be finalised. Important contemplations in this regard include whether one remains true to the already drawn outline, or was it necessary to rethink some things; whether what is written makes sense; whether the scholars have done justice to the topic and whether enough been written on the subject; and whether the scholar is satisfied writing the paper.

   Here, it is to be seen whether the introduction of the paper demonstrate why the topic merits further investigation; whether the paper's body adequately justify the thesis; whether he arguments are clear and reasonable and if the conclusion properly bring the investigation to a close.

3. **Revising:** Students review, modify, and reorganise their work by rearranging, adding, or deleting content, and by setting the tone, style, and content appropriate for the intended audience. The objective of this phase of the writing process is to improve the draft.

4. **Editing:** At this point in the writing process, writers proofread and correct errors in grammar and procedure, and edit to improve style and clarity. Having feedback from peers in this stage is helpful.

   Important considerations in editing include whether the paper employ effective subheadings (if necessary), if each paragraph is in its necessary place, whether the transition into different topics is smooth; whether the writing is understandable and whether there are any awkwardly worded sentences in the paper.

5. **Publishing:** In this last step of the writing process after which the final writing is published and shared with the group.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the writing process is a crucial and iterative process that includes several stages, including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Effective writing requires careful planning, research, organisation, and attention to detail to produce high-quality work. Throughout the process, writers must consider their audience, purpose, and tone to effectively communicate their ideas and achieve their desired outcome. With practice and dedication, writers can develop their skills and create compelling and engaging content that resonates with their readers. Whether writing for academic, professional, or personal reasons, understanding and implementing the writing process can help writers achieve their goals and communicate effectively in a variety of contexts.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

[Adapted from the Lecture on "Data Analysis and Interpretation" by Dr. Subir Sen*]

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WHAT IS QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH?

Quantitative research is a research methodology that involves the use of numerical data and statistical analysis to measure and quantify relationships between variables. It is a methodical study of phenomena by gathering quantifiable data and using statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques for analysis. This approach is usually used in social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, economics, and political science, to study human behaviour and social phenomena and includes collecting of structured numerical data through surveys, questionnaires, experiments and other means, which are then analysed it using statistical methods.

The aim of this kind of research is to identify patterns, trends, and relationships between variables, and to test hypotheses and forecasts and is appropriate for identifying trends and averages, making predictions, testing relationships, and generalising results for large populations. This method is broadly used in natural and social sciences, such as biology, chemistry, psychology, economics, sociology, marketing, and others.

In this research method, researchers and statisticians deploy mathematical frameworks and theories that pertain to the quantity under question. The results achieved from this research method are logical, statistical, and unbiased. Data collection happened using a structured method and was conducted on larger samples representing the entire population. Quantitative research is a valuable tool for exploring and understanding complex social phenomena and human behaviour, and for making data-driven decisions in a wide range of fields.

Quantitative research is the opposite of qualitative research, which involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data. One can use quantitative research methods for descriptive, correlational or experimental research. In descriptive research, one basically seeks an overall summary of your study variables whereas in correlational research, the relationships between the study variables is

investigated. In experimental research, one systematically examines whether there is a cause-and-effect relationship between variables.

To collect quantitative data, one shall often need to use operational definitions that translate abstract concepts (e.g., mood) into observable and quantifiable measures (e.g., self-ratings of feelings and energy levels).

CHARACTERISTICS OF QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Quantitative research has several inimitable characteristics that make it well-suited for specific types of studies. One of the main characteristics of this type of research is that the results can be depicted in numerical form. After a careful understanding of these numbers, it's possible to predict the future of a product or service and make changes accordingly.

Some of the key characteristics of quantitative research include:

- **Use of standardised data collection instruments:** Quantitative research often uses standardised instruments, such as surveys or questionnaires, to collect data in a structured and consistent manner.
- **Large sample sizes:** Quantitative research typically involves collecting data from a large sample of participants to ensure statistical reliability and generalisability.
- **Statistical analysis:** Quantitative research involves the use of statistical methods to analyse the data, such as regression analysis, correlation analysis, or ANOVA (analysis of variance).
- **Objectivity:** Quantitative research is designed to be objective and impartial, with the aim of reducing the influence of the researcher's biases on the results.
- **Structured tools:** Structured tools such as surveys, polls, or questionnaires are used to gather quantitative data. Using such structured methods helps collect in-depth and actionable data from the survey respondents.
- **Sample size:** Quantitative research is conducted on a significant sample size that represents the target market. Appropriate sampling methods have to be used when deriving the sample to fortify the research objective
- **Close-ended questions:** Closed-ended questions are created per the objective of the research. These questions help collect quantitative data and hence, are extensively used in quantitative research.
- **Prior studies:** Various factors related to the research topic are studied before collecting feedback from respondents.

- **Quantitative data:** Usually, quantitative data is represented by tables, charts, graphs, or any other non-numerical form. This makes it easy to understand the data that has been collected as well as prove the validity of the market research.
- **Generalisation of results:** Results of this research method can be generalised to an entire population to take appropriate actions for improvement.

ADVANTAGES OF QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

There are many advantages of quantitative research. Some of the major advantages of why researchers use this method in market research are:

- Quantitative studies are often fast, focused, scientific and relatable. It has speed and efficiency and data computing equipment makes it possible to process and analyse data quickly, even with large sample sizes.
- Collection of reliable and accurate data is possible in quantitative research is possible. As data is collected, analysed, and presented in numbers, the results obtained will be extremely reliable. Numbers do not lie. They offer an honest picture of the conducted research without discrepancies and are also extremely accurate. In situations where a researcher predicts conflict, quantitative research is conducted.
- Quick data collection is possible. Quantitative research involves studying a group of people representing a larger population. A survey or another quantitative research method is used to gather information from these participants. The process of analysing the data and finding patterns is made easier and faster through the use of statistics.
- There is a wide scope of data analysis. Due to the statistics, this research method provides a wide scope of data collection.
- Eliminate bias: This research method offers no scope for personal comments or biasing of results. The results achieved are numerical and thus fair in most cases.
- Repeating the study is possible because of standardised data collection protocols and tangible definitions of abstract concepts.
- The study can be reproduced in other cultural settings, times or with different groups of participants. Results can be compared statistically.
- Data from large samples can be processed and analysed using reliable and consistent procedures through quantitative data analysis.
- Using formalised and established hypothesis testing procedures means that you have to carefully consider and report the research variables, predictions, data collection and testing methods before coming to a conclusion.

DISADVANTAGES OF QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Despite the benefits of quantitative research, it is sometimes inadequate in explaining complex research topics. Its limitations include:

- Using precise and restrictive operational definitions may inadequately represent complex concepts. For example, the concept of mood may be represented with just a number in quantitative research, but explained with elaboration in qualitative research.
- Predetermined variables and measurement procedures can mean that you ignore other relevant observations.
- Despite standardised procedures, structural biases can still affect quantitative research. Missing data, imprecise measurements or inappropriate sampling methods are biases that can lead to the wrong conclusions.
- Quantitative research often uses unnatural settings like laboratories or fails to consider historical and cultural contexts that may affect data collection and results.

DATA COLLECTION

In statistical analysis, collection of data plays a significant part of research. As is understood, data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. It is the process of gathering and analysing accurate data from various sources to find answers to research problems, trends and probabilities, etc., to estimate the possible outcomes.

Through systematic data collection one can gather information about a specific subject. It's crucial to ensure the data is complete during the collection phase and that it's collected legally and ethically. If not, the analysis won't be accurate and could have far-reaching consequences.

There are two basic methods of data. The two methods are primary and secondary. As the name suggests, primary data is the first-hand data collected to get initial raw information from the respondents. Primary data is information obtained directly from a data source without the need to consult additional sources. Primary data results are highly accurate provided it is collected properly from the judiciously ascertained target group(s). the researcher collects the information. It is however, time-consuming and expensive. Secondary data, on the other hand, is second-hand data collected by other parties and already having undergone statistical analysis. This data is either information that the researcher has tasked

other people to collect or information the researcher has looked up. Simply put, it's second-hand information. Although it's easier and cheaper to obtain than primary information, secondary information raises concerns regarding accuracy and authenticity. Quantitative data makes up a majority of secondary data.

Besides the above, at times third-party data is also collected for research. This is the data that's been aggregated and rented or sold by organisations that don't have a connection to your company or users.

Although there are cases for second- and third-party data, first-party data (data one has collected himself/herself) is more valuable because the information received about how the target audience behaves, thinks, and feels— are all from a trusted source.

Data can be qualitative (meaning contextual in nature) or quantitative (meaning numeric in nature). Many data collection methods can be used to either type, but some are better suited to one over the other.

The Importance of Data Collection

Collecting data is an essential part of a business's success as data's accuracy, completeness, and relevance enables organisations to take correct decision about the issue at hand. The information gathered also allows organisations to analyse past strategies and stay informed on what needs to change.

The importance of data collection can be gauged from the following facts:

- Data empowers you to make informed decisions
- Data helps you identify problems
- Data allows you to develop accurate theories
- Data will back up your arguments
- Data makes your approach strategic
- Data tells you what you're doing well

It is imperative that insights gathered from data can make one fully aware of the organisation's efforts and suggests actionable steps to be taken to improve various strategies of all aspects of business. That is by ensuring accurate data collection, business professionals can feel secure in their business decisions. So, it's important to be able to trust your own data collection procedures and abilities.

Data Collection Methods

Data-collection methods allow us to systematically collect information about our objects of study (people, objects, phenomena) and about the settings in

which they occur. In the collection of data, one has to be systematic. If data are collected haphazardly, it will be difficult to answer our research questions in a conclusive way.

Surveys

Surveys are physical or digital questionnaires that gather both qualitative and quantitative data from respondents. While physical copies of surveys can be sent out to participants, online surveys present the opportunity for distribution at scale. Also, they can also be inexpensive as administering a survey can otherwise be quite expensive. If one wishes to target a specific group of people, partnering with a market research firm to get the survey in front of that demographic may also be done.

While Survey method is quite popular and has advantages of covering a large population, it can, at times, suffer from `the effect of bias, including collection bias, subject bias and transactional tracking.

Interviews and Focus Groups

Interviews and focus groups consist of talking to subjects face-to-face about a specific topic or issue. Interviews tend to be one-on-one, and focus groups are typically made up of several people. One can use both to gather qualitative and quantitative data.

Through interviews and focus groups, one can gather feedback from people in your target audience about new product features. Seeing them interact with your product in real-time and recording their reactions and responses to questions can provide valuable data about which product features to pursue.

As is the case with surveys, these collection methods allows oneself to ask subjects anything one wants about their opinions, motivations, and feelings regarding a product or brand. It also introduces the potential for bias. Aim to craft questions that don't lead them in one particular direction.

Interviewing and conducting focus groups can be time-consuming and expensive. It can be a lengthy process too. To avoid this, one can engage a market research facilitator to organise and conduct interviews on your behalf.

Observation

Observing people interacting with your website or product can be useful for data collection because of the truthfulness it offers. If the user experience is confusing or difficult, one can witness it in real-time.

Yet, setting up observation sessions can be difficult. One can use a third-party tool to record users' activities or observe a user's interaction with a beta version of your product. While less used than other data collection methods, observations helps to see first-hand how users interact with your object. One can leverage the qualitative and quantitative data collected from this to make improvements and double down on points of success.

Online Tracking

To gather behavioral data, one can track users' online behaviour across websites and provide insight into what content they're interested in and typically engage with. One can also track users' behaviour on your company's website, including which parts are of the highest interest, whether users are confused when using it, and how long they spend on product pages. This can enable you to improve the website's design and help users navigate to their destination.

Forms

Online forms are beneficial for gathering qualitative data about users, specifically demographic data or contact information. They're relatively inexpensive and simple to set up, and you can use them to gate content or registrations, such as webinars and email newsletters. One can then use this data to contact people who may be interested in your product, build out demographic profiles of existing customers, and in remarketing efforts, such as email workflows and content recommendations and use it appropriately.

Social Media Monitoring

Monitoring company's social media channels for follower engagement is an accessible way to track data about your audience's interests and motivations. Many social media platforms have analytics built in, but there are also third-party social platforms that give more detailed, organised insights pulled from multiple channels. One can use data collected from social media to determine which issues are most important to your followers. For instance, you may notice that the number of engagements dramatically increases when your company posts about its sustainability efforts.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis is a statistical method used to examine and interpret numerical data, such as survey results or experimental measurements. It involves collecting and organising data, applying mathematical and statistical methods to analyse it, and drawing conclusions based on the results.

The process of quantitative data analysis typically includes defining the research question and, collecting data in a systematic and standardised way to ensure its reliability and validity. Organising the data to eliminate any errors or inconsistencies and to make it ready for analysis and using descriptive statistics (such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and range) are used to summarise and describe the data and/ or using inferential statistics such as t-tests, ANOVA, regression analysis, and correlation analysis to test hypotheses, identify relationships between variables, and make predictions. The last step following the above would be interpretation of results and its presentation in a clear and concise way that is accessible to the intended audience.

Quantitative data analysis can provide valuable insights into a wide range of topics and can be used in various fields such as business, health care, social sciences, and education. However, it is important to ensure that the data is collected and analysed in an ethical and responsible manner to avoid any potential harm to individuals or groups.

Data Interpretation

Data interpretation refers to the process of analysing and making sense of data, usually with the goal of extracting insights and drawing conclusions. This can involve a variety of techniques and tools, such as statistical analysis, visualisation, and machine learning algorithms.

The first step in data interpretation is to gather and collect relevant data. This can involve conducting surveys, running experiments, or mining existing databases. Once the data is collected, it must be logically organised to prepare it for analysis. The next step is to perform exploratory analysis, which involves using visualisations and statistical techniques to uncover patterns and relationships within the data. This can include measures of central tendency, such as mean and median, as well as measures of dispersion, such as standard deviation and variance.

Parametric and Non-parametric Tests for Research

Parametric and non-parametric are two broad classifications of statistical procedures. Parametric tests are those that make assumptions about the parameters of the population distribution from which the sample is drawn. This is often the assumption that the population data are normally distributed.

It belongs to a branch of statistics which assumes that sample data comes from a population that can be adequately modelled by a probability distribution that has

a fixed set of parameters. Conversely, a non-parametric model does not assume an explicit (finite-parametric) mathematical form for the distribution when modelling the data. However, it may make some assumptions about that distribution, such as continuity or symmetry.

Most well-known statistical methods are parametric. Regarding non-parametric (and semi-parametric) models, it is said that these typically involve fewer assumptions of structure and distributional form but usually contain strong assumptions about independencies. Non-parametric tests are "distribution-free" and, as such, can be used for non-normal variables.

Non-parametric statistics is the branch of statistics that is not based solely on parametrised families of probability distributions (common examples of parameters are the mean and variance). Non-parametric statistics is based on either being distribution-free or having a specified distribution but with the distribution's parameters unspecified. Non-parametric statistics includes both descriptive statistics and statistical inference. Nonparametric tests are often used when the assumptions of parametric tests are violated.

Quantitative Methods Used in Research

ANCOVA

ANCOVA stands for Analysis of Covariance, which is a statistical method used to compare two or more groups while controlling for one or more continuous covariates. ANCOVA is a combination of two statistical techniques: analysis of variance (ANOVA) and regression.

ANCOVA is often used in research studies to determine whether there are significant differences among groups while controlling for the effects of a continuous covariate. For example, a researcher might want to compare the effectiveness of three different treatments for a medical condition while controlling for the age of the patients.

In ANCOVA, the dependent variable is analysed using a similar approach as in ANOVA, but the continuous covariate is also included in the analysis as an independent variable. ANCOVA can provide more accurate results than ANOVA when there are significant differences in the covariate values among the groups being compared.

Chi-square Test

The chi-square test is a statistical test used to determine whether there is a significant association between two categorical variables. It is commonly used in

research to analyse data from experiments or surveys that involve two or more categorical variables.

The test is based on the principle of comparing the observed frequencies of different categories with the expected frequencies. The expected frequencies are the frequencies that would be expected if there were no association between the two variables being studied. The test statistic is calculated by summing the differences between the observed and expected frequencies, squared and divided by the expected frequencies.

The chi-square test is used to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant association between the two variables being studied. If the calculated value of the test statistic is greater than the critical value, then the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is a significant association between the variables. On the other hand, if the calculated value is less than the critical value, then the null hypothesis is not rejected and it is concluded that there is no significant association between the variables.

The chi-square test has many applications in various fields, including biology, psychology, sociology, and market research. It is also used in quality control and in the analysis of large data sets. However, it is important to note that the test is only valid when certain assumptions are met, such as the sample size being large enough and the data being independent and randomly selected.

Friedman's Two-way Analysis of Variance by Ranks

Friedman's Two-way Analysis of Variance by Ranks is a nonparametric statistical test that is used to determine whether there are differences among two or more groups when the data is in the form of rankings or ordinal data. It is similar to a two-way ANOVA, but it is based on the ranks of the data rather than the actual data values.

The test is named after its developer, Milton Friedman, and it is also known as the Friedman test. The test is commonly used in fields such as psychology, education, and social sciences.

The Friedman test is used to test the null hypothesis that there is no difference among the groups being compared. The test involves ranking the data within each group, calculating the mean rank for each group, and then calculating the sum of the squared deviations of the mean ranks from the overall mean rank. This value is compared to a critical value from the chi-squared distribution, and if it exceeds this value, then the null hypothesis is rejected.

The Kruskal-Wallis Test

This test is suitable for use under the ensuing conditions: (a) you have three or more conditions that you want to compare; (b) each condition is performed by a different group of participants; i.e. you have an independent-measures design with three or more conditions. (c) the data do not meet the requirements for a parametric test. (i.e., use it if the data are not normally distributed; if the variances for the different conditions are markedly different; or if the data are measurements on an ordinal scale).

Mann-Whitney U-test

The Mann-Whitney U-test is used to compare two unrelated, or independent, samples. The two samples are combined and rank ordered together. The strategy is to determine if the values from the two samples are randomly mixed in the rank ordering or if they are clustered at opposite ends when combined.

Type I and Type II Error

In hypothesis testing, we test a null hypothesis against an alternative hypothesis to determine whether there is evidence to reject the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis. However, we may make errors in our decision-making process, which can result in incorrect conclusions. These errors are referred to as Type I and Type II errors.

A Type I error occurs when we reject a true null hypothesis. In other words, we conclude that there is a significant effect when, in fact, there is no effect. This error is also known as a false positive or a false rejection.

On the other hand, Type II error is a statistical term that occurs when a hypothesis test fails to reject a null hypothesis that is actually false. In other words, it is the error of failing to detect a significant difference or effect when one exists.

Type II error is denoted by the Greek letter beta (β) and is calculated as the probability of accepting a null hypothesis when it is actually false. It is also known as a false negative error. Type II errors can occur for several reasons, such as having a small sample size, using an inappropriate statistical test, or having a low level of statistical power. To reduce the risk of making a Type II error, researchers can increase the sample size or use more powerful statistical tests.

It is important to minimize both Type I and Type II errors in hypothesis testing to ensure accurate and reliable results.

REFERENCING SYSTEMS

Referencing styles are standardised methods of citing sources in academic writing. They ensure that sources are properly credited and that readers can easily locate and verify the information used in the paper. There are several referencing styles used in academic writing, including:

- APA (American Psychological Association) style: commonly used in the social sciences, including psychology, sociology, and education.
- MLA (Modern Language Association) style: commonly used in the humanities, including literature, languages, and cultural studies.
- Chicago/Turabian style: commonly used in history, business, and some social sciences.
- Harvard style: commonly used in social sciences, including business and economics.
- Vancouver style: commonly used in medical and scientific writing.

Each referencing style has specific rules for formatting citations, including the order and format of the author's name, date of publication, title of the work, and other publication details. It is important to use the appropriate referencing style for your discipline and to ensure that your citations are accurate and complete.

Guidelines for Ethical Publishing

[Adapted from the Lecture on "Guidelines for Ethical Publishing" by Prof. (Dr.) Gautam Banerjee*]

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INTRODUCTION

Ethics or moral philosophy is a viewpoint that involves systematising, defending, and advancing concepts of right and wrong behaviour. It is based on well-founded tenets of right and wrong and specifies what people must do, usually in terms of rights, duties, benefits to society, fairness and justice, and intrinsic virtues that people behold. In academic research, ethics means a set of ideologies that determine what is good or right or allow authors to distinguish the right from the wrong. This set of beliefs are followed in academic circles all over the world to enrich research integrity, protect authors and researchers, lessen dilution of quality in content, and promise trust in writings. Ethics in research must explain what constitutes a socially responsible research and also describe the significance of ethical and moral values of society and the ethical norms to be followed in academic writing.

It is in this context that the importance of ethically conducted research, writing an article and/ or in discussions with ethical considerations are presupposed. Understood in general parlance, ethical considerations are usually followed as a part of the methodology and should form the integral part of the fabric of academic writings. Adherence to principles of informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, beneficence, non-maleficence while conducting the research are to be considered essential in this context.

A brief comprehension of the domain of knowledge and its ramifications would be useful to understand the context.

'WHAT & HOW' ABOUT THE DOMAIN OF KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is an awareness, a familiarity, or understanding of someone or something and is imbibed through facts, evidences, information, descriptions, or skills, which is acquired through education or experience by observing, realising,

or learning on a continuous basis. Knowledge can be theoretical or practical comprehension of a subject; it can be implicit (as with applied skill or expertise) or explicit (as with the academic understanding of a subject); in any case, it must be more or less formal or systematic In philosophy, the study of knowledge is called epistemology; which was explained by as Plato as "justified true belief". Thus, whenever we talk of knowledge acquisition, we mean involvement of complex cognitive processes: perception, communication, and reasoning; while knowledge is also said to be related to the capacity of acknowledgement and absorption of distilled information by human beings. Some methods of creating knowledge, such as trial and error, or learning from experience, tend to create highly situational knowledge which is generally embedded in language, culture, or traditions. Besides such tacit knowledge, it can also be assimilated through explicit means like knowledge codified and digitized in books, documents, reports, memos, etc. Documented information that can facilitate action.

