



WRITING WORKSHOP #8
UVIC GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
NURSING

March 18, 2010 6-8 p.m. Welcome!

**“When we write, we begin with a promise to our readers that
the rest of the piece should keep.” Erika Lindemann**

AGENDA

- Check in: do you have a project or thesis idea?
Do you have a tip on keeping track of your ideas?
- The outline
- Self evaluation
- The dangling modifier
- Group revision exercise: the introduction
- Model for academic writing – article by Doane and Varcoe (2005)
- Short article on literature reviews
- Your questions



OUTLINES

- The outline: useful or not?
 - The standard outline format is a parallel structure with Roman and Arabic numbers:
 - I. Introduction
 - II. Body A
 - Point 1
 - Subpoint 1, etc.
 - Point 2
 - Point 3
 - Body B
 - Point 1
 - Point 2
 - Point 3
 - III. Conclusion
- Body C or more as needed



OUTLINES, CONT'D

- The parts of outlines are held together in two relationships: coordinate and subordinate.
- For example, in Part II, you may have three parts comprising the body of your essay. These parts (A, B, C) are parallel or equal in importance and coordinate with one another.
- Within one part of the Body, you might have several subordinating points—examples of your main point or secondary points.
- Keep in mind that parts of writing are always held together in either coordinating or subordinating relationships.



OUTLINE, CONT'D

- Formal outlines have some disadvantages:
- they are inflexible (Elbow calls them “freeze-dried”!);
- and sometimes the parallel structure assumes more importance than the actual content.
- Writers are usually more creative and wilful than this kind of outline allows.
- Some writers find this kind of outline (especially when assigned) can really only be written *after the essay is finished*.



OUTLINES, CONT'D: BLOCKING

- Two practical outline formats for working as-you-go are the blocking (or chunking) method and the sentence outline.
- For **blocking**, start by brainstorming, then use your notes to block out parts of your essay.
- Try to identify in the block what you need to accomplish in that section, for example – if you have a block where you synthesize feminist theory in nursing, you can list the several different theorists with key passages.



OUTLINES, CONT'D: BLOCKING

- As you arrange your blocks, ask whether you are keeping the promise to the reader you made in your introduction.
 - Is there enough information?
 - Or perhaps too much?
 - Is the arrangement of information logical?
 - Does all of the material link back to your main purpose or argument?



OUTLINES, CONT'D: SENTENCE OUTLINE

- Peter Elbow (2006) explains that the **sentence outline** helps to capture the dynamic energy and forward movement of the essay. Replace the words and phrases of the standard outline with sentences containing active verbs.
- Use sentences, sometimes questions, to create a “scratch outline” that will change as you write your draft.
- Sentence outlines come to the rescue when you get bogged down conceptually; they can help you figure out what the section of your writing is *about*.



OUTLINES, CONT'D: SENTENCE OUTLINES

- Some examples of sentences in a sentence outline:
- What does my audience need to know about . . . ?
- Some people think that . . . But actually, . . .
- These two thinkers have almost opposite views!
- How is this conception of feminism different from my own?
- Elbow suggests that you move back and forth between sentences and draft: changing both as you progress.
- The sentence outline helps you to grope toward meaning when you are uncertain of what you are trying to say.



SELF REFLECTION

- Self reflection in writing can help you to chart your patterns of errors and weaknesses.
- Self reflection ideas:
 - Keep a learning journal or log – look carefully at feedback on returned papers and note in your log the errors that you tend to make repeatedly.
 - Set learning goals – if you find your topic sentences are consistently weak, plan to find out how paragraphing works, the role of the topic sentence, and how to construct topic sentences and good paragraphs.
 - Use your log or journal as a tool when checking over your papers before submitting them – become alert to your typical flaws and train your eye to find them and correct them *before* handing in.



SELF REFLECTION

- Before and during thesis research and writing, I kept an “ideas log.” A series of cheap, wire-bound notebooks, this “log” was where I jotted all of the ideas, thoughts, book or article references, diagrams, quotations, and doodles that related to my work.
- This log proved very valuable; when I tried to capture trains of thought I had weeks before to incorporate into my writing, I could say to myself – “Oh thank goodness, I put it in the idea log!”
- Do you have a method of self reflection that works for you?



GRAMMAR LESSON: THE DANGLING OR MISPLACED MODIFIER

- Rule #1: The subject of the main clause is always the understood subject of the subordinate clause.
- Thus:
- While waiting for the bus, the police arrested a pickpocket at the edge of the crowd.



DANGLING MODIFIER

- The sentence reports that the police were waiting for the bus (police are subject of main clause).
- But the writer meant that the pickpocket was waiting for the bus.
- How can you fix the sentence?

While waiting for the bus, the police arrested a pickpocket at the edge of the crowd.



THE DANGLING OR MISPLACED MODIFIER

- Another typical error:
- Since leaving school, good jobs have not been easy to find.
- Before going to class this morning, the bookstore was crowded.
- Without a subject-verb relationship, the phrase is dangling. How do you correct these?



FIXING DANGLING CLAUSES

- Rewrite the following to eliminate dangling clauses. Sometimes you can complete the clause; other times you can include the information in a different form. Make your writing economical.
- Before mixing in the dry ingredients, the flour should be sifted.
- While collecting money for the hurricane victims, the generosity of strangers amazed me.
- When revising and editing your papers, it is important to read the sentences aloud and listen to the stress pattern.



GROUP REVISION EXERCISE: THE INTRO

- Thanks to a student for contributing this introduction for group revision.



ACADEMIC WRITING

Next, let's look at two articles:

1. An example of fine academic writing in nursing, recommended by a student– Toward compassionate action by Doane and Varcoe. We will look at a pdf of the article, but it is also published in your 507 text: *Perspectives on nursing theory*.
2. Second – let's read a short piece on the literature review – a foundational genre in social science writing.
3. <http://www.insidehighered.com/advice/mentor/ri-venburght>



QUESTIONS

- Do you have any questions about writing, grammar, punctuation, or APA?

