Writing Workshop #2

“The great enemy of clear language is insincerity.”
George Orwell
Agenda

- Synthesis – post it note / narrative strategies
- Summary
- Analysis
- Quotation – signal phrases
- Paraphrase
- APA chapter 6 “Crediting Sources”
- Plagiarism
- Your position
What does it mean to synthesize?

Synthesis: the composition or combination of parts or elements so as to form a whole.

Beyond the dictionary definition: A sum is greater than its parts—when you synthesize a number of concepts or journal articles, you highlight key ideas from each source and weave them together with your own perspective to form the “whole.”
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<th>Summary and Synthesis - relationship</th>
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<td>• To summarize is to condense the key ideas from a text.</td>
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<td>• To synthesize is to take two or more summaries and bring them together in a fruitful way—possibly adding the glue of personal meaning.</td>
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A literature review is a form of synthesis: you give an overview of what has been written about a topic in order to position your own ideas about the topic.
Strategy #1 for synthesis
post-it notes

- Use post-it notes to practice word economy and prioritize. When you are at the stage of reading/comprehending an article, write 3-5 words on a post-it note to convey each of the key ideas of the article.

- Then use the post-it notes to organize a series of key ideas from several sources.

- Once you’ve got these lined up, start to think about similarities and differences. Which writers views/ideas/definitions agree and which diverge?
Organize the key ideas into different categories that suit your purpose—are you trying to compare different definitions/views of epistemology? Ontology? You can group together the thinkers/writers that share a certain definition or view.

The post-it note strategy can lead to you organizing a literature review or overview of literature. A good example is Effken’s overview of previous literature on intuition (see article)
Strategy #2 for synthesis
The narrative

- Sometimes it helps to think of synthesis as a bringing together of various “stories.”
- The narrative or story is a concept that crosses cultures and an excellent way to organize information.
- You have your own “story” to tell, and you borrow “stories” from others to help tell your own.
- This is well documented in Effken’s description of “how we see the world”; she has put into narrative form a synthesis of how different philosophers describe our experience of the world (see article).
Analysis- what’s that?

- Synthesis means to bring together parts into a whole; analysis means the opposite – to separate a whole into its component parts.

- Thus, if you are asked to analyze an article, you will need to break it down into sections and define/explicate the meaning of each part.
Focus on APA – chapter 6

- Chapter 6 is on “Crediting Sources.”
- There is useful technical information in this chapter about how to quote material – shorter quotations and longer “block” quotations (40 words or more).
- One skill you will need to practice is how to smoothly integrate quotations into your prose.
A signal phrase is the series of words you use to introduce the words or ideas of others. Some model signal phrases follow:

- According to
- In the words of
- As xx has noted
- Xxx pointed out that
- Xxx claimed
- “xxx,” wrote xx
- Xxx answered these objections with the following analysis:
Diane Hacker suggests many different verbs we can use for signal phrases (but be sure meaning matches language):

Quoting smoothly

- How would you fix this use of quoted material (there are five errors):
- Effken declares (2007) that we recognize dogs:
  “because we have an abstract idea of what “dogness” entails.” (23)
Effken (2007) noted that we recognize dogs “because we have an abstract idea of what ‘dogness’ entails” (p. 23).

- placement of date – right after name
- verb choice (declares is strident/ unnecessary for context) – tense – use past
- quotation is short – not block (40 words or over)
- use single quotation marks within double
- need p. with number
- period after in-text citation
Other notable material in chapter 6 - APA

- Long or block quotations (unlike shorter quotations) do have final punctuation before the in-text citation – see example p. 171.
- Paraphrased material should also have a page or paragraph number to guide reader.
- Remember to change words *and* syntax to your own when paraphrasing – or you could be plagiarizing.
- You may change the first letter of the first word in a quotation to upper or lower case to suit your quotation (p. 172)
More Chapter 6 material

- If you omit material, use 3 ellipsis points . . . To show omission of material; use 4 ellipsis to show omission between two sentences.
- Use square brackets to add material for clarity (see p. 173 for example).
- Add emphasis by italicizing a word or words in a quotation. Add immediately after the emphasized word [emphasis added].
- If you note an error in the material, add [sic] immediately after the noted error to clarify that you recognize the error and it is not your own.
Plagiarism – credit all ideas and language.

- Take careful notes to keep track of sources.
- Always double check accuracy of quotations.
- Don’t resubmit ideas/writings from another course.
- When paraphrasing change language and syntax – don’t just plop in new words.
- Don’t repeat language from original when summarizing unless you enclose in quotation marks.
You will have certain “assumptions” and reactions to the material you read—these are not necessarily your “position.”

You come to your position after reading – reading – reading – thinking – writing – reflecting – writing. You may doubt your first impressions and thoughts, but do not discard them. Note them—along with any “intuitions” for later use. They may inform your position.

There is no one correct way to state your position—but your position is always in relation to others in the field. A metaphor I have found useful is the conversation. . . .
Imagine that you are entering a conversation. You are adding your ideas to the ideas swirling around you.

Perhaps, at first, your voice will feel shaky, or weak, or unsubstantial, or small.

But the more that you listen carefully to the conversation around you . . . The more you will realize you have a place, too.

You acknowledge the ideas of the others in the conversation, and you respectfully offer your own—because they matter.