Knowledge can assume diverse forms. It can be declarative which conveys data or facts about something or procedural which connotes the abilities or steps on how to do something. Knowledge can also be causal which is about being able to explain why something happens, Conditional which explains knowing when and why to apply the other forms of knowledge, or Relational which describes the ability to explain how concepts and facts are related to each other. In any case, the purpose of knowledge is to shed light to the deeper meaning of the subject which in turn leads to the development of wisdom in an individual.

Exploration of diverse aspects of knowledge lead to the prime subject of the field of epistemology, which studies what someone knows, how they come to know it, and what it means to know something. The problem of the value of knowledge concerns the question of why knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief. Philosophical cynicism is the notion that humans lack in any form of knowledge. Formal epistemology studies, among other things, rules governing how knowledge and related states behave and in what relations they stand to each other tend to have a profound repercussion on the ethical dimensions of academic writing. Science, thus, tries to acquire knowledge using the scientific method, which is based on repeatable experimentation, observation, and measurement. Presenting outcomes in the form of academic writings requires a truthful reflection of facts as inferred by the research and presented in its true form.

KNOWLEDGE, ACADEMIC WRITING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Knowledge and its articulation in a pure form is fundamental to academic writing. In the context of research, it is especially so because of its ability to help explore truth. Knowledge is a form of awareness or familiarity and is often understood as

awareness of facts or as practical skills, and may also mean familiarity with objects or situations.

A commonly asked question that occupies the mind of students and learners is why knowledge is important in academic writing and what knowledge in academic writing is required to enhance the academic skills. At one or another time throughout our studies or even our career the ability to be ready to write an educational paper is of high importance.

Domain knowledge is of critical importance for Academic writing. It means producing, codifying, transmitting, evaluating, renewing, disseminating, and learning knowledge and ideology in academic disciplines. Being able to write in an academic style is essential to disciplinary learning and critical for academic success.

The genre of academic writing is discipline dependent, so that neither specialists in academic writing nor practising academics in a discipline can, independently of each other, provide readers with the necessary help to develop the ability to write in their academic disciplines. Furthermore, the rules are largely tacit, i.e., they are not explicitly expressed, and articulating them explicitly can have serious effects on good disciplinary writing. The problems of introducing students into good academic writing in their disciplines are therefore not simple and it is suggested that, as words constitute the fundamental building blocks of writing, a better understanding of the problems arising in academic writing can come from a deeper understanding of words, including their translation into different languages. It is also suggested that the difficulties arising from the largely tacit nature of academic writing may be overcome by students and tutors discussing students' descriptions of their work.

VOCABULARY, SYNTAX LEVEL AND SEMANTIC LEVEL

It is imperative that importance of vocabulary, syntax level, and semantic level need special mention in academic writing. An elaborate understanding would help understand the usefulness of these concepts in academic writings.

Academic vocabulary means the words and phrases that are specific to a subject, task, or topic of study. should assume that the reader has limited knowledge of the topic, so explain all ideas completely and clearly. As we are aware, in general, academic vocabulary can be considered to consist of three types of vocabulary-general words which are acceptable for academic use; non-general 'academic' words; and technical words specific to an individual subject area.

In sum, academic vocabulary depends very much on what kind of context we are talking about. For example, spoken academic language differs from written

academic language; the language for one domain of knowledge is different from the other, especially in the technical language they use (though again, they have much in common). The main issue for scholars is to raise their awareness of which general words are formal enough to use in academic writing, build their knowledge of common academic words, and study and learn the technical vocabulary which is used in the discipline you are studying, or plan to study.

In linguistics, syntax is the study of how words and morphemes combine to form larger units such as phrases and sentences. Syntax plays an equally significant role in academic writing. Syntax is the set of rules that helps readers and writers make sense of sentences. It's also an important tool that writers can use to create various rhetorical or literary effects. The syntax of a language, whether it is English or any one of the different languages out there, provides the rules to structure the writing. The semantics of the language provides the meaning. Together, these two terms allow writers to write and convey meaning. Syntax helps us to make clear sentences that "sound right," where words, phrases, and clauses each serve their function and are correctly ordered to form and communicate a complete sentence with meaning. The rules of syntax combine words into phrases and phrases into sentences. Syntax skills help us understand how sentences work—the meanings behind word order, structure, and punctuation.

Semantics is the third concept is an essential facet of academic writing. The term is used to refer to subfields of several distinct disciplines, including philosophy, linguistics and computer science. In linguistics, semantics is the subfield that studies meaning. Semantics can address meaning at the levels of words, phrases, sentences, or larger units of discourse. Two of the fundamental issues in the field of semantics are that of compositional semantics (which pertains on how smaller parts, like words, combine and interact to form the meaning of larger expressions, such as sentences) and lexical semantics (the nature of the meaning of words). Other important issues are those of context and its role on interpretation, opaque contexts, ambiguity, vagueness, entailment, and presuppositions.

Several disciplines and approaches have contributed to the often-contentious field of semantics. One of the crucial enquiries which unites different approaches to linguistic semantics is that of the association between form and meaning. Some major contributions to the study of semantics have derived from studies in the 1980–1990s in related subjects of the syntax–semantics interface and pragmatics.

The semantic level of language interfaces with other modules or levels (like syntax) in which language is traditionally divided. In linguistics, it is typical to talk in terms of "interfaces" regarding such interactions between modules or levels. For semantics, the most crucial interfaces are considered those with syntax (the syntax–semantics interface), pragmatics, and phonology (regarding inflection and pitch).

Although the singularity of language has already been touched upon in the course of the preceding discussion, it was examined only in so far as it had bearing on the general features of human existence. We now propose to show that man's linguistic ability is essential to his nature. The relation between language and reason was recognised at the dawn of philosophy as witnessed by the ambiguous meaning of the word Logos. Let us therefore examine that aspect of the problems which has not as yet been afforded comprehensive treatment - to wit, the relation of linguistic capacity to human nature. It has to be observed though, that the following analysis will not be concerned with the inner structure of languages as explored e.g. in linguistics, structural linguistics, or modern linguistic philosophy. We are, rather, concerned with the phenomenon of language and its meaning in general, than with the meanings within languages. Yet we may take advantage here and there of the findings of modern linguistic research, in so far as these findings shed light on our question.

Man's linguistic capacity has often been related to his upright posture, and to the fact that his hands are free, these being considered pre-conditions to gesticulation or expression through movement in general. The assumption of a link between language and the erect posture or free hands of man, presupposes that gesture is similar to, or at least a interim step towards linguistic expression. This assertion rests upon the supposition that gesticulation though performed by hands or faces can lead to, or is accompanied by the uttering of sounds. But man's posture is not only the physical of factual condition of his linguistic capacity, but a metaphysical condition. We have already noted that man's upright stature is symbolic of his "eccentric position" vis-a.-vis his environment. In a way it could be said that the pre-condition of linguistic expression is the position in relation to objects which are assigned signs and symbols in language. Man's biological background for his fundamental or metaphysical status in the universe, which is crystallised in human language, is his upright posture. Yet leaving metaphysical speculations aside, we may assume only the factual connection between the concrete features of human nature, including man's upright posture and linguistic expression. Thus, within the limits of a phenomenological analysis of language, we may only posit the existence of its relation to human nature without raising, let alone proposing an answer, to the question which factor precedes the other in time.

An enquiry into the origins of human language would involve an attempt to reconstruct the situation prior to the linguistic period. A genetic explanation of language would rest upon, and work from the assumption that man appeared only in the later chapters of history and that his features can be explained only by tracing their evolution from the features of the species which preceded his emergence. Today linguistic literature no longer attaches primary importance

to the question of the origins of language, but is concerned with its nature and function. It is more than likely that it was due to the difficulties facing the genetic explanation, (namely the need so transcend the sphere of language in order to explain it), that led the enquiry in the phenomenological direction. It is, moreover, clear that the difficulty of tracing language to pre-linguistic sources, is rooted in the relation between language and consciousness. As was shown above, the genetic explanation of consciousness faces insurmountable difficulties. That which applies to the genetic explanation of consciousness applies, with all due qualification, to the genetic explanation of language. It might be argued that gesticulation affords the "missing link" between language proper and the prelinguistic situation. However, it is highly doubtful whether gesticulation constitutes a transition to language, as the use of sounds permeated with contents and meanings. When asserting that only human language is meaningful, it is necessary to show that this is indeed so. A meaningful language has been attributed to bees. Karl von Fritch, on the basis of his investigations, has arrived at the conclusion that the dance of the bees is a directed, meaningful means of expression denoting the availability and location of nectar as well as its distance from the hive.

In linguistics, linguistic competence is the system of unconscious knowledge that one knows when they know a language. It is distinguished from linguistic performance, which includes all other factors that allow one to use one's language in practice.

In approaches to linguistics which adopt this distinction, competence would normally be considered responsible for the fact that "I like ice cream" is a possible sentence of English, the specific suggestion that it denotes, and the particular sequence of phones that it consists of. Performance, on the other hand, would be responsible for the real-time processing required to produce or comprehend it, for the particular role it plays in a discourse, and for the particular sound wave one might produce while uttering it.

The distinction is widely adopted in formal linguistics, where competence and performance are typically studied independently. However, it is not used in other approaches including functional linguistics and cognitive linguistics, and it has been criticized in particular for turning performance into a ashcan for hard-to-handle phenomena.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the most common form of academic misconduct. Plagiarism in research entails a researcher using other's material in such a way that it presents

a misleading picture of being the researcher's own contribution. It refers to the act of using someone else's work or ideas without giving them proper credit or permission. It can involve copying someone else's writing, using their research findings, or even presenting someone else's writings as one's own.

Plagiarism is considered a serious academic misdemeanour, and it is widely viewed as unethical and dishonest. In many cases, it can lead to negative consequences, such as academic sanctions, loss of credibility, and legal action.

Thus, plagiarism can concern various aspects of research and its contents. Copying text from another author without appropriate permission or attribution and acknowledgement.

- Copying someone else's research ideas.
- Redoing other people's research and representing it as one's own without referring to the original work.

In other words, Plagiarism is about presenting work or ideas from another source(s) as your own, with or without consent of the original author, and/ or by including it into one's work without full acknowledgement. As University of Oxford mentions, "All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or in electronic form, is covered under this description, as is the use of material generated wholly or in part through use of artificial intelligence (save when use of Artificial Intelligence - AI for assessment has received prior authorisation e.g. as a reasonable adjustment for a student's disability). Plagiarism can also include re-using one's own work without citation. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence."

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has also published a guidance document in 2020 to ensure good quality research with veracity and focus on publishing the outcomes/ research in high-quality journals. It states that public trust in research and its output is crucial for a healthy modern society. Although the research initiative is self-correcting, this self-regulation occasionally needs an on-course correction. Over the years, academic institutions, professional societies, and governments have set several procedures, codes of conduct, standards, and principles to reinforce that trust in such institutions, authors, and publishers.

Quoting US Office of Science and Technology Policy, the UGC says that adoption of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit is unethical and must be shunned. Research misconduct does not include inadvertent errors or differences of opinion; however, generally accepted norms play a foremost role in relating significant departures from accepted practices. "Knowingly, intentionally, or recklessly" departing from standard practice can be grounds for allegations of misconduct."

There are several ways in which researchers and scholars often knowingly, deliberately, or thoughtlessly misrepresent their data and findings. Given the variety of ways in which research can be distorted and misrepresented, detecting such misconduct is not easy. Research misconduct and bias has become an important area of concern for academic research and a subject of study by government agencies and private organisations.

Data manipulation and tampering, suggest that it represents results from multiple experiments are just a few instances of the many ways in which many authors tend to misrepresent their study. These issues have become more common with the ready access to the deluge of information, which allows researchers to manipulate pictures of slides and biological specimens in minor ways to imply changes over time or represent multiple observations when in fact they are simply variations of the original picture.

The following basic practices are considered to be important to avoid plagiarism:

- In general, a person using another author's text, data, methods, ideas, results or formulations should identify the author and document the source.
- All intellectual property, regardless of format, should be appropriately attributed to the original owner.
- Researchers should neither submit previously published results without proper attribution, nor submit the same manuscript to multiple journals simultaneously.
- Conference presentations may be regarded as published material and cited appropriately.
- References to unpublished work of other authors should be identified as a personal communication or directly attributed to the author as an unpublished source.
- Reviewers must be particularly careful in ensuring that the material under review is treated as confidential until it has been published. Using parts or ideas from materials under review without proper attribution is not only plagiarism, but is intellectual theft, which places the entire evaluation system at risk.
- It is common for a researcher to refer to his or her earlier research. Again, when citing one's own work, it is usually best to treat it in the same way as if one was citing another scholar's work. Neglecting to take such precautions is called self-plagiarism

To avoid plagiarism, it is important to properly cite any sources that one uses in one's work, including quotes, paraphrases, and summaries. This involves

providing a reference to the original source, such as through in-text citations or a bibliography. Additionally, it is important to use one's own words and ideas whenever possible, and to seek permission when using someone else's work in a way that goes beyond fair use or fair dealing.

Predatory publishing, also write-only publishing or deceptive publishing, is an exploitative academic publishing business model that involves charging publication fees to authors without checking articles.

Predatory journals—also called fraudulent, deceptive, or pseudo-journals—are publications that claim to be legitimate scholarly journals, but misrepresent their publishing practices. Some common forms of predatory publishing practices include falsely claiming to provide peer review, hiding information about Article Processing Charges (APCs), misrepresenting members of the journal's editorial board, and other violations of copyright or scholarly ethics. Because of their increasing prevalence, this article aims to provide helpful information for authors on how to identify and avoid predatory journals.

Predatory publishing is an exploitative academic publishing business model that involves charging publication fees to authors without checking articles for quality and legitimacy, and without providing editorial and publishing services that legitimate academic journals provide, whether open access or not.

Predatory publishers are so regarded because scholars are tricked into publishing with them, although some authors may be aware that the journal is poor quality or even fraudulent but publish in them anyway. New scholars from developing countries are said to be especially at risk of being misled by predatory publishers. According to one study, 60 per cent of articles published in predatory journals receive no citations over the five-year period following publication.

Research findings are truly effective only when properly communicated and publicly shared. Moreover, researchers earn their proprietary rights by giving away their findings in the form of publications. Researchers must present all results, including favourable, unfavourable, and null findings. The truthful reporting of all findings is essential as a matter of record and to save time for future scholars, who need not redo the work that has already been done. An important aspect of research is its dissemination. The primary purpose of dissemination is to inform the larger community of the findings of the research activity so that it becomes a part of the scientific knowledge base for other scholars to replicate, test, challenge, confirm, and build upon.

Often, research findings are of interest to others, such as practitioners, policy- and decision-makers, and the public. Seeking proper outlets and providing the correct

information at an audience-appropriate level of unambiguousness and format become important criteria to ensure that the research reaches the appropriate audience in the correct format at the right time. Peer-reviewed journals are among the key channels for research dissemination. Researchers often want to reach a broader audience, beyond their academic peers. Common sense should guide the selection of outlets such as blogs, the popular press, and practitioner journals by focusing on those outlets that are most likely to reach the intended audience. While formats might vary, ethical considerations do not vary regardless of the audience or means of communication. Unfortunately, in a "publish-or-perish" world, publication can become an objective in its own right, encouraging a market for predatory journals and introducing unethical publication practices. The editorial policies of publishers of reputable journals are the first line of defence in ensuring research quality and integrity.

Emergence of predatory journals is another danger for ethics in academic writing. The recent increase in academic journals with little or no editorial standards to ensure research quality is becoming one of the more blatant instances of academic misconduct, apart from the commercial exploitation of the research community. As already explained, "Predatory journals and publishers are entities that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterised by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices". Researchers should avoid predatory journals both as an outlet for their manuscripts and as cited references in their research.

In this context the UGC guidance document "Public Notice on Academic Integrity," draws specific attention to predatory journals (UGC, 2019). Some of the typical characteristics of predatory journals are:

- Guaranteed acceptance of manuscript upon submission No peer-review process
- Pay and publish, irrespective of quality of manuscript or relevance to journal scope
- No journal website and/or no clarity on aims and scope of the journal
- Use of misleading and inaccurate self-generated impact factors No editorial board
- Publication of obviously poor-quality content and/or content that is clearly outside the stated scope of the journal

Additional guidance on selecting a suitable journal for publication is provided in section Submitting a manuscript to an unsuitable journal is one of the most

common mistakes that authors make and one of the major reasons for the rejection of a manuscript. First-time authors or those who are branching out into diverse research areas may be unfamiliar with the journals in the field. On the other hand, seasoned authors, too, tend to publish in the same journals, although new publication opportunities are constantly arising in the form of online- and open access (OA) publications. As per the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), "Open access journals are journals that use a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access."

Criteria for journal selection Authors should keep the following criteria in mind when choosing a journal as an outlet for their research:

- Do aims and scope of the journal align with those of the research work?

  Authors can readily find relevant information on a journal's homepage under sections such as "About the Journal", or "Aims and Scope". Careful review of this information can help determine whether their research might be a good fit for the journal. Scholarly journals are diverse in terms of their content and audience. Their variety can come from several sources, for example, journals vary by their level of specialisation, disciplinary focus, and relative emphasis on contributions to theory versus applications of theory. In the natural and physical sciences, a distinction is made between a focus on theory versus experiments; in the social sciences a distinction is often made in whether the target audience is academia or practitioners or some combination. It is up to the author to decide on the outlet that best meets the current scholarly requirements. The following questions are to be answered in this context.
- Has the journal published articles of similar nature?

  After short listing journals based on their broad aims and scope, authors should consider a more in-depth search within the journal with keywords from their manuscript to determine whether the journal has published similar work. An indicator of where a manuscript might be submitted is to be found among its own cited references. Journals that are most frequently cited might be good outlets for the work.
- What are the journal's submission requirements?

  In preparing a manuscript for submission, it is important to review the "Information for Authors". Journals often specify the type of research they publish. Submissions outside the journal's scope are often rejected without review. Journals also provide guidance regarding the length of the article and the limits, if any, on the number of tables and figures. Most OA journals also charge article-processing fees, which might play a role in determining where to submit an article.

- What is the journal's intended audience?

  International peer-reviewed journals typically tend to have wide readership than regional journals. The latter may tend to publish articles with geographic or local significance and may absence of international readership. Similarly, details of a niche academic topic are more likely to be accepted for publication in specialised journals. On the other hand, OA journals might be accessed by wider audience, leading to increased discoverability since there are no subscription fees associated with accessing them. Recently, several OA journals have been on the receiving end of increasing criticism over the lack of proper peer review and poor-quality control. A quick check to assess journal quality might be to determine whether a journal is indexed in reputed citation databases. Although, potentially subject to manipulation, the presence of respected scholars on the journal's editorial board is another indicator of journal quality.

- What is the journal's impact factor and rank?

  The Journal Impact Factor (JIF) is the ratio of the number of citations to the journal's articles to the number of total citable articles published in that journal over a fixed period of time. One should also look at the relative standing of a journal in a given subject category based on JIF. The JIF is a journal-level indicator that is one of the many criteria that can be used to determine aspects of journal quality. While there are several journal metrics, the journal "impact factor" has been one of the oldest reputed publisher-neutral metric trusted by researchers and research organisations worldwide.

SOME GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL PUBLISHING

From the above discussions it is clear that ethical publishing connotes the practice of ensuring that published research or work meets certain ethical standards. Here are some guidelines for ethical publishing:

- **Authorship:** All authors should have contributed significantly to the research or work, and should be listed as co-authors. Ghost writing and guest authorship should be avoided.
- **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a serious ethical violation and should be avoided. All sources should be properly cited and referenced.
- **Data fabrication and falsification:** Data fabrication involves making up data, while data falsification involves manipulating data. Both practices are unethical and should be avoided.
- **Conflict of interest:** All potential conflicts of interest should be disclosed in the publication. This includes financial, personal, or professional relationships that could influence the research or work.

- **Informed consent:** For research involving human subjects, informed consent should be obtained. This means that the subjects should be fully informed about the study and should give their voluntary consent to participate.
- **Animal research:** Research involving animals should follow ethical guidelines, such as the Three Rs (replacement, reduction, and refinement) and should be approved by an institutional animal care and use committee.
- **Reproducibility:** All research should be reproducible. This means that there should be sufficient detail provided in the publication for others to replicate the study.
- **Peer review:** Peer review is an essential part of the publishing process. Reviewers should be selected based on their expertise, and should provide unbiased and constructive feedback.
- **Editorial independence:** Editors should maintain editorial independence, and should not be influenced by factors such as financial gain, personal relationships, or conflicts of interest.
- **Corrections and retractions:** In cases where errors are found, corrections should be made promptly. In cases of serious ethical violations, retractions may be necessary.

Adhering to these guidelines is important for maintaining the integrity and credibility of published research and work.

Educational Research and its Purpose

[Adapted from the Valedictory Address by Prof. Ranjan Chattaraj*]

**In-charge, Department of Mathematics, Birla Institute of Technology, Deoghar*

ABOUT ACADEMIC WRITING

Academic writing is a type of writing that is used in academic settings such as universities, colleges, and research institutions. It is a formal style of writing that is used to communicate complex ideas, theories, and research findings. The purpose of academic writing is to contribute to the body of knowledge in a particular field or discipline.

Academic writing is characterised by its use of evidence-based arguments, objective language, and a structured approach. It often involves extensive research, critical thinking, and analysis of data. In academic writing, it is important to use appropriate academic language, including discipline-specific terminology and jargon.

