

Welcome to the SON Writing Workshop

October 1, 6-8 p.m. PST



Agenda:

- academic writing
reading strategies
APA overview
your questions

What is academic writing?

- Writing that follows a set of agreed upon conventions – e.g. APA.
- Writing for the purpose of sharing new knowledge in a particular discipline.
- Writing with a degree of formality and complexity in diction and syntax.

Academic Writing

- Remove the mystery: examine academic writing as an anthropologist or linguist would– study style and techniques of the best academic writers.

Sample of clear academic writing in field of Nursing

- Previous research on caregiving has shown that family caregivers differ in their coping styles and appraisals of their situation on the basis of a number of characteristics including gender, race, and their relationship to the person with dementia (Kramer, 1997; Levin, Chatters, and Taylor, 1995). Because our previous research showed that women were more likely to comply with a home environmental intervention than men (Gitlin, Corcoran, Winter, Boyce, and Marcus, 1999), we speculated that women would derive greater therapeutic benefit than men. We also anticipated that minority caregivers, the majority of whom were African American in this study, would demonstrate greater benefit than White caregivers on the basis of previous research that has shown that African Americans are more likely to derive improved self-efficacy from behavior-change interventions.

Academic Writing

- Avoid the pitfalls of the worst academic writing—too long sentences, unclear passages, overuse of the passive, and jargon.

Judith Butler won first prize in the worst sentence contest for academic writing:

The move from a structuralist account in which capital is understood to structure social relations in relatively homologous ways to a view of hegemony in which power relations are subject to repetition, convergence, and rearticulation brought the question of temporality into the thinking of structure, and marked a shift from a form of Althusserian theory that takes structural totalities as theoretical objects to one in which the insights into the contingent possibility of structure inaugurate a renewed conception of hegemony as bound up with the contingent sites and strategies of the rearticulation of power.

Reading Strategies

- Pre-reading:
 - What do I already know?
 - What do the titles and subtitles tell me?
 - Who is the author; what is the author's background and point of view?

Reading Strategies

As you read. . .

- Jot down questions and reactions in margins as they arise.

(Print out articles and photocopy parts of books so you can write on them.)

- Annotate and look up unfamiliar words.
- Summarize ideas as you go – try to write one sentence to describe each paragraph.

Reading Strategies

- Long, complex sentences – try to take the sentence apart into separate building blocks, jotting down your translation of each block.
- Draw a web or other visual strategy to try to diagram meaning.
- Read parts of the article aloud to try to “get at” meaning aurally/ orally.

Reading Strategies. . .

- Use Wiki as a good spot source to look up references in the text you are uncertain about (but don't use Wiki as a reliable source in your essay).
- When unsure of meaning, discuss with a friend.
- Ask for clarification from your professor!

APA

- APA is an in-text citation method (author, date), a way of referencing material (reference page), a style (e.g. headings, rules of presentation, hyphenation), and also a philosophy.
- Philosophy: Research and publications in the social sciences should be rigorous and accurate, reflect ethical practices, and demonstrate respect for human difference.

APA overview – verb tense 3.18

- Use past tense or present perfect tense when discussing literature or procedures: “The researchers showed” or “The researchers have shown. . . .”
- But—use the present for the results or conclusions you make so that readers can join you in deliberation: “My research shows. . . .”

APA overview – headings 3.02

- There are five levels of headings in APA manuscripts – see 3.02 for chart.
- Regardless of levels of subheadings in a section, you always start with the highest level of heading.
- See the sample manuscripts for great examples, pp. 41 ff.

APA overview – order of citations 6.16

- When you have multiple citations in parenthesis, list them in alphabetical order, as they appear in the reference list. Use semi colons to separate them.
- Arrange works by the same author by year of publication – earliest first: (Gogel, 1990, 2006).

APA overview – basic citation styles

- APA style governs the appearance of in-text citations, depending on first or subsequent citation and whether or not (author, date) is used or just (date).
- These are difficult to remember! Just check the handy chart on page 177 to ensure you are citing correctly.

APA overview

- Use the manual – excellent sections on how to write an abstract and introduction, and a great chapter on writing concisely and clearly.
- Use the index for questions that come up. When you can't find the answer, let “common sense” and consistency prevail.
- Use the sample papers, p. 41 following, to find examples of headings, wording, etc.

Your questions. . .

- What questions do you have about reading, writing, or APA?