There are several types of academic writing, including research papers, essays, theses, dissertations, and academic articles. Each of these types of academic writing has its own specific structure and requirements.

One important aspect of academic writing is the citation of sources. It is essential to properly cite sources to give credit to the original authors and to allow readers to verify the information presented. The most commonly used citation styles in academic writing are APA, MLA, and Chicago.

Overall, academic writing is an important part of scholarly communication and plays a crucial role in advancing knowledge and understanding in various fields of study.

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND ITS PURPOSE

Educational research refers to the systematic investigation of educational topics using rigorous scientific methods. The aim of educational research is to enhance our understanding of how people learn, and how educational systems and practices can be improved to support effective learning outcomes.

Educational research can be conducted at different levels, including at the individual, classroom, school, and systemic levels. It can also cover a range of educational topics, such as curriculum development, teaching methods, student learning, assessment, educational policies, and the impact of technology on learning.

Researchers in educational research typically use a variety of quantitative and qualitative research methods to collect and analyze data. These methods include surveys, experiments, case studies, interviews, focus groups, and observational studies.

The findings from educational research can be used by policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders to inform decision-making, and to develop evidence-based interventions and practices that promote effective learning outcomes for students.

The purpose of educational research is to systematically investigate and understand educational phenomena, such as teaching and learning, in order to improve educational practice and policy.

Educational research aims to gather evidence through various methods, including experiments, surveys, case studies, and observations, to address questions about how students learn, how teachers teach, how schools operate, and how educational policies and programs impact students and society.

Through educational research, educators and policymakers can make informed decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment, and resource allocation. They can also identify effective teaching practices and interventions that improve student learning outcomes and address educational inequities. Additionally, educational research can inform the development of new theories and approaches to teaching and learning, leading to innovation and improvement in education.

Academic writing for research typically involves conducting original research, analyzing data, and presenting your findings in a scholarly manner. The goal of academic writing is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in your field and to communicate your research to a wider audience.

EFFECTIVE ACADEMIC WRITING FOR RESEARCH

Here are some cues for effective academic writing for research:

Start with a clear research question or hypothesis: Your research should be guided by a clear question or hypothesis that you want to answer. This will help you focus your research and organise your writing.

Conduct a thorough literature review: Before starting your research, it's important to review the existing literature in your field. This will help you identify gaps in knowledge and develop a research strategy.

Use a structured approach to your writing: Academic writing typically follows a structured format, including an introduction, literature review, methods, results, and conclusion. Use this structure to organise your writing and ensure that your research is presented in a clear and logical manner.

Be precise and concise: Academic writing should be precise and concise, using clear and concise language to convey your ideas. Avoid using overly complex language or jargon that may be difficult for readers to understand.

Use proper citation and referencing: When presenting your research, it's important to cite and reference all sources used. This helps to give credit to previous research and to avoid plagiarism.

Revise and edit your writing: Before submitting your research, make sure to revise and edit your writing carefully. This will help to ensure that your research is presented in a clear, concise, and professional manner.

Overall, academic writing for research requires a rigorous and structured approach, as well as a commitment to clear and precise communication. By following these tips, you can ensure that your research is presented effectively and contributes to the existing body of knowledge in your field.

ACADEMIC WRITING: CHALLENGES

Academic writing can be quite challenging at times. Here are some of the most common challenges make academic writing very exciting.

The first challenges is about language proficiency. It is imperative that academic writing often presupposes a high degree of language proficiency, which can be a difficulty for non-native writers of a language.

The second issues in academic writing pertains to clarity of ideas. Academic writing entails clear and precise expression of thoughts and competence to translate thoughts on paper. This can be trying if the writers are not very clear in their ideas or if they are not yet conversant with the norms of academic writing.

The third challenge that must be surmounted in to hone excellent research skills. Academic writing often requires extensive research and the ability to evaluate and synthesize the data obtained from multiple sources. This can be quite challenging if the writer is not very familiar with the research process or if he has trouble finding pertinent sources.

Time management is yet another area which poses challenge to the writer. Academic writing can be time-consuming and at time tedious and hence be often difficult to manage the writing process alongside other academic or professional responsibilities.

Formatting and citation is also an area that can be difficult to manage by writers. Academic writing necessitates adherence to specific formatting and citation styles, which can be hard for those who are not familiar with these conventions.

It is generally seen that writers experience writer's block when working on complex and challenging projects like academic writing. This can make it difficult to generate ideas or make progress on the writing process.

Writing a good article with high impact is in itself a challenge but with constant practice and dedication, these challenges can be overcome successfully.

Academic writing is "thesis-driven,"; the starting point is a particular perspective, idea, or position applied to the chosen topic of investigation, such as, establishing, proving, or disproving solutions to the questions applied to investigating the research problem. Academic writing addresses complex issues that require higher-order thinking skills applied to understanding the research problem [e.g., critical, reflective, logical, and creative thinking as opposed to, for example, descriptive or prescriptive thinking]. Higher-order thinking skills include cognitive processes that are used to comprehend, solve problems, and express concepts or that describe abstract ideas that cannot be easily acted out, pointed to, or shown with images. Think of your writing this way: One of the most important attributes of a good teacher is the ability to explain complexity in a way that is understandable and relatable to the topic being presented during class. This is also one of the main functions of academic writing—examining and explaining the significance of complex ideas as clearly as possible. As a writer, you must adopt the role of a good teacher by summarizing complex information into a well-organised synthesis of ideas, concepts, and recommendations that contribute to a better understanding of the research problem.

Academic writing is about addressing complex issues that require higher-order thinking skills applied to understanding the research problem [e.g., critical, reflective, logical, and creative thinking as opposed to, for example, descriptive or prescriptive thinking]. Higher-order thinking skills include cognitive processes that are used to comprehend, solve problems, and express concepts or that describe abstract ideas that cannot be easily acted out, pointed to, or shown with images. Think of your writing this way: One of the most important attributes of a good teacher is the ability to explain complexity in a way that is understandable and relatable to the topic being presented during class. This is also one of the main

functions of academic writing—examining and explaining the significance of complex ideas as clearly as possible. As a writer, you must adopt the role of a good teacher by summarizing complex information into a well-organised synthesis of ideas, concepts, and recommendations that contribute to a better understanding of the research problem.

Academic writing is a means of producing, codifying, transmitting, evaluating, renovating, teaching, and learning knowledge and ideology in academic disciplines. Being able to write in an academic style is essential to disciplinary learning and critical for academic success. Control over academic writing gives you capital, power, and agency in knowledge building, identify formation, disciplinary practices, social positioning, and career advancement.

Developing expertise in academic writing is a constant quest to improve quality of papers and increasing the possibility of getting it published in journals. The process is lengthy and challenging that can take many years and involves constant mental and emotional struggles. It takes time, effort, awareness, experience, reflection, stamina, and support to become proficient in academic writing.

Some suggestions, mentioned below, would be helpful for improving the quality of academic writing. The first one is to foster productive writing habits that work for you. One must also read extensively in ones related field and widely in related fields, develop linguistic awareness and grammatical sensitivity and persevere through the recursive writing process of planning, outlining, drafting, revising, polishing, and presenting/publishing. Lastly, one must attend to key elements of academic writing, such as audience, purpose, organisation, style, clarity, flow, and appearance, and with continuous focus on the core of academic writing, one can always be excellence in academic writing.

SELECT ARTICLES ON ACADEMIC WRITING

On Academic Writing

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[Adapted from the Article in *European Business Review,* Vol. 18, No. 6, pp. 479–490, • November 2006]

ABSTRACT

Are there any useful tricks of the trade, as it were, to sustain a productive routine of writing for publication in academic journals?1 Nowadays the drive towards international publication is stronger than ever in Europe (poor Americans, who have to publish in domestic journals). The trend is irreversible and strong. At the same time teaching requirements remain the same and administrative duties tend to be distributed widely among faculty everywhere. There is a definite need to use time (writing time) more effectively, and even if work habits in academia are quite diverse and personal, there must be some lessons to draw by comparing experiences by those who have succeeded. Personally I cannot refer to any huge list of publications (only some 30 articles), but I have been in the business for some time (about 40 years), served as editor for many years, and as reviewer for a dozen journals. Here are some rules for success I have drawn from editorial experience and from interacting with those who know.

13 RULES ON THE TOPIC OF ACADEMIC WRITING

Aaron Wildavsky wrote a small book some 20 years ago called "Craftways - on the organisation of scholarly work". The book was full of good advice on how to get things done. I no longer remember all the advice except two; keep conversations with students short and business-like and that the essence of scholarly work is time management. This latter statement included the factual statement that academic writing is not a matter of waiting for inspiration, but instead of maintaining a habit. Wildavsky pointed out that we should work on schedule and establish rules, which could help us say no to all those interesting projects that tempt us to jump from one project to another without finishing any of them. Wildavsky means that we should set aside time every day for writing and we should make our environment aware of this so they don't disturb, and so they keep expectations high. ("How did your writing go today?"). The good academic writers I know use this regular scheduled writing pattern. Bill Starbuck locked himself in his room every morning working on manuscripts, and spent the afternoon chatting with colleagues when he was a researcher in Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin and helped Scandinavian

researchers along in the 1970ies. I myself decided when the children were small that I would not work at home and that has become a habit, which I seem unable to break now that they are no longer there. Accordingly, the following rules shall be worth considering.

Rule 1

Make academic writing a habit. Quality comes with regularity rather than with inspiration.

It is also important to point out that academic work is writing, more than anything else. Surely one can enjoy a good discussion in the seminar and some people love to give lectures, but the thing that remains and reaches the large academic audience is the written text. Surely you can see this if you think of your favourite quotation and the person behind it. Have you met the author? Do you have an image of her or him? My favourite quotation is: "How can I know what I think until I see what I say!" by Karl Weick. (It turns out that he has quoted somebody else (Robert Graves) who wrote it in 1927, see "Sensemaking in Organisations 1995). I met Karl Weick for the first time some 10 years ago at a workshop. He looked like I had imagined him, but he was a rather quiet person in the workshop - dominated the agenda without saying much. He is a writing man! He has dealt with most organisational problems before we discover them

Rule 2

Academic work is writing. Whatever the enjoyment of the day it is what you write that counts! Write down your argument! Articulate in writing!

Karl Weick was able to set the stage for the workshop we attended by explaining what he was working with in such a way that we, the other participants, came back to his problem, time and again, in our discussion. He was working with forest fires and fire fighters and the problem that he presented to us, which we could not get out of our minds, was Drop your tools! They have found that in recent forest fires in the USA several fire fighters have died with heavy tools in their hands. They could have saved their life if they had dropped the tools and run to safety, but instead they kept a 35 kilo chain saw in their hands and died. There even was a foreman who ordered his six men to drop their tools and run, but came after them and picked up the tools and died! Why don't they drop their tools? (Why don't scholars drop their tools once in a while and try a different method?). The effect of this fascinating problem presentation was that Karl Weick got a lot of ideas from us during the seminar, because we would associate to his problem when presenting our own papers. I remember saying to him during a coffee break: Why

are they called "fire fighters?" Are they supposed to fight the fire? Is the 'fighting' connotation promoting reckless bravery or masculinity or ….? Is there something in the word? - and I saw him make a note afterwards.

Another example of the same effect of telling your colleagues about your problem was the "floating information" thing told by Susan Starr and Geoffrey Bowker at the same workshop. The Clinton administration had invested in different improvement project for 6 university libraries in the USA. Starr and Bowker participated in the evaluation of this commendable initiative. They had found that across all disciplines and faculties it was true that the more qualified the researcher the less use of the library. Doctoral students used the library more than doctors etc. The explanation was that the more qualified researchers were part of networks that they kept informed about their research problems. A positive effect of this is that if your colleagues find something that seems relevant to your problem, they inform you about it (Have you seen what XX wrote about YY in the ZZ journal! Here is a copy?). This kind of information that floats along e-mail connections they call "floating information." By keeping colleagues informed about what you are working on you get help for free! I had a benefactor like that many years ago. David Rosenberg was a sociologist driven out of his sociology department by Thatcher policies and working with accounting people at the UMIST in Manchester at the time. A colourful person and he had a memorable row with Aaron Wildavsky on matters of principle (door slamming and harsh words) at the serene Municipalities' conference retreat at a historical site outside Stockholm. That was where we become friends. Well, he used to send me books bought in second hand bookshops with greetings like "You need this! You owe me 2£ 50.!"

Rule 3

You are more productive if you chose problems that interest also others than yourself. Present your problem to others and they will come up with good ideas!

If you have got this wonderful opportunity to have the enjoyable work (we really should pay for the privilege rather than draw a salary!) as academic researcher you simply must publish. Usually we are employed on taxpayers' money and we have to return the favour by reporting results. It is our duty to make our results available to the international research community and to practice. Usually we are not very good at presenting our results to practice, but we should try. It is not enough to present it to students and make them learn it for the exams. That is probably the best way to assure that it is forgotten anyway! The publishing process, be it books or articles in journals, is time consuming. When I talk about publishing in seminars, I sometimes get the complaint that the review process takes

such a long time that a researcher cannot afford to wait for the outcome of the review process. He or she must go on in order to be at the research frontier!

This is flawed reasoning in several respects! First the research front is what is published. If you do not publish you cannot, by definition, be at the research front. Second if you think that you will fall behind the research front if you do not do what others did before they got their current publication out, try to remember that their articles have also gone through a long review process. You are already behind anyway. Maybe they are doing something else now?

Third, it is hard to know what should be considered the frontier at any given moment. Some articles are cited intensively for a while and then forgotten, others assume classical status slowly peaking 3-4 years or later on those nice curves generated by the SSCI. And even if the front moved away in one area it might be more stable in another. There are leaks between disciplines and one could always try to make the choice of journals to approach wider by finding a writing partner in another discipline.

But it is true that it is frustrating to wait for the review process to produce results. The best way to beat that feeling is to find something to do while you wait. Write an article! While you wait for the proofs for your next book, work on the next-next one! It is pure nonsense for a researcher to just sit and wait for the review process! It is however a problem to come back to the old stuff if you get a request from the editor to revise the article and if you are preoccupied with something else at the time. This is something that has to be managed. The best piece of advice here is probably that one should not spread one's work over too wide areas, because that might make it difficult to do a good, job of revising articles which have been in review for, maybe a year. My experience though, is that people do not shift between topics or theories so much that it is very difficult to come back to old manuscripts.

Rule 4

Make it a habit to work on several manuscripts at a time. Do not stop working because you have sent a manuscript for review!

When you get the comments from reviewers you may see them as hostile and insulting at first reading. As editor I sometimes get letters from authors who are very angry with incompetent reviewers who have not even understood the simplest propositions. My answer is if friendly reviewers, who have volunteered to spend part of their busy life on this manuscript, and who are chosen because they are experts in the area, misunderstand, then there just might be something wrong with the way things are presented in the manuscript. In 90% of the cases the

fault lies with the author and her or his way of expressing thoughts. It is childish to take offence from the reviewers. They do an important job and if they don't get the message try another way of formulating the text. This is the chance you get to have professional feedback based on the text alone (in blind review journals), not on friendship or respect or animosity.

While speaking of reviewers it is appropriate to point out that the quality of a scientific journal comes from the review process. The difficulty today with journals in our area is, besides getting good, innovative manuscripts, to keep good reviewers happy. They do a thankless job in the shadow of anonymity and they don't like to be insulted by getting draft manuscripts to review. If there is anything that prejudices reviewers it is to get sloppy manuscripts to read. Sometimes I get cover letters saying that" I was going to revise this manuscript anyway, but I thought I would wait until I have comments from reviewers". This is not the way to work! Now I remember another advice from Wildavsky (1989): Send in the 4th or 5th version of your manuscript to the journal! Do not insult reviewers by sending them half ready manuscripts! Reviewers are busy professionals who love challenges but who do not want to correct draft manuscripts. The best way of preparing a manuscript for the journal review process is to have one or two review processes of your own and a conference version before the manuscript is submitted. The more reviewers you can have in your network the better manuscripts you submit and the more productive you are. But above all pay close attention to reviewer comments, don't dismiss them as misunderstandings or products of malevolent competitors, who want to stop your career and steal your ideas. Oh, by the way, the most useful advice on how to do revision work, that I know of, can be found in Booth *et al.,* (1995) or later editions.

Rule 5

Love your reviewers. Try to get as many of them as you can and respect their comments! Do review work yourself!

I think that a neglected part of research training is the review work which is a significant part of the work of any qualified researcher. It should be properly included in all doctoral programs.

The language problem is a great problem to most of us. If you consider how often you are seduced by trivialities expressed in forceful English, which you don't exactly understand but you don't want to look in the dictionary. The English speakers are often not aware of the language problem, especially in England where the language is such an important indicator of social status, you are likely not to be heard properly if your language is faulty. It is not only the grammar! It

is the structure and the rhythm, which gets fuddled by the structures of your first language. For Scandinavians it is quite difficult to write good English, because we tend to think in the structures that our languages provide us with. Therefore, even a grammatically correct English text by a Scandinavian can be quite amusing reading for a native speaker. The cure for this is, besides visits to English speaking countries, to write English regularly and get feedback on the language, but also to read effective English, which I think is best found in the international news magazines like *Time*, *Newsweek* etc. We do have to write in English! The trend is very obvious. There is concentration going on in the scientific journal industry and the language will continue to be English. *The Scandinavian Journal of Management* is published in Oxford even if the publishing company has been taken over by a Dutch publisher!

A further piece of advice concerning English is the following: My experience is that it is better that I write the manuscript in bad English and have it corrected than if I write it in Swedish and have somebody translate it. Translators may be good in English but they are usually not as knowledgeable about the research topic as I am. This makes them uncertain and therefore they tend to be bound by my text and the result is not a good readable English text. I know that there are some people who insist on writing in their own language and have texts translated, but that requires very good translators who take the time to discuss manuscripts with the author. Such translators are rare and expansive, and research grants are not cut out for such extravaganza.

Rule 6

Work on your English! Find out what effective English is like!

The first thing that you think about after defending your thesis is that now it is over this terrible ordeal of revising chapters and responding to unreasonable requests from tutors. Well it isn't! After a few days of vacation, you have to start collecting items for your CV. You discover that there is a large number of new PhDs this year and they all want to have the best academic jobs. There used to be plenty of opportunities for a young PhD, and there still is, but things will never be as good as they were when your current professors were in the same situation. (Don't believe them! They did not have to struggle to get ahead as you will have to!). You have to publish to show that you are trying to improve yourself all the time.

So what have you got to start with? You have your thesis work and there is plenty of things that were not said in the thesis or which could have been said differently. If we assume that your thesis is a monograph (a book) it is desirable to present

the results in article form to a wider audience. Please, don't try to make an article to summarize the whole thesis! It almost never works. Instead select a theme and make an article of that. Then select another theme…. The reason for articles summarizing theses usually are rejected is that the author tries to say too much in those few pages since she or he wants to be true to the thesis. The purpose of the article is different from that of the monograph. One could say that the book tries to build a self-contained argument, with all the premises included in the first few chapters, while the purpose of the article is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge, or, as Anne Huff (1999) would say, to participate in one particular conversation. I think the idea about participating in a conversation is a sobering one for article writers – you don't want to repeat unnecessarily what has already been said, but you want to align (dovetail as it were) your contribution with that conversation. There is no point then in demonstrating in an article that you have read classical authors like March, Simon or Hofstede (they may be your readers!) in a survey of the literature, in the way you may have to do to earn the doctorate. In an article you use literature references to indicate in what area (conversation) your contribution aim for and expects an evaluation to be based in. If you want to criticize some earlier work, or demonstrate where earlier research went wrong, it is another matter. Because then it is very important to show that you are giving the previous writers a fair reading.

This means that all the work that you put into the chapter on earlier research will be reduced to a few lines in the beginning of the article manuscript, and furthermore, you will have to delete most of the thesis literature since it is common background knowledge for your article readers. Literature references thus are much more focused on the problem at hand in an article. Also it is usually not necessary to state your philosophy of science explicitly, since your reader will recognize that in the first few lines anyway. If your article is about methodology the situation may be different, but you are not likely to have much to add to the literature on methodology at the time you have just made it to the doctoral level.

Rule 7

Use literature references in an article to indicate what ball park you are playing in. (Don't tell us what famous researchers said in classical articles, because we know that!)

The article you are about to write on the basis of your thesis work, thus is much narrower than the thesis. It keeps to one problem and it goes deeper into it. Usually, you cannot say more than one thing in a good article, so you should be careful to build it up to demonstrate your point. This is made easier if the structure is right. The most important structural aspect of an article is the idea of Beginning - Middle - End.

Everything you write should have a beginning, a middle and an end. The first reaction to such advice is Of course! Tell me something not so trivial! Well, in my more than 10 year life as editor I estimate that 90 % of the rejected manuscripts were rejected because they broke this rule. Usually, bad manuscripts consist of middle parts while lacking beginning and end. This is probably because authors are so fascinated by their findings that they forget to introduce their problem and since they have no problem there is no way to stop talking about the findings. The point of having a proper problem formulation is that it automatically offers a nice way to end the article by giving an answer to the problem! In doctoral theses there is always a section in the concluding chapter on future research and sometimes this is carried over into articles making them open-ended and non-conclusive. What we want from an article is a clear statement of what the contribution is. If it is a good article readers will start to generate ideas about future research by themselves. Let them enjoy that pleasure by themselves! You will probably not do the future research you suggest anyway, will you?

Stating the problem is probably the most important part of the article writing. If you get that right, the rest will follow automatically. Go back to the formulation of the problem many times during revisions and see if you cannot make it clearer and more aligned to your findings. The simpler the better! The ideal problem formulation is "Now I will find out whether X is black or white" which gives the obvious ending "It was black!" (or white). To have a simple problem statement does not preclude complicated model work or analysis of data in the middle part of the article!

There are, of course standard structures for articles, which may serve as reminders when you build your argument. One should remember, though, that slight variations may serve as "bait" for editors who have seen it all too many times already. That structure is:

- Statement of the problem
- Earlier research relevant to that problem
- Focused statement of immediate research purpose (e.g., hypotheses)
- Statement of what data are needed for that purpose, and a justified choice of method to collect and analyze such data. (note justification refers to the problem, not that you happen to know how to do, e.g., DEA).
- Specification of how data were collected and results obtained - presentation.
- Discussion - implications.

In the individual case the emphasis may vary, but the structure is usually the same. No doubt that the beginning, and to some extent the end, sets the stage for the middle part. No matter how well the middle part is done a dull beginning can reduce its value to almost nothing.

Rule 8

Beginning - Middle - End.

Preparing your manuscript for submission is also part of the research process. All journals have instructions to authors, usually on the inside of the back cover, and those instructions are there because authors are supposed to follow them. The instructions are there because manuscripts go through a complicated production process where the link between the author and the editor is only a tiny little line up in the left-hand corner of a very complex flow chart. Many people are involved and work has to be standardised because the production controllers get promoted etc. It is not possible to treat every author with the respect he or she deserves, and have a unique procedure for the individual manuscript. These are mass production systems and you must comply! The large publishing houses have several hundred journals in all kinds of areas, and they are working with electronic editions etc. They have all the arguments for standardisation (although we see an increase in the willingness to include pictures in articles). If the instructions say double-spaced it is because you are supposed to provide a double spaced manuscript, if it says three copies don't send two. Abstract, references, figures, questionnaires.... follow the instructions! Do not submit to more than one journal at a time! Submitting a manuscript to a journal means that you reserve the copyright for that journal while it is reviewing it. You can stop the process and take the manuscript back at any time but you cannot reserve the copyright to more than one publisher at a time. Once the first journal has rejected the manuscript you are free to submit it to another one, but then note that the instructions may be different. Electronic submissions dominate nowadays but the same advice remains: don't make it more difficult for your manuscript to get through the review process by creating unnecessary extra work for the editors.

Rule 9

When submitting a manuscript follow the instructions!

The editor will look through the manuscript and if it looks ready for review select the reviewers. Usually two reviewers are selected and usually they accept, but sometimes reviewers are too popular among editors and manuscripts pile up on reviewers' desks. Then, later then intended, the manuscript may be returned to the editor and it will take some time before the review report is produced. Reviews are blind in scientific journals. That means that the author's name is taken away (see to it that you name is only on the cover page of the manuscript) and it is not good manners to refer conspicuously to your own work. If you do you should write "Cohen (1996) found that... " Rather than "In my excellent study from 1996

(Cohen 1996) I found that...". It also means that the reviewers are anonymous. The only exception I remember is when Hofstede was reviewer of a manuscript that used his work in the wrong way and he chose to state at the beginning of his comments that "My name is Hofstede." When the editor gets the reviewer reports (consisting of one page with an evaluation and a recommendation to the editor, and one part with comments directed to the author) the editor writes a decision letter which is usually several pages long and has the structure;

1) Reviewer 1 recommends xx on this and that basis, 2) reviewer 2 recommends yy on this basis; 3) my own opinion is this or that; my editorial decision is "revise and resubmit"..... Comments to the author from the reviewer are enclosed and the author is asked to revise and write an accompanying letter specifying how she or he has responded to the points made by the reviewers. All reviewers get the comments by the other reviewer and the decision letter. In this way reviewers can see how their judgement compares with that of the others. Also the reviewers are well prepared to evaluate the revised version of the manuscript when it arrives, because if the decision is "revise and resubmit" the same reviewers will look at the revised manuscript and that calls for two conclusions. The first is that the author should pay close attention to every point the reviewers have made (even if it is to state that you disagree), because if you do not care about what they say why should they spend part of their life (even if it is only a day) reading your manuscript. The other conclusion is that the feedback of review comments among regular reviewers will tend to give the journal its specific profile – at least for journals where the editor sits for a longer period. Then the journal can be said to maintain a specific conversation that you want to be part of. You want to avoid unwarranted discord with that conversation.

Are there any tricks to get a better deal from the reviewers, one might ask. The obvious trick is that journals have profiles if you examine their content over the last few years. It may have to do with the choice of editor. In some journals the editor is shifted every three years or so, and that might influence the content, but usually frequent shifts of editor will make the journal more mainstream because it takes some time to shift a profile. As to the choice of topic there are fashions, which can be detected by scrutiny of the last few issues. Therefore it is wise to check the profile of the journal to see if the manuscript fits. It isn't much point in sending a manuscript based in one school of thought to a journal which favours another school. There are also some journal editors who look favourably at references to earlier work in their journal (citation indices are used to classify journals into the A, B etc. categories, and an author who does not refer to an article which is obviously relevant in the targeted journal is not improving prospects of acceptance. The editor knows what has been published in her/his own journal! Even if the

editor is appointed for the short periods of 3 years it might be a goal to improve the standing of the journal by way of citations, so one should as a minimum not miss relevant citations to the journal one submits to.

Rule 10

Check that your manuscript fits the profile of the journal!

When the author gets a decision to revise, which is the second most frequent decision, (during my 10 years as editor I have only accepted a manuscript without revision twice!) it is time to plan how to respond to all points raised. If you choose not to change something, that must also be justified.

The first thing to note in this situation is that the decision "revise and resubmit" establishes a new bond between author and editor (and reviewers) because there is a common wish toward improvement. In spite of all the critical points raised the revise decision puts you in a very good position. Don't waste it by interpreting reviewer comments as hostile! I remember that during my first year as editor of the Scandinavian Journal of Management I got a submission from a well known American researcher in a particular area that I, myself, was quite familiar with. The manuscript had not been given the finish one could expect from such a distinguished person, but I sent it out for review without delay (short backlog). The reviewers were quite frank about the deficiencies, but I could find enough positive comments to justify a revise decision, but I feared that the negative comments by the reviewers would turn the author off. To my relief I got a revised version back quite quickly and the author expressed his gratitude for the useful comments (close to insulting if you had asked me!). This illustrated very clearly how professional academic work needs to be able to turn critique (even less diplomatic forms) into something positive. The point is this bond that emerges between author and reviewers in the process. A consequence of this mutual interest in a successful outcome is that there is usually great improvement in the revised versions of the articles. Many are accepted at this stage, a few may have to revise again. I believe that the "stereo"-effect of having two reviewer comments makes the author see a clearer picture of what the manuscript is all about. The conclusion then is that reviewer comments should be taken very seriously and the author should consider both comments at the same time. By reconsidering the manuscript from both points of view the author can assume its own line of reasoning. (But please note the stupidity in the conclusion: "The reviewers have not understood the point so I will not change the argument!").

As noted above the manuscript will have gone through several revisions already before submission so the author may feel boredom taking upper hand in relation to the manuscript. It might be a good idea sometimes to put the manuscript to rest for

a while, but in most cases I would guess that the author will make a better job of it by striking when the iron is hot. Again, revision work can be done well as routine work (see Booth *et al.*, 1995).

Rule 11

Revision is the core of academic writing!

Editors are powerful persons in the life of academics, especially in those in journals which have as high rejection rates (which is usually the sign of an A-journal) as those in our area have. (It should be noted that journals in the sciences like Physics, Chemistry and Medicine have much lower rejection rates!) But there are limitations to the power of the editor. If I as editor were to go against the opinion of the reviewers too often, I would soon have no reviewers left. Also, every editor wants to edit a respected journal. Therefore, the editor cannot grant personal favours to authors. Especially I found it very annoying when authors sent manuscripts to me and wanted me to, in a sense, co-author the article. "Do you think this manuscript could be turned into a publishable article and what do you think should be done with it?" I guess most editors (even for B and C journals) have quite enough of work with the ordinary submissions, which will take a large part of their time, not to appreciate this kind of invitation. The response, if any, will probably be rather rude. Even having to write a letter saying that the editor is not interested in helping the author write a proper manuscript will take time. Just imagine how much correspondence is involved in the editor's work? I remember the situation when about halfway through my stint as editor I thought it a good idea to clear some memory in my computer by putting my correspondence letters to authors on a diskett or something (this was the time before CDs) and the message came up thet there was not enough room on the medium I was transferring the file to. It made me reflect upon the work and time put into these letters, and upon how the editor is caught in a web of relations and dependencies. All these arguments, and other ones, point to the fact that all kind of capacity problems prevents an editor from deviating too much from common (researcher) sense in the decisions. It is not a coincident that most respected journals are quite mainstream! This underlines another fact of life. In those great journals the editor can manage to hold the editorship for only a few (usually 3) years. Of these 3 years the first is easily lost as the editor struggles to get the hang of it and adapt the rest of her/his life to the editorship calling. The second year can be productive as the flow starts to appear manageable, and the third year is devoted to find somebody willing to take over and organising the transition. Exercising power is more like an unintended consequence of the efforts to deal with the workload.

Rule 12

The editor has power, but it is limited.

Academic writing is a frustrating process, which most of us are tempted to avoid now and then, but it is very educational to take the abuse and do the revisions and admit that what you did at first can be improved. It is through the elimination of mistakes of all kinds (remember Popper!) that we make progress. It is satisfying to add another title to your CV and it is nice to see that others refer to your work. It is well worth the effort in many ways. It might even be profitable! (The editors of the Journal of Accounting & Economics calculated that an article published in their journal was worth 30.000 USD to the author in terms of increased life income.) The crucial thing, however, is that the academic work cycle ends with publication. Your work is not done until you have reported in a journal. That is why I would like to finish with the slogan one can find on Lars Engwall's office wall. It serves to remind us that we need work discipline to do what is required for successful publication. Others cannot see when we work and when we do something else (Did you here about the colleague at one of the UK universities that went to work in the morning, put his jacket on the support for the back of his office chair, and then went home again?), so you have to discipline yourself. We work in projects, research grants are given for projects, and we are supposed to finish these projects and publish the results. Somehow the most important results tend to be neglected, we never finish the projects properly since we are so busy getting started with the next one. And since we are now on our way towards new exciting discoveries, we postpone the publishing of current reports to a later date. Oh, how much interesting, but unexploited material I have in binders on my shelves! Better start writing that article today!

Rule 13

Work, Finish, Publish.

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What is "Academic" Writing?

L. Lennie Irvin

[Adapted from the chapter in Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, Volume 1,
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INTRODUCTION: THE ACADEMIC WRITING TASK

As a new college student, you may have a lot of anxiety and questions about the writing you'll do in college.* That word "academic," especially, may turn your stomach or turn your nose. However, with this first-year composition class, you begin one of the only classes in your entire college career where you will focus on learning to write. Given the importance of writing as a communication skill, I urge you to con-sider this class as a gift and make the most of it. But writing is hard, and writing in college may resemble playing a familiar game by completely new rules (that often are unstated). This chapter is designed to introduce you to what academic writing is like, and hopefully ease your transition as you face these daunting writing challenges.

So, here's the secret. Your success with academic writing depends upon how well you understand what you are doing as you write and then how you approach the writing task. Early research done on college writers discovered that whether students produced a successful piece of writing depended largely upon their representation of the writing task. The writers' mental model for picturing their task made a huge differ-

Most people as they start college have wildly strange ideas about what they are doing when they write an essay, or worse—they have no clear idea at all. I freely admit my own past as a clueless freshman writer, and it's out of this sympathy as well as twenty years of teaching college writing that I hope to provide you with something useful. So, grab a cup of coffee or a diet coke, find a comfortable chair with good light, and let's explore together this activity of academic writing you'll be asked to do in college. We will start by clearing up some of those wild misconceptions people often arrive at college possessing. Then we will dig more deeply into the components of the academic writing situation and nature of the writing task.

MYTHS ABOUT WRITING

Though I don’t imagine an episode of MythBusters will be based on the misconceptions about writing we are about to look at, you’d still be surprised at some of the things people will believe about writing. You may find lurking within you viral elements of these myths—all of these lead to problems in writing.

Myth #1: The “Paint by Numbers” myth

Some writers believe they must perform certain steps in a particular order to write “correctly.” Rather than being a lock-step linear process, writing is “recursive.” That means we cycle through and repeat the various activities of the writing process many times as we write.

Myth #2: Writers only start writing when they have everything figured out

Writing is not like sending a fax! Writers figure out much of what they want to write as they write it. Rather than waiting, get some writing on the page—even with gaps or problems. You can come back to patch up rough spots.

Myth #3: Perfect first drafts

We put unrealistic expectations on early drafts, either by focusing too much on the impossible task of making them perfect (which can put a cap on the development of our ideas), or by making too little effort because we don’t care or know about their inevitable problems. Nobody writes perfect first drafts; polished writing takes lots of revision.

Myth #4: Some got it; I don’t—the genius fallacy

When you see your writing ability as something fixed or out of your control (as if it were in your genetic code), then you won’t believe you can improve as a writer and are likely not to make any efforts in that direction. With effort and study, though, you can improve as a writer. I promise.

Myth #5: Good grammar is good writing

When people say “I can’t write,” what they often mean is they have problems with grammatical correctness. Writing, however, is about more than just grammatical correctness. Good writing is a matter of achieving your desired effect upon an intended audience. Plus, as we saw in myth #3, no one writes perfect first drafts.

Myth #6: The Five Paragraph Essay

Some people say to avoid it at all costs, while others believe no other way to write exists. With an introduction, three supporting para-graphs, and a conclusion,

the five paragraph essay is a format you should know, but one which you will outgrow. You'll have to gauge the particular writing assignment to see whether and how this format is useful for you.

Myth #7: Never use "I"

Adopting this formal stance of objectivity implies a distrust (almost fear) of informality and often leads to artificial, puffed-up prose. Although some writing situations will call on you to avoid using "I" (for example, a lab report), much college writing can be done in a middle, semi-formal style where it is ok to use "I."

THE ACADEMIC WRITING SITUATION

Now that we've dispelled some of the common myths that many writ-ers have as they enter a college classroom, let's take a moment to think about the academic writing situation. The biggest problem I see in freshman writers is a poor sense of the writing situation in general. To illustrate this problem, let's look at the difference between speaking and writing.

When we speak, we inhabit the communication situation bodily in three dimensions, but in writing we are confined within the two-dimensional setting of the flat page (though writing for the web—or multimodal writing—is changing all that). Writing resembles having a blindfold over our eyes and our hands tied behind our backs: we can't see exactly whom we're talking to or where we are. Separated from our audience in place and time, we imaginatively have to create this context. Our words on the page are silent, so we must use punctuation and word choice to communicate our tone. We also can't see our audience to gauge how our communication is being received or if there will be some kind of response. It's the same space we share right now as you read this essay. Novice writers often write as if they were mumbling to themselves in the corner with no sense that their writing will be read by a reader or any sense of the context within which their communication will be received.

What's the moral here? Developing your "writer's sense" about communicating within the writing situation is the most important thing you should learn in freshman composition.

Figure 1, depicting the writing situation, presents the best image I know of describing all the complexities involved in the writing situation.

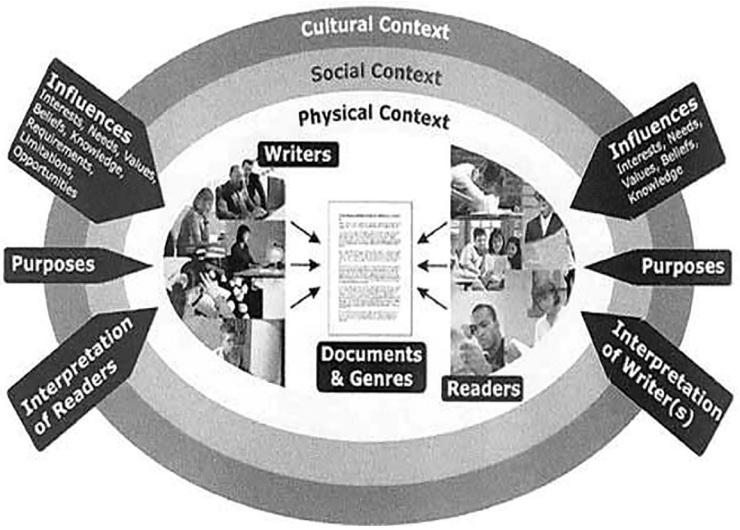

Figure 1: Looking More Closely at the “Academic Writing” Situation

Source: *“A Social Model of Writing.” Writing@CSU. 2010. Web.10 March 2010. Used by permission from Mike Palmquist.*

Writing in college is a fairly specialised writing situation, and it has developed its own codes and conventions that you need to have a keen awareness of if you are going to write successfully in college. Let’s break down the writing situation in college:

So far, this list looks like nothing new. You’ve been writing in school toward teachers for years. What’s different in college? Lee Ann Carroll, a professor at Pepperdine University, performed a study of student writing in college and had this description of the kind of writing you will be doing in college:

What are usually called ‘writing assignments’ in college might more accurately be called ‘literacy tasks’ because they require much more than the ability to construct correct sentences or compose neatly organised paragraphs with topic sentences. . . . Projects calling for high levels of critical literacy in college typically require knowledge of research skills, ability to read complex texts, understanding of key disciplinary concepts, and strategies for synthesizing, analyzing, and responding critically to new information, usually within a limited time frame. (3–4)

Academic writing is always a form of evaluation that asks you to demonstrate knowledge and show proficiency with certain disciplinary skills of thinking, interpreting, and presenting. Writing the paper is never “just” the writing part. To be successful in this kind of writing, you must be completely aware of what the professor expects you to do and accomplish with that particular writing task. For a moment, let’s explore more deeply the elements of this college writing “literacy task.”

Knowledge of Research Skills

Perhaps up to now research has meant going straight to Google and Wikipedia, but college will require you to search for and find more in-depth information. You'll need to know how to find information in the library, especially what is available from online databases which contain scholarly articles. Researching is also a process, so you'll need to learn how to focus and direct a research project and how to keep track of all your source information. Realize that researching represents a crucial component of most all college writing assignments, and you will need to devote lots of work to this researching.

The Ability to Read Complex Texts

Whereas your previous writing in school might have come generally from your experience, college writing typically asks you to write on unfamiliar topics. Whether you're reading your textbook, a short story, or scholarly articles from research, your ability to write well will be based upon the quality of your reading. In addition to the labor of close reading, you'll need to think critically as you read. That means separating fact from opinion, recognizing biases and assumptions, and making inferences. Inferences are how we as readers connect the dots: an inference is a belief (or statement) about something unknown made on the basis of something known. You smell smoke; you infer fire. They are conclusions or interpretations that we arrive at based upon the known factors we discover from our reading. When we, then, write to argue for these interpretations, our job becomes to get our readers to make the same inferences we have made.

The Understanding of Key Disciplinary Concepts

Each discipline whether it is English, Psychology, or History has its own key concepts and language for describing these important ways of understanding the world. Don't fool yourself that your professors' writing assignments are asking for your opinion on the topic from just your experience. They want to see you apply and use these concepts in your writing. Though different from a multiple-choice exam, writing similarly requires you to demonstrate your learning. So whatever writing assignment you receive, inspect it closely for what concepts it asks you to bring into your writing.

Strategies for Synthesizing, Analyzing, and Responding Critically to New Information

You need to develop the skill of a seasoned traveller who can be dropped in any city around the world and get by. Each writing assignment asks you to navigate

through a new terrain of information, so you must develop ways for grasping new subject matter in order, then, to use it in your writing. We have already seen the importance of reading and research for these literacy tasks, but beyond laying the information out before you, you will need to learn ways of sorting and finding meaningful patterns in this information.

In College, Everything’s an Argument: A Guide for Decoding College Writing Assignments

Let’s restate this complex “literacy task” you’ll be asked repeatedly to do in your writing assignments. Typically, you’ll be required to write an “essay” based upon your analysis of some reading(s). In this essay you’ll need to present an argument where you make a claim (i.e. present a “thesis”) and support that claim with good reasons that have adequate and appropriate evidence to back them up. The dynamic of this argumentative task often confuses first year writers, so let’s examine it more closely.

Academic Writing is an Argument

To start, let’s focus on argument. What does it mean to present an “argument” in college writing? Rather than a shouting match between two disagreeing sides, argument instead means a carefully arranged and supported presentation of a viewpoint. Its purpose is not so much to win the argument as to earn your audience’s consideration (and even approval) of your perspective. It resembles a conversation between two people who may not hold the same opinions, but they both desire a better understanding of the subject matter under discussion. My favourite analogy, however, to describe the nature of this argumentative stance in college writing is the courtroom. In this scenario, you are like a lawyer making a case at trial that the defendant is not guilty, and your readers are like the jury who will decide if the defendant is guilty or not guilty. This jury (your readers) won’t just take your word that he’s innocent; instead, you must convince them by presenting evidence that proves he is not guilty. Stating your opinion is not enough—you have to back it up too. I like this courtroom analogy for capturing two importance things about academic argument: 1) the value of an organised presentation of your “case,” and 2) the crucial element of strong evidence.

Academic Writing is an Analysis

We now turn our attention to the actual writing assignment and that confusing word “analyze.” Your first job when you get a writing assignment is to figure out what the professor expects. This assignment may be explicit in its expectations, but often built into the wording of the most defined writing assignments are implicit

expectations that you might not recognize. First, we can say that unless your professor specifically asks you to summarize, you won't write a summary. Let me say that again: don't write a summary unless directly asked to. But what, then, does the professor want? We have already picked out a few of these expectations: You can count on the instructor expecting you to read closely, research adequately, and write an argument where you will demonstrate your ability to apply and use important concepts you have been studying. But the writing task also implies that your essay will be the result of an analysis. At times, the writing assignment may even explicitly say to write an analysis, but often this element of the task remains unstated.

So, what does it mean to analyze? One way to think of an analysis is that it asks you to seek How and Why questions much more than What questions. An analysis involves doing three things:

1. Engage in an open inquiry where the answer is not known at first (and where you leave yourself open to multiple suggestions)
2. Identify meaningful parts of the subject
3. Examine these separate parts and determine how they relate to each other

An analysis breaks a subject apart to study it closely, and from this inspection, ideas for writing emerge. When writing assignments call on you to analyze, they require you to identify the parts of the subject (parts of an ad, parts of a short story, parts of Hamlet's character), and then show how these parts fit or don't fit together to create some larger effect or meaning. Your interpretation of how these parts fit together constitutes your claim or thesis, and the task of your essay is then to present an argument defending your interpretation as a valid or plausible one to make. My biggest bit of advice about analysis is not to do it all in your head. Analysis works best when you put all the cards on the table, so to speak. Identify and isolate the parts of your analysis, and record important features and characteristics of each one. As patterns emerge, you sort and connect these parts in meaningful ways. For me, I have always had to do this recording and thinking on scratch pieces of paper. Just as critical reading forms a crucial element of the literacy task of a college writing assignment, so too does this analysis process. It's built in.

Three Common Types of College Writing Assignments

We have been decoding the expectations of the academic writing task so far, and I want to turn now to examine the types of assignments you might receive. From my experience, you are likely to get three kinds of writing assignments based upon the instructor's degree of direction for the assignment. We'll take a brief look at each kind of academic writing task.

The Closed Writing Assignment

- Is Creon a character to admire or condemn?
- Does your advertisement employ techniques of propaganda, and if so what kind?
- Was the South justified in seceding from the Union?
- In your opinion, do you believe Hamlet was truly mad?

These kinds of writing assignments present you with two counter claims and ask you to determine from your own analysis the more valid claim. They resemble yes-no questions. These topics define the claim for you, so the major task of the writing assignment then is working out the support for the claim. They resemble a math problem in which the teacher has given you the answer and now wants you to “show your work” in arriving at that answer.

Be careful with these writing assignments, however, because often these topics don’t have a simple yes/no, either/or answer (despite the nature of the essay question). A close analysis of the subject matter often reveals nuances and ambiguities within the question that your eventual claim should reflect. Perhaps a claim such as, “In my opinion, Hamlet was mad” might work, but I urge you to avoid such a simplistic thesis. This thesis would be better: “I believe Hamlet’s unhinged mind borders on insanity but doesn’t quite reach it.”

The Semi-Open Writing Assignment

- Discuss the role of law in Antigone.
- Explain the relationship between character and fate in Hamlet.
- Compare and contrast the use of setting in two short stories.
- Show how the Fugitive Slave Act influenced the Abolitionist Movement.

Although these topics chart out a subject matter for you to write upon, they don’t offer up claims you can easily use in your paper. It would be a misstep to offer up claims such as, “Law plays a role in Antigone” or “In Hamlet we can see a relationship between character and fate.” Such statements express the obvious and what the topic takes for granted. The question, for example, is not whether law plays a role in Antigone, but rather what sort of role law plays. What is the nature of this role? What influences does it have on the characters or actions or theme? This kind of writing assignment resembles a kind of archaeological dig. The teacher cordons off an area, hands you a shovel, and says dig here and see what you find.

Be sure to avoid summary and mere explanation in this kind of assignment. Despite using key words in the assignment such as “explain” “illustrate” analyze”

"discuss" or "show how" these topics still ask you to make an argument. Implicit in the topic is the expectation that you will analyze the reading and arrive at some insights into pat-terns and relationships about the subject. Your eventual paper, then, needs to present what you found from this analysis—the treasure you found from your digging. Determining your own claim represents the biggest challenge for this type of writing assignment.

The Open Writing Assignment

a. Analyze the role of a character in Dante's The Inferno.
b. What does it mean to be an "American" in the 21st Century?
c. Analyze the influence of slavery upon one cause of the Civil War.
d. Compare and contrast two themes within Pride and Prejudice.

These kinds of writing assignments require you to decide both your writing topic and you claim (or thesis). Which character in the Inferno will I pick to analyze? What two themes in Pride and Prejudice will I choose to write about? Many students struggle with these types of assignments because they have to understand their subject matter well before they can intelligently choose a topic. For instance, you need a good familiarity with the characters in The Inferno before you can pick one. You have to have a solid understanding defining elements of American identity as well as 21st century culture before you can begin to connect them. This kind of writing assignment resembles riding a bike without the training wheels on. It says, "You decide what to write about." The biggest decision, then, becomes selecting your topic and limiting it to a manageable size.

Picking and Limiting a Writing Topic

Let's talk about both of these challenges: picking a topic and limit-ing it. Remember how I said these kinds of essay topics expect you to choose what to write about from a solid understanding of your subject? As you read and review your subject matter, look for things that interest you. Look for gaps, puzzling items, things that confuse you, or connections you see. Something in this pile of rocks should stand out as a jewel: as being "do-able" and interesting. (You'll write best when you write from both your head and your heart.) Whatever topic you choose, state it as a clear and interesting question. You may or may not state this essay question explicitly in the introduction of your paper (I actually recommend that you do), but it will provide direction for your paper and a focus for your claim since that claim will be your answer to this essay question. For example, if with the Dante topic you decided to write on Virgil, your essay question might be: "What is the role of Virgil toward the character of Dante in The Inferno?" The thesis statement, then, might

be this: “Virgil’s predominant role as Dante’s guide through hell is as the voice of reason.” Crafting a solid essay question is well worth your time because it charts the territory of your essay and helps you declare a focused thesis statement.

Many students struggle with defining the right size for their writing project. They chart out an essay question that it would take a book to deal with adequately. You’ll know you have that kind of topic if you have already written over the required page length but only touched one quarter of the topics you planned to discuss. In this case, carve out one of those topics and make your whole paper about it. For instance, with our Dante example, perhaps you planned to discuss four places where Virgil’s role as the voice of reason is evident. Instead of discussing all four, focus your essay on just one place. So, your revised thesis statement might be: “Close inspection of Cantos I and II reveal that Virgil serves predominantly as the voice of reason for Dante on his journey through hell.” A writing teacher I had in college said it this way: A well-tended garden is better than a large one full of weeds. That means to limit your topic to a size you can handle and support well.

Three Characteristics of Academic Writing

I want to wrap up this section by sharing in broad terms what the expectations are behind an academic writing assignment. Chris Thaiss and Terry Zawacki conducted research at George Mason University where they asked professors from their university what they thought academic writing was and its standards. They came up with three characteristics:

1. Clear evidence in writing that the writer(s) have been persistent, open-minded, and disciplined in study. (5)
2. The dominance of reason over emotions or sensual perception. (5)
3. An imagined reader who is coolly rational, reading for information, and intending to formulate a reasoned response. (7)

Your professor wants to see these three things in your writing when they give you a writing assignment. They want to see in your writing the results of your efforts at the various literacy tasks we have been discussing: critical reading, research, and analysis. Beyond merely stating opinions, they also want to see an argument toward an intelligent audience where you provide good reasons to support your interpretations.

The Format of the Academic Essay

Your instructors will also expect you to deliver a paper that contains particular textual features. The following list contains the characteristics of what I have for

years called the "critical essay." Although I can't claim they will be useful for all essays in college, I hope that these features will help you shape and accomplish successful college essays. Be aware that these characteristics are flexible and not a formula, and any particular assignment might ask for something different.

Characteristics of the Critical Essay

"Critical" here is not used in the sense of "to criticize" as in find fault with. Instead, "critical" is used in the same way "critical thinking" is used. A synonym might be "interpretive" or "analytical."

a. It is an argument, persuasion essay that in its broadest sense MAKES A POINT and SUPPORTS IT. (We have already discussed this argumentative nature of academic writing at length.)
b. The point ("claim" or "thesis") of a critical essay is interpretive in nature. That means the point is debatable and open to interpretation, not a statement of the obvious. The thesis statement is a clear, declarative sentence that often works best when it comes at the end of the introduction.
c. Organisation: Like any essay, the critical essay should have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. As you support your point in the body of the essay, you should "divide up the proof," which means structuring the body around clear primary supports (developed in single paragraphs for short papers or multiple paragraphs for longer papers).
d. Support: (a) The primary source for support in the critical es-say is from the text (or sources). The text is the authority, so using quotations is required. (b) The continuous movement of logic in a critical essay is "assert then support; assert then support." No assertion (general statement that needs proving) should be left without specific support (often from the text(s)). (c) You need enough support to be convincing. In general, that means for each assertion you need at least three supports. This threshold can vary, but invariably one support is not enough.
e. A critical essay will always "document" its sources, distinguishing the use of outside information used inside your text and clarifying where that information came from (following the rules of MLA documentation style or whatever documentation style is required).
f. Whenever the author moves from one main point (primary support) to the next, the author needs to clearly signal to the reader that this movement is happening. This transition sentence works best when it links back to the thesis as it states the topic of that paragraph or section.

g. A critical essay is put into an academic essay format such as the MLA or APA document format.

h. Grammatical correctness: Your essay should have few if any grammatical problems. You’ll want to edit your final draft carefully before turning it in.

CONCLUSION

As we leave this discussion, I want to return to what I said was the secret for your success in writing college essays: Your success with academic writing depends upon how well you understand what you are doing as you write and then how you approach the writing task. Hopefully, you now have a better idea about the nature of the academic writing task and the expectations behind it. Knowing what you need to do won’t guarantee you an “A” on your paper—that will take a lot of thinking, hard work, and practice—but having the right orientation toward your college writing assignments is a first and important step in your eventual success.

DISCUSSION

1. How did what you wrote in high school compare to what you have/will do in your academic writing in college?
2. Think of two different writing situations you have found your-self in. What did you need to do the same in those two situations to place your writing appropriately? What did you need to do differently?
3. Think of a writing assignment that you will need to complete this semester. Who’s your audience? What’s the occasion or context? What’s your message? What’s your purpose? What documents/genres are used? How does all that compare to the writing you are doing in this class?

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Academic Writing and Difference

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the theme of cross-cultural issues in the teaching of writing (Theme 4) through the cultural politics of knowledge and identity.

Success in academic writing is dependent not merely on general competence, but also on an understanding of the constitutive cultural system of academic writing. In negotiating writing tasks, writers must also negotiate underlying assumptions of reader expectations and writing strategies which have decided cultural bases (Grabe and Kaplan 1996).

What Canagarajah (2000) calls "the geopolitics of academic writing" (p. 85) arises from an asymmetry of power between academic writing and the Other discourses that it tends to negate. To perpetuate itself, academic writing conceals its own cultural roots which lie demonstrably in Western notions of rationality affiliated with the Enlightenment (Knoblauch and Brannon 1984). Thus, what is, in fact, cultural is made to appear neutral.

I explore these issues and the possibilities for an ethnologically informed practice via Canagarajah (2000), Ivanič (1998), Buell (2004), Bleich (1993), Prior (2004) and others.

As Rohinton Mistry, prizewinning (East) Indian Canadian novelist recounts:

I left Bombay for Canada at the age of twenty-three, and assumed before I got there that it would be no new thing for me . . . The English I spoke was not the English they spoke. I mean there were so many different Englishes . . . . At one time I thought this was the culture of the West but now I know it was something different. It was the Indian version of the West and it was mine. (2004 p. 199).

Rohinton Mistry' fateful encounter with the many Englishes, seems to confirm Halliday's (1978) suggestion that "language comes to life only when functioning in some environment" (p 28). Language is part of a larger cultural and social system not immediately obvious, especially from the margins. Yet one cannot help detect

in Mistry's confessional narrative a rather peculiar readiness, almost a complicity, with the discourses of the host culture which now define him. It is as though in the interstices of the "many different Englishes" Mistry encounters his difference mediated for him by the host culture, pre-eminently as an absence. Knowledge, even self knowledge, for the postcolonial subject cannot be legitimated without the help of the centre: thus Mistry's "now I know." His affirmation as a postcolonial subject can take place, it seems, only through an epistemic struggle which Suresh Canagarajah (2000) also articulates eloquently in his ethnological study of academic writing.

Why, one feels compelled to ask, does the very difference that sustains Mistry as a writer later seem like an epistemic absence from the perspective of the host culture now at the outset? A lack of knowledge of the implicit assumptions of the host culture can appear reductively as a lack of intelligence, almost. But, borrowing Hymes' words, we may retort, "Character does not come in one accent alone; intelligence has many voices" (p. 209).

Mistry's experience, at once a parable of Otherness and the legitimation of knowledge in dominant discourses, has implications for academic writing, whose implicit codes, pose formidable challenges to the uninitiated. It is in academic writing that the different disciplines appear to organise themselves coherently as discourse communities; and it is through academic writing that we understand how such discourse becomes, as Herzberg says, "a means of maintaining and extending the group's knowledge and of initiating new members into the group." (1986, p. 21; Cited Swales 1990, p. 21). (See also Ivanič 1998, p. 78).

Entering a discipline thus means entering a discourse — in the form of academic writing. However, the entry process is fraught with complications. What appears as transparent and neutral to insiders is not so to outsiders. The roots of these discourses lie demonstrably in a European cultural and intellectual movement, the Enlightenment (Knoblauch and Branon 1984, pp. 51-76), which gave rise to that mode of 'disinterested' inquiry we call positivism. However, as Canagarajah's ethnological analysis of academic writing demonstrates, "disinterested positivism serves ideological interests" (p. 57).

Academic writing can pose challenges for local and overseas students alike, although for different reasons. But for both groups it is their outsider status, their difference, in academia that compounds their difficulties. In the end, however, difference makes outsiders of us all.

To enter a discourse also means constructing ourselves in it, requiring the invention of what Roz Ivanič (1998) has called a "discoursal identity" (p. 181).

Learning to do so, however, may require us to subsume our differences in ways that, for cultural or social reasons or both, we may be unprepared for.

What strategies, if any, does the conventional teaching of writing provide students for negotiating such difficulties of academic writing associated with difference? And what can ethnology provide?

There is an emerging realisation in both the theory and practice of academic writing, as exemplified by Grabe and Kaplan, that we need to widen our focus beyond issues of grammar despite its continuing importance: "The teaching of writing is separate and distinct from the teaching of syntactic accuracy and the teaching of various text conventions (e.g. spelling punctuation) (1996, p. 422)." To be meaningful, instruction has to account for the cultural, social or ideological underpinnings of writing tasks such as reports, case studies, assignments and so on.

Or too long we have also been fixated on simplistic formulations of difference. "Differences in languages," which was used in contrastive analysis to account for "all the variance that arises with language learning" is, as Buell (2004) asserts, somewhat inadequate in the end. Because this form of analysis failed to capture many other nuances. Citing Selinker (1974), Buell offers the notion of "interlanguage" as a possible alternative (p. 101). In this explanatory model the variations in native and non-native productions occur not simply because of differences in the languages but primarily because in using a foreign language one actively creates an interlanguage, an in-between language, whose "structures neither mirror the learner's first language nor follow the usual patterns of the target language" (p. 101).

Historically, the shift in explanatory models also marks the development of contrastive rhetoric out of contrastive analysis. And it is in the emergence of the latter Buell sees the promise of "inter-rhetoric, where learners of new rhetorical codes may creatively produce novel, border zone forms, new combinations and transformations that mimic neither the code they are learning nor the code they already know" (p. 102). While Buell's analysis is meant to work well with other interpretive procedures . . . "intertextual, and ethnographic approaches can work together to enrich an understanding of codes and code-switching in written texts". . . , it is still grounded to a large extent in issues of second language writing. In this sense, the linguistic approach, the very discourse of contrastive rhetoric, cannot also escape completely the scrutiny from ethnology. Although Buell may be the first one herself to admit this ("the goal of analysis then is not to definitively state the boundaries of monolithic codes" (p. 118)), we cannot ignore the dangers Caanagarajah warns against when he says, "the linguistic explanation smacks

of blaming the writers for a deficiency, and the culturalist paradigm benignly ghettoises" writers "under the guise of tolerating differences (p. 107). The linguistic approach is, we might say, a logical positivist concession to difference.

Understanding writing, it must be emphasised, entails going beyond the conventional ensemble of issues associated with it that has evidently constricted the possibilities for all parties: teachers, students, theorists. This may be illustrated most vividly through the work of Knoblauch and Branon (1984):

In traditional practice, commenting on student writing is essentially a product-centred, evaluative activity resembling literary criticism. Students write "papers" so that teachers can describe their strengths and weaknesses, grading them accordingly . . . The assumption has been that evaluating the product of composing is equivalent to intervening in the process. Teachers have concentrated, therefore, on retrospective appraisals of "finished" discourses . . . (p. 123)

The inherent limitations of traditional writing pedagogy is not only the privileging of product over process but more remarkably the conflation of the two. Moreover, the deafening silence of the student writer is only deepened by the feedback given in the traditional writing class. The actual dynamics of power existing in the traditional writing class between the teacher and the taught is enacted through a crucial but poorly understood interrelationship between writing, feedback and revision as dissected here by Knoblauch and Branon.

Using actual samples of feedback on student writing, they demonstrate further how the use of "facilitative feedback" as opposed to "directive commentary" (p. 126) can improve students' attempts to be more effective writers. Interestingly, the two different forms of feedback also correspond to two different forms of writing instruction, namely, the writing workshop and the traditional writing classroom, respectively. As a mode of instruction, the writing workshop has definite potential to free learners from the strictures of the traditional writing class in which writing instruction stagnates into a few set formulas:

The writing workshop depends on a style of response which differs altogether from that of traditional instruction because its concern is not merely to elicit writing in order to judge it, but to sustain writing through successive revisions in the pursuit of richer insights and concurrently the maturation of comprehension. (Knoblauch and Branon 1984 p. 122).

The writing workshop eschews the write-and-be-judged protocol of conventional instruction in favour of a write-and-explore protocol which incidentally also finds a ready sympathy with the ethnological ethos. It is also in the workshop that we may return some of the power to student writers by raising their status from silent interlocutors to that of active partners in knowledge construction.

The search must now be widened to capture the denser pragmatics in which academic writing remains embedded and for which the ethnological procedure is particularly well suited. In this enterprise our fields and laboratories are none other than our classrooms — and the artefacts none other than the texts that our students produce. Students become not only our informants but "co-researchers" (Ivanič 1998, p. 110) in the larger social reality of learning.

The ritualised forms of the academic writing scene is overdue for ethnological analysis. Because regardless of whether student writers are native or non-native speakers of the language both have to learn, as Buell observes, the same "multiple and fluid codes" that constitute target texts in, unsurprisingly, "graduate seminars and disciplinary fields" (102). Due recognition needs to be accorded to students' struggles as outsiders: in academic writing tasks students are indeed endeavouring to enter a highly organised but largely invisible social system. The rituals of academia are enacted very often in academic writing. Target texts cannot be produced by students in designated academic settings such as the graduate seminar simply by following instructions – a belief that seems to underpin much of conventional teaching instruction, itself a product of the ruling ideology. Producing target texts in designated settings requires entering textual processes ultimately grounded in issues of power. Academic writing is simultaneously a style of writing and a form of social practice that sustains and is in turn sustained by academia. Its codes reflect the values of its practitioners.

Buell suggests that "code switching," a further analytical framework for understanding the complexities of the writing process, "highlights, as other theories do not, the social significations of linguistic and rhetorical codes in terms of how they both reflect and produce social identities, relations, and contexts" (102).

Thus, linguistic constructions in students' work that strike us as different and which we are generally inclined to dismiss as nothing more than the lack of proficiency in the target language or perhaps the discourse of academic writing, if they are first language speakers, may be emanating from a far more complex set of reasons than we are prepared to admit. In the first place, this understanding appears to be modelled on our commonly held beliefs about writing: we tend to conflate writing with the mechanical act of transcribing. Our pedagogies based on such simplistic understanding of writing tend to target the most superficial issues — grammar, mechanics — as if no other problems existed. For instance, in writing there is an intense tripartite struggle for meaning between writer, text, and audience, which supersedes the mundane occupations of the general run of the mill writing instruction.

As Paul Prior (2004) suggests, "in everyday usage, 'writing' signifies two distinct acts, inscription and composing, that are treated as one . . . when we think of writing, our first image is probably of an act of inscription . . . (p.168)." The very "writing processes . . . where texts come from (p.167)," therefore, remain insufficiently theorised. Texts are also, if anything, notoriously non-homogeneous entities, derived from "varied materials" (p. 167), which impart to them a complex dynamics. Textual theorists such as Derrida have pointed out that "the 'objectivist' or worldly consideration of writing teaches us nothing if reference is not made to a psychical space of writing" (p. 212).

Capturing the rich dynamics of the text which is essential to the teaching of writing requires a considerably broader approach. Consider, for instance, the matter of scholarship in research articles signalled overtly through the use of "para-textual conventions" (Canagarajah, 2002, p. 177) without which knowledge cannot be transformed into a legitimate "textual product" (p. 165) as Canagarajah demonstrates. The "geopolitics of academic writing" (p. 85) arises from the dominant culture's one-sided valorisation of its own textual practices at the expense of others. There is a concommitant Othering of knowledge through the Othering of textual conventions — which are, as Canagarajah demonstrates, in many ways material practices, too.

As far as writerly strategies are concerned, para-textuals are the overt reminders of learning. But even subtler devices are available. Ellen Barton's "rich feature analysis" of academic texts demonstrates how the use of "evidentials . . . words that express a writer's attitude toward knowledge" (2000, p. 72)" have a decisive effect on how writers sound in their texts. The writer's "epistemological stance" (74) is intimately connected to the authorial persona they are required to create for themselves. In discourse communities which essentially transact in knowledge the lack of appropriate knowledge stances can mean failure to gain entry:

Experienced academic writers use their epistemological stance to establish and maintain authority as individual knowledge-makers.

Inexperienced academic writers, in contrast, use their epistemological stance to establish and maintain general society as the authority over knowledge . . . This contrast between inexperienced writers' identification with general society and experienced writers' identification with the academic community is one of the classic conflicts between professors and students, experts and lay people, town and gown. (Barton 2004, pp. 74-75).

Thus, from the outset writers can find themselves inside or outside the discourse depending on the identities they create for themselves through their epistemological stances as Barton demonstrates here. In written texts writers are

attempting to convey more than information. How central the issue of identity is in relation to writing may be seen from the recent work of Roz Ivanič (1998) who points out emphatically that where writing is concerned " . . . it is not so much a problem of the meaning I want to convey as a problem of what impression of myself I want convey" (p. 336). Ivanič demonstrates this evocatively through the self-performing inaugural of her book Writing and Identity:

Who am I as I write this book? . . . I am a writer with a multiple social identity, tracing a path between competing ideologies and their associated ideologies. I have an idea of the sort of person I want to appear in the pages of this book: responsible, imaginative, insightful, rigorous, committed in most of my social roles, but not all. (1)

Do our students know how to become the sorts of persons they are required to become in their written work? Do we tell them how they should project themselves? Our failure to do so is not a simple one as it makes us complicit in serving as relays for an ideology.

We should ask not only who we become as we write, but, more crucially, who do our students become or try to become as they write for us? What histories, cultural and personal, do they bring to the task of writing? How does the writing task require writers to shape their respective social identities?

Pedagogic strategies for teaching writing at the university based on these interrogations can lead us to a much broader understanding of how texts are produced. This focus on texts and textual strategies shifts the ground of inquiry: no more are we interested only in mere catalogues of linguistic differences (ungrammatical vs. grammatical; native vs. non-native; novice vs. expert) but an examination of writers and writing.

Moreover, the view of writing which Ivanič adopts enables us to understand how writer's identities are shaped by that discourse of higher education we call academic writing. The notion of "discoursal identity" (Ivanič 1998, p. 181) opens up the possibility of understanding texts as a set of different identity positions in writing. Some of these are offered to us; others we must create for ourselves. But nothing is fixed and everything is open to negotiation and contestation. Once freed from its traditional concerns thus, the teaching of writing can become an initiation into the richness of a textual dynamics registered through knowledge stances, identity positions, conscious and unconscious responses to generic expectations, the successful or unsuccessful emulation of disciplinary discourses and so forth. These priorities require us to look at writing as more than a set of determinate outputs — "as though the text in its present form were a fixed entity" (Knoblauch and Branon 1984 p. 125).

Texts themselves may provide some clues. However, a more comprehensive picture can be developed by exploring these issues through open-ended interviews with student writers. The very act of helping student writers explore their own texts in this manner and develop narrative accounts of them retrospectively leads to a greater awareness of the writing process on the part of the students. Much of the work undertaken by Ivanič (1998), Buell (2004), Bleich (1993), Prior (2004) and others corroborates this.

Bleich outlines the possibilities of ethnology for the teaching of writing thus:

The situation of academic ethnography is political, but some ethnographic studies of school classrooms are helpful correctives. Focusing attention on the classroom as an institution (a culture? a community?) can loosen the boundary between theorists and teachers, and between academic ethnographic work and the work of writing in classrooms. (177).

This, in fact, seems more a manifesto than a description of the possibilities of ethnography as a pedagogical tool. Bleich's statement exhorts us, it seems, to reinvent ourselves within the institution as researchers of writing—if we are not always already so by virtue of our profession. The loosening of boundaries Bleich mentions appears to place theory and practice on the same continuum. No longer can we content ourselves to be the purveyors of the rules of 'good' writing. We must become the mediators of that form of self-understanding which is peculiar to the project of writing. "Bringing identity explicitly onto the agenda in the learning and teaching of writing," as Ivanič observes perspicaciously, "transforms it from a local 'fix-this-essay' undertaking into a much more broadly conceived project (338)." This may be justifiably read as an indictment of conventional practices in which students and teachers both, it seems, are equally implicated in conceptualising writing simplistically as a set of responses that could be learned and applied unthinkingly. Even such a casual remark ("a local 'fix-this-essay' undertaking"), almost an aside, carries a telling resonance of that sort of populism which perhaps prevails in university writing centres.

It is precisely here that the ethnological project provides us with a means of countervailing the pervasive reductionism surrounding the teaching of writing: we correct grammar, therefore we teach writing, seems to be the literalist mantra. But when we teach writing we effectively teach a form of social practice which may not be understood without, first, recognising that writing, to reiterate an earlier point, far exceeds the simple act of transcription: we occupy various discourse positions in writing, which are in the final analysis socially conceived. Thus, as Basso (1974) states: "Armed with an adequate code description, the ethnographer of writing may turn his attention to a more complex set of problems involving the code's

manipulation in concrete situations" (p. 428) — which in our case happens to be academic writing.

An ethnology of academic writing will necessitate, first, the rescuing of writing from simplistic formulations. We will need to understand the institutional setting of higher education as a discursive process and the challenges it poses in negotiating identity and difference for many students. Working closely with students we can develop a better understanding how writing can be both a possibility and a limit. At the moment we deliver writing instruction normatively. Ethnology can shed light on the actual conditions in which writing as composition takes place and the textual practices that emanate from it. One can envisage the specific form of changes that an ethnologically informed writing practice may lead to, if we consider how the workshop vis à vis the conventional writing class has greater emancipatory possibilities as delineated earlier here through the work of Knoblauch and Branon (1984). Workshops provide the means for rehearsing the many identity positions and their concomitant voicing strategies — which ethnologically formulated responses to student writing can help foster.

Failure to internalise the voices in which apparently routine academic tasks are performed leads inevitably to an epistemic devaluing evn as difference becomes confounded with inability. For instance, the voice of disinterested inquiry in academic tasks, we might find, is none other than the voice of the gentleman scholar. But for social or cultural reasons it may not be equally available to all of us. Thus as Ivanič (1998), reminds us "women, older people, Black people, homosexual and bisexual people, and working class people might bring with them to their studies," a perception "that they do not have the right to a voice in the academic community" (p. 340).

Academic writing tasks, as we can see, are not socially neutral. Left uncorrected thus, writing instruction can easily replicate the very conditions of disadvantage that prevail in the larger society. Ethnology can provide this much needed corrective while enabling us to formulate strategies not for the containment but the promotion of difference. The present study serves as a prolegomenon to a much more detailed engagement later.

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Writing a Literature Review of Research Paper: A Step-by-Step Approach

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ABSTRACT

Writing a literature review in the pre or post-qualification, will be required to undertake a literature review, either as part of a course of study, as a key step in the research process. A literature review can be just a simple summary of the sources, but it usually has an organisational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis. It demands a range of skills, such as learning how to define topics for exploration, acquiring skills of literature searching and retrieval, developing the ability to analyze and synthesize data as well as becoming adept at writing and reporting, often within a limited time scale. The aim of this article is to present a step-by-step approach to writing a literature review research paper to facilitate student and novice reviewers' understanding.

Keywords: Literature Review; Literature Searching; Writing a Review.

INTRODUCTION

A literature review discusses published information in a particular subject area, and sometimes information in a particular subject area within a certain time period. A literature review of a mature topic addresses the need for a critique of, and the potential reconceptualization of, the expanding and more diversified knowledge base of the topic as it continues to develop. The second kind of literature review addresses new or emerging topics that would benefit from a holistic conceptualization and synthesis of the literature. Because these topics are relatively new and have not yet undergone a comprehensive review of the literature, the review is more likely to lead to an initial or preliminary conceptualization of the topic like a new model or framework.

The reasons for undertaking a literature review are numerous and include eliciting information for developing policies and evidence-based care, a step in the research process and as part of an academic assessment. To many qualified students faced

with undertaking a literature review the task appears daunting. Frequently-asked questions range from where to start, how to select a subject, and how many articles to include, to what is involved in a review of the literature (Cronin, *et al*., 2008). A literature review can be just a simple summary of the sources, but it usually has an organisational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis. A summary is a recap of the important information of the source, but a synthesis is a re-organisation, or a reshuffling, of that information. It might give a new interpretation of old material or combine new with old interpretations. Or it might trace the intellectual progression of the field, including major debates. And depending on the situation, the literature review may evaluate the sources and advise the reader on the most pertinent or relevant (writingcenter.unc.edu).

WHAT IS LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is a surveys scholarly articles, books and other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and by so doing, providing a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works. Literature reviews are designed to provide an overview of sources you have explored while researching a particular topic and to demonstrate to your readers how your research fits into the larger field of study (libguides.usc.edu, n.d.). A literature review is a description of the literature relevant to a particular field or topic. It gives an overview of what has been said, who the key writers are, what are the prevailing theories and hypotheses, what questions are being asked, and what methods and methodologies are appropriate and useful. As such, it is not in itself primary research, but rather it reports on other findings (Emerald Group Publishing, n.d.).

The primary reports used in the literature may be verbal, but in the vast majority of cases reports are written documents. The types of scholarship may be empirical, theoretical, critical analytic, or methodological in nature. Second a literature review seeks to describe, summarise, evaluate, clarify and/ or integrate the content of primary reports (Cooper, 1988).

A literature review is an objective, thorough summary and critical analysis of the relevant available research and non-research literature on the topic being studied (Hart, 1998; Cronin, *et al.,* 2008). Its goal is to bring the reader up-to-date with current literature on a topic and form the basis for another goal, such as the justification for future research in the area. A good literature review gathers information about a particular subject from many sources. It is well written and contains few if any personal biases. It should contain a clear search and selection strategy (Carnwell and Daly, 2001; Cronin, *et al.,* 2008). Good structuring is essential to enhance the flow and readability of the review (Colling, 2003).

Literature review is different from an academic research paper. The main focus of an academic research paper is to develop a new argument, and a research paper will contain a literature review as one of its parts. In a research paper, you use the literature as a foundation and as support for a new insight that you contribute. The focus of a literature review, however, is to summarize and synthesize the arguments and ideas of others without adding new contributions.

The vast majority of literature reviews serve as a section of a primary research article that provides the theoretical foundation for the main study that is the subject of the article. In that capacity, Fink (2005) describes multiple purposes for literature reviews. A literature review anchors the rest of a scholarly article. It describes the content and quality of knowledge already available, and readily presents the reader the significance of previous work (Okoli & Schabram, 2010). As an academic piece, the review cannot simply regurgitate the subject matter, but rather must contribute to the work in its dual approach of synthesizing the available material and offering a scholarly critique of theory (Okoli & Schabram, 2010).

SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of a systematic literature review is to provide as complete a list as possible of all the published and unpublished studies relating to a particular subject area. It is different with traditional reviews that attempt to summarize results of a number of studies, systematic reviews use explicit and rigorous criteria to identify, critically evaluate and synthesize all the literature on a particular topic (Cronin, *et al.,* 2008). Primary purpose of this article is to provide the reader with a comprehensive background for understanding current knowledge and highlighting the significance of new research. It can inspire research ideas by identifying gaps or inconsistencies in a body of knowledge, thus helping the researcher to determine or define research questions or hypotheses.

Beecroft *et al*. (2006) argue that a sufficiently focused research question is essential before undertaking a literature review. Equally, however, it can help refine or focus a broad research question and is useful for both topic selection and topic refinement. It can also be helpful in developing conceptual or theoretical frameworks (Coughlan, *et al.,* 2007; Cronnin, *et al.,* 2008).

Parahoo (2006) suggests that a systematic review should detail the time frame within which the literature was selected, as well as the methods used to evaluate and synthesize findings of the studies in question. In order for the reader to assess the reliability and validity of the review (see figure 1), the reviewer needs to present the precise criteria used to: (a) Formulate the research question; (b) Set inclusion or exclusion criteria; (c) Select and access the literature; (d) Asses

the quality of the literature include in the review; (e) Analyse, synthesize and disseminate the findings.

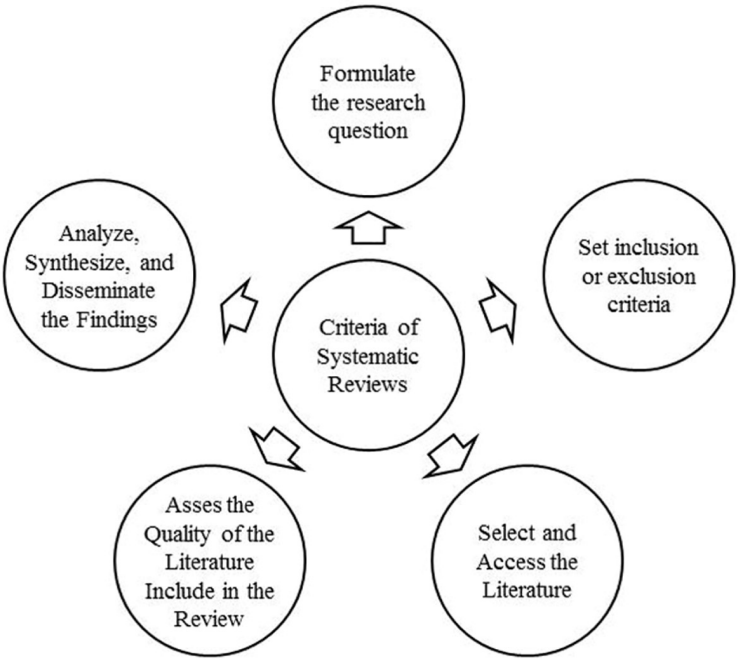

Figure 1: Criteria Used to Systematic Review

STEPS IN THE LITERATURE REVIEW PROCESS

Given the particular processes involved in systematic reviews, meta-analysis and meta-synthesis, the focus of the remainder of this article is on the steps involved in undertaking a traditional or narrative review of the literature. Cronin *et al*. (2008) argue that the first step involves identifying the subject of the literature review. The researcher undertaking a quantitative study may have decided this already. However, for the individual undertaking a non-research based literature review this will be the first step.

Choosing a Review Topic

The first task to tackle, often the most difficult, in writing a review of literature is choosing a topic (Timmins and McCabe, 2005; Cronin, *et al.,* 2008). Often the task is especially difficult because of a lack of knowledge in the content area. Below are some hints for facilitating your selection of a topic. First, skim through your textbook and identify broad topics in the discipline that interest you. Second, read the chapters associated with the topics you pick to develop familiarity with the

vocabulary (key words), primary investigators, and issues or controversies in the area. Third, talking to others, such as expert, or reading around a topic can also help to identify what areas of the subject the reviewer is interested in and may help indicate how much information exists on the topic (Timmins and McCabe, 2005). The next step, after choosing a topic, is to go to the library and search for journal articles published in the area. Use key words to find article titles for specific topics; sometimes abstracts are provided for the reader's reference. Abstracts can be useful, time saving devices because they aid in weeding good, associated literature from unrelated, peripheral articles.

Cronin (2008) explained that having sufficient literature is also important, particularly when the review is an academic assignment. These academic exercises usually have short deadlines, so having enough literature is key from the perspective of being able to do the review and submit it on time. Literature reviews that are part of academic coursework usually have strictly enforced word limits and it is important to adhere to that limit. Topics that are too broad will result in reviews that are either too long or too superficial. As a rule of thumb, it is better to start with a narrow and focused topic, and if necessary, broaden the scope of the review as you progress. It is much more difficult to cut content successfully, especially if time is short.

Searching and Selecting Appropriate Articles

The next step after selected a topic is to identify, in a structured way, the appropriate and related information. A systematic approach is considered most likely to generate a review that will be beneficial in informing practice (Hek and Langton, 2000; Cronin *et al.,* 2008). Newell and Burnard (2006) suggest that comprehensiveness and relevance are what reviewers need to consider and add that the more specific the topic or question being searched is, the more focused the result will be (Cronin *et al.,* 2008).

The type of articles that are selected for a good review of literature are theoretical presentations, review articles, and empirical research articles. Choosing the work of a single researcher may be one method for starting a literature review. Your presentation will be more powerful if conflicting theoretical positions and findings are presented along with the position or prediction that you support in your paper. You should choose several researchers' works that have added to the knowledge base in a specific area. Strive to eliminate (or explain away) articles that have faulty methods or that use faulty reasoning to support their findings.

Nowadays, literature searches are undertaken most commonly using computers and electronic databases. Computer databases offer access to vast quantities of information, which can be retrieved more easily and quickly than using a manual

search (Younger, 2004). There are numerous electronic databases, many of which deal with specific fields of information. It is important therefore to identify which databases are relevant to the topic (Cronin *et al.,* 2008). Existing literature reviews and systematic reviews can also be important sources of data. They can offer a good overview of the research that has been undertaken, so that the relevance to the present work can be determined (Cronin *et al.,* 2008).

Cronin *et al*. (2008) argue when undertaking a literature search an important question in determining whether a publication should be included in your review is defining the type of source. The four main types of sources are outlined in Table 1. In conducting the literature search it is important to keep a record of the keywords and methods used in searching the literature as these will need to be identified later when describing how the search was conducted (Timmins and McCabe, 2005).

Table 1: Defining the Types of Sources for a Review

Source	Definitions
Primary source	Usually, a report by the original researchers of a study
Secondary source	Description or summary by somebody other than the original researcher, e.g. a review article
Conceptual/ theoretical	Papers concerned with description or analysis of theories or concepts associated with the topic
Anecdotal/ opinion	Views or opinions about the subject that are not research, review or theoretical in nature

Source: *Cronin et al. (2008) p. 41*

It is always more desirable to use primary sources whenever possible. Primary sources in science are usually in the form of articles published in reputable journals. Generally, journals are regarded as being more up-to-date than books as sources of information (Cronin, *et al.,* 2008). Secondary sources include textbooks and review articles or Description or summary by somebody other than the original researcher. Like your literature review, secondary sources do not contain new information. A look at secondary sources is often a good move when starting a literature review, but you never rely solely on secondary sources and always review the primary sources as a check against possible errors.

Analysing and Synthesizing the Literature

After you have collected the articles, you intend to use in your literature review, you are ready to analyze each one (break it down and identify the important information in it) and then synthesize the collection of articles (integrate them and identify the conclusions that can be drawn from the articles as a group).

Initially, it is advisable to undertake a first read of the articles that have been collected to get a sense of what they are about. Most published articles contain a summary or abstract at the beginning of the paper, which will assist with this process and enable the decision as to whether it is worthy of further reading or inclusion. At this point, it may also be of benefit to undertake an initial classification and grouping of the articles by type of source (Cronin, *et al.,* 2008).

There are a number of tools that can help us analyze and synthesize our key sources. Table 2 show about using a synthesis matrix to organise the sources in your literature review and integrate them into a unique interpretation that not only serves as the foundation of your study but also contributes to the dialogue in your field and establishes your credibility as a scholar. There are limitless ways of structuring a matrix (Sally, 2013).

For example is a synthesis matrix organised by the key studies on your specific topic. Identify six to twelve studies that are closely related to the focus of your study and that you will use as the foundation for your proposed research. In the first column along the vertical axis of the table, list the author and date of publication for each study (Sally, 2013). Then create columns to identify the purpose or research questions the authors posed, the method used in the study, characteristics of the sample, the major findings of the study, the main ideas or themes distilled from the findings, how the findings confirm those of other studies (similarities), and how the findings differ from other studies or offer information not found in other sources.

Table 2: A Synthesis Matrix Organised by the Key Studies

Author & Date	Purpose	Method	Sample	Finding	Similarities Uniqueness
Sources 1					
...					
Sources n					

Sources: *(Sally, 2013).*

Another tools for analyze and synthesize is undertake an initial classification and grouping of the articles by type of source. Once the initial overview has been completed it is necessary to return to the articles to undertake a more systematic and critical review of the content. It is recommended that some type of structure is adopted during this process such as that proposed by Cohen (1990). This simple method is referred to as the Preview, Question, Read, Summarize (PQRS) system and it not only keeps you focussed and consistent but ultimately facilitates easy identification and retrieval of material particularly if a large number of publications are being reviewed (Cronin, *et al.,* 2008).

Following the preview stage, a reviewer may end up with four stacks of articles that are deemed relevant to the purpose of the review (Cronin, *et al.,* 2008). In the question stage, questions are asked of each publication. Here several writers have suggested using an indexing or summary system (or a combination of both) to assist the process (Timmins and McCabe, 2005; Cronin *et al.,* 2008).

Although there are slight variations in the criteria proposed in the indexing and summary systems, generally they are concerned with the title of the article, the author, the purpose and the method applied in a research study, and findings and outcomes. It is also useful to incorporate comments or key thoughts on your response to the article after it has been reviewed. For the purpose of good record keeping, it is suggested that the source and full reference are also included. It can be very frustrating trying to locate a reference or a key point among a plethora of articles at a later stage (Cronin, *et al.,* 2008).

As it is likely that not all of the articles will be primary sources, you may wish to adapt your summary system to accommodate other sources, such as systematic reviews or non-research literature. Possible headings, adapted from appraisal tools for various types of literature are outlined in Table 3. Although it may be laborious at times, each article should be read while trying to answer the questions . It is worth noting, however, that if any aspect of the appraisal is not clear, it may be beneficial to access more detailed tools or checklists that facilitate further analysis or critique (Cronin, *et al.,* 2008).

Table 3: Summary of Information Required in Review

Primary Sources	Secondary Sources Review	Non-research Literature
Title:	Title:	Title:
Author and year:	Author and year:	Author and year:
Journal (full reference):	Journal (full reference):	Journal (full reference):
Purpose of study:	Review questions/ purpose:	Purpose of paper:
Type of study:	Key definitions:	Credibility:
Setting:	Review boundaries:	Quality:
Data collection method:	Appraisal criteria:	Content:
Major findings:	Synthesis of studies:	Coherence:
Recommendations:	Summary/ conclusions:	Recommendations:
Key thoughts/ comments, e.g.	Key thoughts/ comments, e.g.	Key thoughts/ comments, e.g.
Strengths/ weakness:	Strengths/ weakness:	Strengths/ weakness:

Source: Cronin et al. (2008) p. 41

The final stage of appraisal is to write a short summary of each article and may include key thoughts, comments, strengths and weaknesses of the publication. It should be written in your own words to facilitate your understanding of the material. It also forms a good basis for the writing of the review (Cronin, *et al.,* 2008).

Organisation of Writing the Review

The main aim in structuring your review of the literature is to lead your reader to understand the need to conduct precisely the form of literature review or research paper that you propose or have done. The key to a good literature review or research paper is the ability to present the findings in such a way that it demonstrates your knowledge in a clear and consistent way (Cronin, *et al.,* 2008).

The introduction and conclusion to your review of the literature should show how your research project will join the on-going conversation: identify the key terms and concepts and indicate how your research will resolve unresolved questions in others' work. You can also outline the structure of the review itself — by preview in the introduction, or review in the conclusion — and you can then foreshadow the direction of the next section/ chapter.

Introduction

Cronin, *et al.* (2008) argue that the introduction should include the purpose of the review and a brief overview of the 'problem'. It is important that the literature sources and the key search terms are outlined. The introduction will not only present the main topic, but will also make a statement about the status of knowledge in this area of research.

Some areas of concern in preparing the introduction is (a) Define or identify the general topic or area of concern to provide a context for reviewing the literature; (b) Point out overall trends, conflicts in theory, methodology, evidence and conclusions, or gaps in research and scholarship, to identify a particular problem; (c) Establish your purpose for reviewing the literature or point of view; explain the criteria used to select and evaluate the literature; explain what it included or excluded (scope); and forecast the organisation or sequence of the review.

Main Body

The main body of the report presents and discusses the findings from the literature. There are several ways in which this can be done (Cronin *et al.,* 2008; Carnwell & Daly, 2001). Regardless of the manner in which the main body of the review is framed, there are key points that must be considered. First, Group research studies and other literature according to common denominators such as qualitative or quantitative approaches, purposes, theories, methodologies, or conclusions.

Second, summarize individual studies in detail appropriate to its comparative importance in the literature and to its relevance for your research. Third, Use figures and/ or tables to present your own synthesis of the original data or to show key data taken directly from the original papers.

In order for your reader to move through your information with ease while keeping the big picture in view, order your body paragraphs in the same way that you did in the statement about how your literature review will proceed. Order the abstractions (main ideas) from general to specific, deciding which sources have contributions to make to which concepts. You will then present more specific information from the sources, using in-text citation, to discuss the abstractions in more detail and to point out areas of agreement or debate among sources. Your body paragraphs should work to not only summarize what sources have said, but to demonstrate relationships between them.

Conclusion

The conclusion should provide a summary of findings from the literature review. Explain what your analysis of the material leads you to conclude about the overall state of the literature, what it provides and where it is lacking. Cronin *et al.* (2008) mention that the review should conclude with a concise summary of the findings that describes current knowledge and offer a rationale for conducting future research. In a review, which forms part of a study, any gaps in knowledge that have been identified should lead logically to the purpose of the proposed study. In some cases, it may also be possible to use the developed themes to construct a conceptual framework that will inform the study. In all reviews, some recommendations or implications for practice, education and research should be included.

References

The literature review should conclude with a full bibliographical list of all the books, journal articles, reports and other media, which were referred to in the work. Regardless of whether the review is part of a course of study or for publication, it is an essential part of the process that all sourced material is acknowledged. This means that every citation in the text must appear in the reference. Omissions or errors in referencing are very common and students often lose vital marks in assignment because of it. A useful strategy is to create a separate file for references and each time a publication is cited, it can be added to this list immediately (Cronin *et al.*, 2008).

CONCLUSION

This article has presented a detailed guide to developing a systematic literature review This guide presents a step-by-step approach to carrying out the rigorous,

scientific methodology of a systematic literature review. While written generally enough to be applicable to a broad range of fields, especially specific to social sciences and management.

Whether the approach is qualitative or quantitative will often dictate when and how it is carried out. Various types of literature reviews may be used depending on the reasons for carrying out the review and the overall aims and objectives of the research. Writing a review of the literature is a skill that needs to be learned. By conducting them, student or researchers can be involved in increasing the knowledge through evidence-based practice.

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Basic Academic Writing Skills

Oxford University Press

[Adapted from Basic Academic Writing Skills, Oxford University Press 2011]

Test your knowledge on Basic Academic Writing Skills by answering the following multiple-choice questions. You can find the answers to each question at the end of this document.

A student wishes to use an idea from the extract of an article below (in italics), in an essay whose topic is: Analyse the role of revision in producing a competent essay.

The article was published in 2005 and examines the experiences of writing for native and non-native students in the United States. Diane Becket, the author of the article, concludes with these words:

For the students in this study, the factors that most influenced their progress are the extent to which they are able to balance the conflicting demands of their lives, the motivation to thoughtfully revise their essays, and their overall attitude to the class. These factors are more important for their progress than whether or not they were born in the United States.

1. **Which of the following paraphrases is NOT a plagiarism of the above source?**
    a. Becket (2005) concludes that one of the most significant factors in student writing is the motivation to thoughtfully revise their essays.
    b. Becket (2005) concludes that one of the most significant factors in student writing is the willingness to revise carefully as this is more important for their progress than whether or not they were born in the United States.
    c. According to Becket (2005), one of the most significant factors in student writing is their motivation to thoughtfully revise anything they write.
    d. Becket (2005) concludes that one of the most significant factors in student writing is the willingness to revise carefully.
2. **The rule for using first and second person pronouns ('I', 'we', 'you') in writing at university is:**
    a. Always check whether it is acceptable to use them, as different disciplines and even different assessment styles have different rules.
    b. Always avoid first and second person pronouns.

c. Always avoid first and second person pronouns and also phrases such as 'In this author's opinion'.

d. Always avoid first and second person pronouns, as your writing has to be seen to be objective.

3. When we use quotations, we should:

a. use inverted commas around the 'exact' words of the author.

b. place the 'exact' words of an author in inverted commas and supply a citation with a page number.

c. paraphrase carefully and use a citation.

d. summarise what the author said and use a citation with page numbers.

4. When you paraphrase an idea you may:

a. use synonyms for many of the words.

b. use any of the disciplinary terminology from the original source.

c. write a longer or shorter sentence than the original.

d. All of the above.

5. You are writing an essay and want to use a quotation to show that all students meet challenges when they begin studying at university or college. Which would be the best way to use a quotation from the extract below (using the APA citation style)?

The extract below is from page 60 of an article by Diane Becket published in 2005:

Although the native and non-native speakers share the same high school background, their attitudes, which have been affected by these experiences, are different. Memories from Indian schools influence the non-native speakers' attitude to American high schools, and they feel a pressure to succeed because of the efforts of their parents to give them a better life in the United States. The native speakers feel no such pressures, but they struggle with negative memories of high school. Both groups of students are, however, working in their own ways to adjust to the demands of college life.

a. According to Becket (2005), "memories from Indian schools influence the non-native speakers' attitude to American high schools, and they feel a pressure to succeed because of the efforts of their parents to give them a better life in the United States" (p. 60).

b. According to Becket (2005), "the native speakers feel no such pressures" (p. 60).

c. According to Becket (2005), both native and non-native students need "to adjust to the demands of college life" (p. 60).

d. According to Becket (2005), "although the native and non-native speakers share the same high school background, their attitudes, which have been affected by these experiences, are different" (p. 60).

6. Which of the following paraphrases of an idea from pages 68–69 of an article published in 2005 by Diane Becket is CORRECTLY cited (according to the APA 6th style)?

a. Both native and non-native students need help in learning writing skills (Diane Becket, 2005, pp. 68–69).

b. According to Beckett (published in 2005, pp. 68–69) both native and non-native students need help in learning writing skills.

c. An academic article published in 2005 claimed that both native and non-native students need help in learning writing skills.

d. Both native and non-native students need help in learning writing skills (Becket 2005, pp. 68–69).

7. This is a sentence on page 180 from an article written by Karen P. Macbeth and published in 2006:

The most common view of academic culture tends to speak of it as shared "habits of mind" (e.g., Brodkey, 1987; Kennedy & Smith, 2006).

8. Which of the sentences below CORRECTLY cites the idea (using APA 6th style)?

a. Brodkey (as cited in Macbeth, 2006, p. 180) has claimed that academic culture is constructed of habitual patterns of thinking that are shared by those within the culture.

b. Brodkey (1987, as cited in Macbeth, 2006, p. 180) has claimed that academic culture is constructed of habitual patterns of thinking that are shared by those within the culture.

c. Brodkey (1987) has claimed that academic culture is constructed of habitual patterns of thinking that are shared by those within the culture (as cited in Macbeth, 2006, p. 180).

d. Macbeth (as cited in Brodkey, 1987 and Kennedy & Smith, 2006) has claimed that academic culture is constructed of habitual patterns of thinking that are shared by those within the culture.

9. This is the information supplied by ProQuest for an article in a journal:

Diverse, Unforeseen, and Quaint Difficulties: The Sensible Responses of Novices Learning to Follow Instructions in Academic Writing

Macbeth, Karen P. Research in the Teaching of English 41.2 (Nov 2006): 180–207.

What is the title of the journal?

a. Diverse, Unforeseen, and Quaint Difficulties: The Sensible Responses of Novices Learning to Follow Instructions in Academic Writing.
b. Research in the Teaching of English. Urbana
c. Diverse, Unforeseen, and Quaint Difficulties
d. Research in the Teaching of English

10. All reference list items include:

a. the place of publication of the source.
b. the page numbers of the source.
c. the full bibliographic details required for the particular type of source that is being referenced.
d. the authors, the year, the title of the source, the place of publication and the publisher.

11. Below is a paragraph taken from an article published in 1999 by Lejk, Wyvill and Farrow.

There are a number of methods of getting around the problem of unequal contribution to groupwork. The most common is to use some form of peer assessment to arrive at an individual's contribution to the group effort and then use this assessment to apply a weighting to the group mark (e.g. Lejk *et al.,* 1996). Although these methods are pragmatic and widely accepted, they do go against the ethos of team working in which the team works as a unit and is judged as a unit. In addition, there are still question marks over students' ability to objectively assess their peers in a group setting. Some methods of peer assessment appear to be more difficult for non-professional assessors than others (Schechtman, 1992) and the ability of students to assess themselves fairly in a group setting has been questioned (Falchikov, 1991). Interviews with students at the University of Sunderland also cast doubt on the ability of some students to objectively assess their peers. All in all, assessment of groupwork is problematic.

It is a well written paragraph but the topic sentence has NOT been written as the first sentence.

What topic sentence would YOU write as the first sentence of this paragraph if you wanted to maximise the impact of the argument?

a. There are a number of methods of getting around the problem of unequal contribution to groupwork.

b. Assessment of groupwork is problematic.

c. All in all, assessment of groupwork is problematic.

d. Interviews with students at the University of Sunderland also cast doubt on the ability of some students to objectively assess their peers.

Answers

1	D	6	D
2	A	7	A
3	B	8	D
4	D	9	C
5	C	10	B

Writing a Research Paper

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[Adapted from Writing a research paper. Jaan Mikk. Šiauliai University, Lithuania. 20061]

ABSTRACT

The value of research and the career of a university lecturer depend heavily on the success in publishing scientific papers. This article reviews the guidelines for writing and submitting research papers. The three most important success criteria in publishing are as follows: the paper describes a good research, it is written according to the traditions of scientific writing and submitted to the right journal. The "right" journal publishes papers similar to yours. It is effectual to follow the usual structure of scientific papers: introduction, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion. Introduction gives the review of the literature studying your problem and leads to the aim and the hypothesis of your research. The methods part contains the description of the research in detail, which enables the reader to do the research over again. Results are usually given in tables and graphs. Discussion includes the analyses of the data received to find support or reject the hypothesis raised in introduction. The inferences are compared with the findings of other researchers and shortcomings and/or tasks for further research are pointed out. It is important to avoid plagiarism in the manuscript and to consider the copyright law. The manuscript is sent to the editor of the selected journal together with a letter explaining why the journal was chosen and who is the contributing author. In about three months, the editor sends the reviews of the manuscript to the contributing author. The reviews are free support and advice in doing research and writing papers. If not rejected, the manuscript will be revised by the authors and published. Even the published papers contain shortcomings, which do not harm their contribution to science. The article has one table and the list of references in ten entrees.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching in the universities has to be science-based. Therefore lecturers and professors are evaluated according to their success in publishing scientific papers. There is a proverb "publish or perish" in universities and colleges.

The aim of this article is to deliver some essential ideas for writing to scientific journals. The problems of selecting the journal, writing the paper, and submitting it to a journal are discussed. A good research is a basis for successful publishing but the research methodology is not treated in the article.

There are different types of papers:

a. the reports of empirical studies,
b. the description and analysis of a case study,
c. the review articles, which include meta-analysis of previous research,
d. the theoretical articles to develop theory, and
e. the methodological articles to develop research methods (Publication manual … 2003).

The two first types of papers are considered first of all although the ideas below are applicable to the other types of papers as well.

It is difficult for a young researcher to write and submit his/her paper. S/he is thinking that the research or the manuscript is not good enough for publishing. Perfect papers are never published because there are no perfect paper. Good papers are published. These papers put the scientific discussion in the field forward (Day 2006).

You should not be afraid of rejection. Reviewing of your manuscript gives you invaluable information about the research in your field and about writing research papers. Publishing in valued journals and collections is an inevitable part of your career as a university lecturer.

Let us look at some success criteria in publishing.

1. The paper describes a good research. The research uses current ideas and methods appropriately. It is grounded in theory and adds something to it. Good research is rigorous, systematic and very focused (Day 2006). You should discuss one problem in one paper, although there can be different approaches to the problem in your paper. Large samples of subjects facilitate the acceptance of your manuscript.
2. You answer the question why your paper is important. The importance can be in wider principles, which emerged from your research. You can describe how people can use the findings of your research and how other researchers can develop the work further. Papers on popular topics (gender, collectivism, narcotics, etc.) are easier to publish (Toomela 2003). A good paper arouses the interest of readers.
3. You have been reading the best papers in your research field and you give an overview of the contemporary trends in the field. Your paper will be published if it adds something to the international discussion in the field. You can contribute to the discussion if you know the current state of affairs.

4. The paper is written according to the traditions of scientific writing. Scientists are accustomed to read the papers with traditional elements, structure and style. If you violate these traditions, then your paper is difficult to understand and editors are eager to reject such manuscripts. The most thorough presentation of these traditions is published by the American Psychological Association (Publication manual … 2003).

Below we will discuss the writing and submitting of manuscripts. However, we begin with selecting the appropriate journal.

SELECTING THE JOURNAL

Most papers are rejected because they have been sent to the wrong journal. Papers are not badly written and/or the described research is not of low quality but the papers do not suit the objectives of the journal. We need to orient ourselves to the needs of the readers and to the journal policies (Samuels S. J. 1991).

The aims of a journal can be found on its web page or editorials published in the first or last issue in a volume. Journals' web sites usually give the following information:

a. editors, indexing in databases, forthcoming thematic issues,
b. aims and the content of the journal,
c. recommended style of writing,
d. copyright issues of the papers,
e. appropriate length of papers,
f. requirements to headings, figures, references, etc.,
g. guidelines for submission.

You should decide if your manuscript fits the aims and the content of the journal. In this case you have a good chance to be published.

Indexing of the papers of a journal in scientific databases is an indicator of the quality of the journal. The other indicators are high frequency of citing of the papers in other journals, well known editors and editorial board members, low acceptance rate, etc. (Klingner, Scanlon, and Pressley 2005). Publications in highly valued journals have more weight in your CV but it is more difficult and time-consuming to get published in these journals.

Scientific databases themselves are of various prestige in the scholarly world. The most prestigious is the ISI (Institute for Scientific Information) Web of Knowledge (Current Content). It includes the most valued scientific journals in the world. Every branch of science has its own database, for example the SSCI (Social Science

Citation Index) in social sciences, the ERIC (Educational Resource Information Center), the International ERIC and the BEI (British Education Index) in education, PsycARTICLES and PsycINFO in psychology etc. The common searching engines are not the usual tools for finding scientific papers.

The acceptance rate of a journal is the proportion of the number of submitted manuscripts to the number of published manuscripts. The acceptance rate of journals is very different; it varies from one percent to eighty percents (Henson 1999). High quality journals have lower acceptance rate as rule, but some top-quality journals have high acceptance rate as well. Kenneth T. Henson (1999, 780) recommends young researches not to send their manuscripts to the journals with the acceptance rate below 25%. Her paper includes some data about the acceptance rate of journals on education.

Journals have thematic issues that are announced about a year before the composing of the issue. If the topic of the manuscript fits the content of a thematic issue, prefer the issue. The acceptance rate into the thematic issues is about three times higher than the acceptance rate into the general issues of the journal. After the thematic issue is published, the editors tend to reject the manuscripts on this topic (Henson 1999). The topics of the thematic issues can be found in the editorials of the journal and on the journal's web page.

Different journals value different components of quality and you should have this in mind while selecting the appropriate journal. Some journals value practical implications of the research, the others value the originality of findings and approach, the others emphasize high clarity and readability of presentation, still other editors base their decisions mainly on the rigor of the research methodology, etc (Day 2006). Send your manuscript to the journal which values the aspect well developed in your article!

You have read many papers while preparing your research and manuscript. The journals you have read most are usually the best to submit your manuscript. You know the scientific problems of the journal, the favored research methods and the style of presentation. You have used this knowledge in your paper and therefore it fits the journal. You probably have read some papers from one or two editorial board members. The members can be the blind reviewers of your manuscript.

It is easier to publish papers, which correspond to the world-view of the editor and reviewers (Toomela 2003). You can find something about this world-view if you read the papers of the editors and editorial board members on your topic or related topics. Really new knowledge is easier to publish in periphery; it can be published in the leading journals only if there are two competing scientific schools (Toomela 2003).

Most manuscripts are rejected by highly valued journals. Nevertheless, the papers are published in some other journal. Your can have more than one journal in your mind as the possible places for the publication of your manuscript but you can send your manuscript only to one journal at once. If you are not sure in the selection of the journal, you can send the abstract of your paper to the editor and ask if this paper might be of interest for the journal (Klingner, Scanlon & Pressley 2005; Murray 2005, 63–64).

WRITING THE ABSTRACT AND INTRODUCTION

Robert Hauptman (2005, 115) writes: "Perhaps the single most important point is to have the desire to discover something new and share it with readership". It is time to begin the writing of a paper when you have something to say to your colleagues in the scientific world (Klingner, Scanlon & Pressley 2005). You have an evidence-based new conclusion. The conclusion makes some contribution to theory and it can be applied to develop practice. The new idea can be developed on data, which you have used earlier in another paper to base the conclusion in another area.

Usually, the question is to be answered are you the single author of the paper or somebody is your co-author. It is always easier to write in co-operation, the quality of the paper will be higher and you learn something from your co-authors (Hauptman 2005; Murray 2005). It is useful to work in-groups and speak about the idea of a paper to colleagues and if they add something essential to the framework of the paper, they have the right to be the co-authors. All the persons who have added creatively to the research or writing are the authors.

Further we will treat the traditions of scientific writing according to the usual structure of a research paper. The structure is as follows:

a. abstract,
b. introduction,
c. methods,
d. results,
e. discussion,
f. conclusion,
g. references,
h. appendixes.

The structure has been developed for the papers describing empirical studies but it is used for other types of papers with some modifications as well. In the papers about case studies, the discussion and the results parts may be joined. If

the conclusion is short, then it can be given at the end of the discussion without a special heading, etc.

It is useful to start the writing from an outline of the paper (Lester 1990; Neman 1989). The outline organises any support you can give to your main new idea. The subheadings in your outline should describe their content as fully as possible – then the outline is of real help in writing. I have put concrete ideas into my outlines and references to literature to rely on during writing. In my outline, it is also given how many pages or characters can be devoted to every subheading in the paper.

Composing a good outline constitutes about 20% of the total writing time. It prevents many rewritings, additions or deletions after writing.

The title of paper should clearly describe its main idea. Besides this, ask yourself which words you will use in looking for this kind of information in databases and look if the words are in your title. If not, consider rewriting of the title or include the important words into keywords. A theoretical concept may be more interesting in the title than empirical bases. A good title is up to 12 words. Waste words (study on, a, the,…) should be excluded and verbs are not used. The title does not contain abbreviations (Tirri 2002).

The abstract reflects the main content of the paper. It usually includes the following information:

a. purpose of the paper,
b. methodology of the research: subjects, instruments, procedure,
c. findings and conclusion,
d. the value of the paper.

The journal editors give the length of the abstract for their journal. Usually it is up to 100–250 words. In spite of the small volume, the abstract must be understandable without the paper. The research is described in the past tense.

Introduction is one of the most difficult parts to write. It has several tasks: to develop the background of research, indicate the importance of the problem, and formulate the aim, hypothesis, and rationale of the research.

A weak review of the literature indicates that the author is not competent enough in the area and this may be one of the reasons for the rejection of the manuscript. A good review of the literature demonstrates the logical continuity between previous and present work. It discusses only this literature which is related to the problem. You cannot review all the papers available and give an exhaustive historical review. It is useful to begin from a recent meta-analysis if available, to consider the latest publications in the area and especially in the journal to which you intend

to submit your paper. The editors and authors of the journal can be the reviewers of the manuscript (Fradkov 2003). The review should be understandable to a relatively wide audience. Nonessential details, statements, and concepts intelligible only to the specialists might be avoided. A simple statement of controversy is better than an extensive and inconclusive discussion. A good review describes the problem and the solutions proposed by other researchers. It emphasizes the pertinent findings and possibly relevant methodological issues (Publication manual … 2003).

It is very important to formulate the aim of the paper. The aim points to the final conclusion of the paper. The aim and the conclusion are the center of the manuscript where to concentrate all the material. The review of the literature depends on the aim; the research methods depend on the aim, and the discussion. Without a clear aim there can be much information in the paper but it is not understandable why all this material is given. At the same time, the word "aim" is sometimes omitted. For example, "The paper examines…". The aim can be divided into more concrete research questions. After the aim, restrictions of the research can be described.

Quantitative research is based on the theory about the phenomena investigated. The theory is described in the review of the literature and an untested inference or an unsolved problem is defined. The theory enables the author to ground a hypothesis to solve the problem. Together with the hypothesis, the explanation should be given why this hypothesis is raised.

At the end of the introduction, there is sometimes a short description of the rationale of the investigation described in the paper (Publication manual… 2003, 17).

The rationale gives an overview of the logic and the data used to ground the final conclusion. In the rationale, the variables manipulated are mentioned, the research methods, different parts of the research if available etc. are referred to. The general scheme of the paper prepares the reader for a better understanding of the details in its following parts.

WRITING THE METHODS AND THE RESULTS SECTION

The next important part of a scientific paper is the methods part. It usually has subheadings: subjects, instruments, and procedure. The method must be written in detail so that the reader can replicate the research because the replicability of research is the cornerstone of the scientific method. Unusual methods may require a literature citation. If the paper describes a continuation of an earlier study and the method has been soon published in detail, you may refer the reader to your

earlier paper and give a brief summary of the method (Publication Manual … 2003, 17). Statistical methods can be named in the results part. Too many details burden the reader with irrelevant information; therefore, you should be parsimonious with details and words. On the other side, too brief and vague methods description may cause the rejection of the manuscript (Klingner, Scanlon & Pressley 2005, 16).

In the first subsection of methods, the subjects are described. Usually the numbers of subjects, their age, educational level, ethnicity, division by gender, socio- economic status, etc. are given. It is very important to give the information about the representativity of subjects. As far as the strict methods for ensuring representativity are usually not used in educational research, some comparison of the subjects in the research with the entire population is of big value. For example, "the subjects were from the top third ability group in the Republic of Lithuania" or "an average rural school". The school names or the students' names are usually not given; pseudonyms can be used if necessary.

The second subsection of methods is instruments used in research.

Describe in detail the basis and the composition of your own questionnaire or test (including the number and the type of questions). Give examples of questions! Sometimes the whole questionnaire is in the appendix or the results part. If you were using the instruments elaborated by other researches, give the exact names and references of these tests and questionnaires! The method for verifying the correctness of the translation of the instrument should be mentioned. It is very important to give the data about the reliability and the validity of your instruments.

The third subsection of methods is procedure. You should explain why you used this procedure and then represent it. Describe the rules followed in the data gathering process: instructions given to students, time for filling in the questionnaire, randomization procedure, the language used, etc.! Describe the coding of the subjects' answers if unusual or the method for the analysis of the textbook. Sometimes the researcher could not exactly follow the procedure fixed in the research plan. The deviations from the planned procedure can be referred to in this subsection of the paper.

After the methods part, the results of the research are given. In qualitative research the results are the subject's expressions, data in documents, individual scores in questionnaires or tests, reports of observations, etc. The results of quantitative research are usually given in tables and graphs. These are the average data for groups of subjects, not individual scores. Only these data are presented which are needed for grounding the final thesis. Tables and graphs are not retold in the text but their main content can be formulated in the results part. A short introduction of the sources and the importance of the tables are added. The tables and graphs are

usually given on separate sheets at the end of the manuscript. In the text there is an instruction: "Insert Table 1 here!"

The methods of statistical analysis of the data essentially belong to the methods part however the statistical methods are usually given in the results part. The methods are named and then the results of the analysis are given. Unusual methods need reference to the source where the method is introduced and/ or need explanation of the method. To give the reader a better understanding of the research, some data are added even if they are not used in the discussion part. Arithmetical means are given with the sample size and standard deviations. Variable means, reliabilities, and significance levels are added to correlation coefficients. Mean effects and differences are supplied with statistical significance (p value) (Publication manual ... 2003, 21 - 22).

WRITING THE DISCUSSION AND THE REFERENCE LIST

Discussion is the most important part to write. It explains how the results approve or disapprove your hypothesis (the disapproved hypothesis must have solid bases in the introduction part of your paper). The generalizations should be explained and compared with the findings of other researchers. The conclusions contradicting the mainstream thinking in your area must be very well grounded or omitted.

The structure of the discussion must be in accordance with research questions, hypothesis and results. You have to discuss and not to retell the results. You are not allowed to introduce new data in the discussion part (Klingner, Scanlon & Pressley 2005).

In the discussion part, you are to evaluate and interpret the implications of your results. The shortcomings of the method can be given here as well; sometimes they are at the beginning of the discussion. Many discussion sections are too long and verbose (Tirri 2002). If the discussion is short, then you can join it with the results or the conclusion part.

In the conclusion section you give the main results of your research and the main answer to your research question. This is your contribution to the development of science. It is soon the fourth time you write down your main idea: the first time it was named in the heading, the second time formulated in the abstract, the third time thoroughly explained in the discussion, and the forth time repeated in the conclusion. Implications based on your findings are also very important here and new research questions can be named. But no new ideas are introduced in the conclusion part. Sometimes a mistake in the concluding parts is that a general inference is made although the subjects in the research were not representative to the whole sample.

The most important rule in composing the list of references is that all the sources you have referred to in you text must be included in the reference list and the list should contain only these references which are mentioned in the text. You should follow the journal's rules for forming the references, which in many cases are the same as in the Publication manual of the APA (2003). If you are using an Internet source, then the address of the source and the date of retrieval must be given in the reference list besides the journal name, volume, etc. (Publication manual … 2003, 231). All the parts of every reference should be checked in the original publication.

Secondary references should be avoided. The reference list is an important source of information not only for readers but for reviewers as well. It is important to include significant publications of recent years preferably from published journals in it. Look carefully for publications in the journal to which you intend to submit your paper (Tirri 2002)! A poor reference list is a good justification for the rejection of a manuscript (Fradkov 2003, 1647).

Some papers have appendixes. The appendix may include: a list of stimulus materials, or an unpublished test and its validation, a new computer program, a complicated mathematical proof, or a complex piece of experiment, etc. (Publication manual … 2003).

ACADEMIC STYLE

To get people to read your paper, it must be interesting in content and style. The content is to some extent new to the readers and the style should be engaging and even exciting. The effect can be reached by indicating on controversies, giving unexpected results, simple writing etc. (Mikk 2000, 243 – 268). The text in the active voice and the first person is more interesting than the text in the passive voice. At the same time, the passive voice suggests objectivity of the material. The scientist must be objective and examine all the arguments pro and contra of his/her thesis. Expressions of surprise, exclamations, apologies, etc should be kept to the minimum in the text (Põldsaar & Türk 1999).

A scientific text is usually difficult to read. It contains a new knowledge and many scientific terms. In spite of that you should try to explain your idea as simply as possible. Editors are not willing to publish papers, which are understandable only to some colleagues of the author. Comprehensible writing is important to the reviewers as well (Samuels 1991).

There are many rules for clear writing (Mikk 2000, 157 – 198). Some of them follow.

1. Avoid long and complicated sentences! Every sentence is to be taken into working memory before it can be understood but the capacity of the memory

is restricted. You can look at the words in your text and ask if they are really needed there. Klingner, Scanlon and Pressley (2005) recommend avoiding the passive voice.

2. Prefer simple words! Restrict the usage of complicated terminology! Do not put symbols and descriptors you have developed for yourself into your paper! Words are in the text not to impress readers but to express your concept (Day 2006).
3. Make your text as concrete as possible! Abstract concepts are difficult to understand. Give examples! There can be examples of the questions from your questionnaire, the examples of subjects' answers, the examples of interpretation of the phenomena studied, etc.
4. Follow the usual structure of a research paper! Relate all the parts of your paper to each other and to your final conclusion! Present your problem and base a solution!

The recommendations for understandable writing should be used to the extent needed by the readership of the journal.

One more aspect in writing is important – your language should not hurt anybody. Usually, the papers referred to in the introduction part are not criticized. If needed, the controversies and unsolved problems are pointed out. You should avoid sexist words: (mankind, he, chairmen, etc.), racist words (Negro, wog, etc.), ageist words (crone, geezer, etc.), and homophobic words (queer etc.) (Põldsaar & Türk 1999). Nowadays "he" is replaced by "he/she" or "s/he" if the gender is not important; "chairman" is replaced by chairperson" etc. Discriminative words also decrease the objectivity of the message. They may hurt readers independently of the author's neutral intentions.

The last aspect in the academic style we consider is plagiarism. Põldsaar and Türk (1999) differentiate two types of plagiarism:

1. taking someone's text, table, or picture without indicating the source,
2. "documenting the source but paraphrasing its language too closely, that is, lifting whole phrases from original or using the original's sentence structure" (Põldsaar & Türk, 1999, 22).

If you lift the whole phrase, quotation marks are needed and the page number of the original text should be indicated. There is however a practical problem. When I make notes from a book or a paper, I may use the phrases from the text because they are so good. If I now put the phrases into my own paper without using the quotation marks, I will violate the rights of the original paper's author. The only solution is to put all the phrases in my notes, which I have taken from another person's text into the quotation marks. Nowadays xerocopying is replacing note taking.

Quotations are not recommended to describe your thesis. The thesis should be presented in your own words. Quotations can be used to support your position (Neman 1989, 382).

BEFORE SUBMITTING THE PAPER

It is useful to give the manuscript to colleagues for reading and to carry out the last check before submitting it.

Colleagues will see your paper as readers or reviewers and their questions or critical remarks are useful to be considered before submitting. If you have no college in the area at your faculty, you can send the manuscript to an honored scholar. The scholars usually are ready to help young researches (Klingner, Scanlon & Pressley 2005). Ask the colleague to assess your paper in several aspects (Day 2006; Tirri 2002):

- Is the title appropriate?
- Does the abstract summarize the content of the paper?
- Is the aim of the paper clearly stated on the first page?
- Is the text logically flowing from point to point with subheadings, introductions and conclusions to sections?
- Are the method, results and discussion convincing in grounding the conclusion?
- Are the implications clearly specified?
- Is the text written in reasonably short sentences, without too many scientific terms or jargon?

Most of the scientific work is published in English but the native language of European or Asian researchers is not English. The journals require that your manuscript must be in perfect English, usually American. You can give your native language text for translation but this is not a perfect solution – the translator is not

familiar with your specific terminology and you do not learn English needed in the contacts with other researchers. It is better to write your paper in English by yourself. Of course, a good knowledge of English and an intense will is needed but the work pays back. The English spell-checker in the computer helps you to correct many spelling and some stylistic errors. It is very good, if you can have a writing coach who will help you in writing (Klingner, Scanlon & Pressley 2005). In every case, you should give your manuscript to a native English speaker to make the final language editing.

While writing, you have followed the instructions to authors found on the journal web page. Nevertheless, it is useful to carry out the last check before submitting

the manuscript. The Publication manual (2003, 380–382) includes the answers to the following questions in the last check:

- "Is each paragraph longer than a sentence? …
- Do all headings of the same level appear in the same format? …
- Are any unnecessary abbreviations eliminated? …
- Are the references cited both in the text and in the reference list? …
- Are journal titles in the reference list spelled out fully? …
- Is each figure labeled with the correct figure number and a short article title?"
- If the journal is using blind reviewing, then you should remove all the information that might reveal your identity from the text (Klingner, Scanlon & Pressley 2005).
- The usual composition of a manuscript for submitting is as follows (Tirri 2002):
- The first numbered page is for the title, the authors' names and addresses.
- The second page is for the abstract.
- Introduction starts on the third page and each succeeding section starts on a new page.
- Each of the tables and figures is on a separate sheet at the end of the manuscript.

The editors are interested in having the number of copies, which is needed for reviewing, and look at your paper if it is clearly printed and looks nice.

SUBMITTING AND RESUBMITTING

You shall include a cover letter to the editor while sending the manuscript. It creates the first impression of you and your paper. The cover letter includes the journal name, the heading of the manuscript, and the authors' names. It briefly describes the contents of the manuscript and explains why you have chosen the specific journal. Write about similar publications written by the author. Refer to previous correspondence if there was any! Indicate the contributing author and give his/her surface mail address, telephone number, e-mail address, and fax number!

Editors are eager to know that the authors are the owners of the copyright to the manuscript. Copyright consists of moral rights (to make changes in text, etc.) and of property (to receive royalties) rights. All the rights belong to the author(s)

at first. However, it can be written in conformity with the labor contract that the property rights on your paper, book, etc. belong to your university. While sending the manuscript, you should be ready to sign an agreement for the transfer of copyright. In the agreement the authors warrant that:

- the article is their original work,
- they have written permission to use any table, illustration, text that has been published earlier,
- the article has not been assigned or licensed by them to any third party.

According to the written agreement, the authors usually assign all the rights of copyright to the publisher, although they should leave the moral rights themselves. In some countries, the papers are published without signing the copyright agreement.

The researchers are willing to publish their research work in their native language and in English. This is not against the law if publishing in the native language fits one of the following cases:

- there was a license for publishing the paper only once,
- there was a license for publishing the paper during certain time,
- there was a license for publishing the paper only in the native language, there was no agreement for the transfer of copyright (Pisuke 2004).

You should inform the editor of the English journal about the publication in your native language in the first letter to him/her and indicate in the agreement that it was not earlier published in English. International journals usually ask the author to transfer the copyright and after that it is not possible to publish the same paper in the native language without including the right in the agreement with the international journal or fitting the agreement to one of the three first cases above.

The manuscripts can be submitted electronically or on paper double-spaced. Study the submission guidelines on the journal's web-site! Electronic submission is faster and usually it gives the possibility to follow the review process of your manuscript.

After the submission, you will receive an acknowledgement saying that your paper has been received. The editor will send your manuscript to (anonymous) reviewers. It can be sent to editorial board members or to the author you refer to in your reference list (Fradkov 2003, 1644). They will have one to six months for reviewing (Henson 1999). If you have not received the feedback in three months, you can write to the editor and ask about the progress of reviewing.

The reviewers are mostly engaged with the content of the research described not as much with the writing of the paper. The usual questions answered by the reviewers are as follows (Publication manual, 2003):

- Is the research question significant?
- Have the instruments satisfactory reliability?
- Does the research design fully test the hypothesis?
- Is the research advanced enough for publishing?

The reviewers may criticize some parts of your paper and give some suggestions. Be careful with understanding and using the ideas! "Do not believe everything an editor says. Do not disbelieve everything an editor says" (Hauptman 2005, 118).

The editor sends the blind reviews, their summary and a conclusion to the corresponding author. The reviews may be very different. The conclusion depends heavily on the significance of your problem and your contribution to its solution (Fradkov 2003). There are four possible conclusions (Table 1). We have to keep in mind that many published papers have been rejected somewhere before publishing (Klingner, Scanlon & Pressley 2005).

Table 1: Possible Conclusion of the Editor and the Author's Actions

Editor's Decision	Comments	Author's Actions
Accept as it is	Almost never happens after the first submission	Wait for proofs and sign the agreement for the transfer of copyright
Needs minor changes	Happens after the second or third submission	Make the recommended changes and resubmit
Revise and resubmit	Usual decision after the first submission	Make the acceptable changes and resubmit
Reject	Often the result of choosing a wrong journal	Make the important changes and submit to another journal

It really is a compliment to receive the editor's decision: "revise and resubmit". Respond to the editor at once and agree to rework your paper by the date given (Day 2006; Murray 2005).

Critical remarks in the reviews are a free advice and support to your research! Read them carefully and consider possible changes! Agree with the reviewer if your main thesis remains unchanged. The editor is waiting for changes you have made during the revision. Do not agree with the reviewer if your position is correct. You can explain the position using some more details.

Submit the revised paper and the letter of explanations, which describes the changes you have made and explains why some suggested changes were not

acceptable (Klingner, Scanlon & Pressley 2005). The editor can send your paper to the same reviewers or new ones and you will receive new reviews together with the editor's conclusion, which usually is more favorable. If only minor changes were needed, the editor can accept your paper himself or herself.

THE ACCEPTED PAPER!

The editor informs you about the acceptance of your paper immediately when s/he takes the decision. S/he also notifies the year and the number of the issue when your paper is published. Publishing can take from one month to two years (Henson 1999).

In some universities, the accepted paper is considered as valuable as a published one. There is no doubt that it will be published at the time noticed. However, the publication itself can take up to two years.

When the layout of your paper is made, you will be asked to read it and sign the text. You have to correct the spelling errors but you are not expected to disagree with the changes, which the editors have made. The only exception is the changes that contradict your important ideas (Day 2006). It is not the time to add or rewrite anything.

Together with the signed proofs you will be asked to send the agreement for the transfer of copyright. The editor will send you a ready-made agreement and the author usually signs it without discussion. Some journals charge the authors money for printing tables, charts, etc. (Henson 1999). Usually, the journals do not pay authors fee.

After the publication of the journal issue with your paper you will receive about ten copies of your paper to send them to your colleagues. Some journals send a pdf copy of published the paper instead of paper copies.

The description above gives an idealized picture of writing a research paper. Very many recommendations were given but it is practically impossible to follow all of them in one paper. You succeed in meeting some requirements to the paper and the others may be met not so good. Nevertheless, your paper may be published if it adds something to the international discussion in your area.

I have been analyzing the research methods in published papers together with my doctoral students in education and we have found shortcomings in them, sometimes serious. It does not mean that you should take the research or writing your paper without proper care. The higher the quality of your paper, the more rapid will be your success in science. It just means that it is impossible to write an ideal paper. There are excellent papers and published papers!

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About Us

Dev Sangha Institute of Professional Studies and Educational Research

Dev Sangha Institute of Professional Studies and Educational Research (also known as DIPSER in short) is a reputed institution for teachers' education located in Deoghar district in the State of Jharkhand of India. DIPSER is the only professional academic institution under Sido Kanhu Murmu University (SKMU) and is meant exclusively for women students. Geographically located in the northeast part of Jharkhand state and westward in Santhal Paragana, it is situated amidst serene surroundings and provides a healthy, pristine and spiritual ambience conducive to learning. The Institute is well-connected by rail, road, and airways.

The Institute, founded upon firm ethical values and fundamental wisdom of Indian heritage, was established in 2001 with a view to nurture inspirational women teachers dedicated to the cause of teaching who, enabled by their training and education at DIPSER, would be able to serve the nation with a deep sense of duty and commitment throughout their professional lives educating the young.

DIPSER is a self-financing institution that offers three courses. These are - D.El.Ed. (Diploma in Elementary Education), B.Ed., and M.Ed.. It runs the only M.Ed. course in the state of Jharkhand. The B.Ed. and M.Ed. courses are two-year full-time undergraduate and master's courses and are approved by NCTE and recognised by Sido Kanhu Murmu University (SKMU). D.El.Ed. is also a Two-Year Course, recognised by NCTE and affiliated to Jharkhand Academic Council, Government of Jharkhand. A NAAC certified institution, DIPSER was granted linguistic minority status by the Government of Jharkhand in December, 2010.

DIPSER, together with Dev Sangha National School (DSNS) which is a CBSE approved school, are the two arms of Dev Sangha Seva Pratisthan (DSSP), a Registered Society extending value-based educational services in the backward tribal region of Santhal Pargana in India.

DSSP and its operational institutions, DIPSER and DSNS were founded by late revered Shrimat Acharya Saumyendra Nath Brahmachary, an eminent Thought Leader and Acharya of Dev Sangha, Deoghar. DSSP is an initiative of the Acharya inspired by his Guru Dev (Master, Guide, and Mentor) revered self-realised seer Shrimat Narendra Nath Brahmachary Ji, founder Acharya of Dev Sangha, Deoghar. Dev Sangha was founded with the aim of facilitating efforts at self-realisation by aspirants in line with the life practices of the Rishis (seers) of the Upanishads. Dev Sangha Seva Pratisthan was designed as an instrument for backward integration of the spirit of fundamental truth with its manifestation in the form of the objects and activities of nature and the everyday worldly life of requirements and concerns by enabling young minds –

‘To learn essential knowledge and life skills (DSNS)' and 'To learn how to dispense such learning (DIPSER).’

About The Book

The book *Demystifying Academic Writing for Research* is practical guide-book on demystifying the complexities of academic writing and describes eloquently how a scholarly paper can be written in a simple yet professional way.

The book is a collection of chapters adapted from lectures delivered by experts in the 'National Workshop on Demystifying Academic Writing for Research' held at DIPSER in March 2023. The book also included articles from eminent scholars to provide readers an opportunity to know more about the subject.

The book includes valuable insights on how to write clear, concise, and effective academic texts, especially for research and explains the various facets of academic writing like structuring the content, the writing process, citing sources, use of language, etc., while writing an academic paper. The common challenges in writing such as plagiarism and issues with respect to publishing academic work have also been discussed elaborately. The book can be a good reference for all students, researchers, scholars and academics looking to advance their academic writing skills and publish papers in academic journals.

Editor

Prof. Taposh Ghoshal is a teacher, trainer and management professional engaged in education, training and consulting in India and abroad. A Ph.D. from Calcutta University, M.B.A. from University of Allahabad, and Masters in Political Science from Agra University, Prof. Ghoshal has also done advance courses at VAIS (UK), IIM Calcutta, IIM Ahmedabad, IIFT New Delhi, XLRI Jamshedpur etc.

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