Writing for the EdD

09 May 2014

Agenda

9:00am Introductions/welcomes

EdD Survey Feedback

Hour 1 Academic writing & instructor expectations

Break [15 min]

Hour 2 Forum/response posts & writing quality

Break [15 min]

Hour 3 Conciseness, clarity & frequent writing errors

1:00pm Finish

Follow Along?

- Go to:
 http://
 professionallearningblog.com/
- Click "Faculty Activities"
- Download PDF Slides

EdD Survey Feedback

April 2014

Survey Feedback

Elements of Writing

- 1. Frequent writing errors
- 2. Thesis statement
- 3. Purpose of writing
- 4. Conciseness in writing
- 5. Transitions
- 6. Positionality
- 7. Clarity in writing

Processes of Writing

- 1. Incorporating APA
- Understanding instructor expectations (requirements/rubrics)
- Seeking clarification on assignments and expectations
- 4. Incorporating research
- Assessing quality of writing
- Incorporating multimedia/ technology

Survey Feedback

Types of Writing

- 1. Thesis
- Proposal
- 3. Literature review
- 4. Forum response post
- 5. Research essay
- 6. Forum post

Other Comments

- How to start working on proposal now rather than waiting until the third year of the program begins?
- Most commonly asked questions/issues about thesis writing
- 3. Preparing for the dissertation.

Additional Supports

- 1. Live F2F lectures
- 2. Real time online lectures
- 3. Recorded lectures
- 4. Self-directed readings about writing
- 5. University contact person
- 6. Instructor-organized writing group

Live Session 1 (May 2014 – Year 1) [Recorded video + self-directed readings in June]

- Elements Frequent writing errors, conciseness, clarity
- Processes Instructor expectations & seeking clarification, assessing quality
- Types Forum post, response post



- *Elements* Purpose of writing, transitions
- Processes Incorporating technology
- Types Proposal and literature review

Recorded Session 3 + self-directed readings (Jan. 2015 – Year 2) [Live session Feb/March]

- *Elements* Thesis statement, positionality
- Processes Incorporating APA
- Types Research essay, Thesis

3 F2F lectures, recorded lectures, Self-directed readings about writing (over 2 years), + 2 more APA sessions



Instructororganized writing group



Communities of Research Practice Year 3

Concrete Experience

(doing / having an experience) Course Work Years 1, 2 & 3

Active Experimentation

(planning / trying out what you have learned)

Reflective Observation

(reviewing / reflecting on the experience)

Writing for The EdD Years 1 & 2

Abstract Concepetualisation

(concluding / learning from the experience) Thesis
Writing &
Reflection
Years 2 & 3

Academic Writing & Instructor Expectations

Small/Large Group Discussion

- What's it like being a student (again)?
- How does online learning differ from your prior experiences with F2F learning?
- How easy has it been to negotiate your student/classroom and leader/workplace roles?
- How do you notice that writing in the EdD is different from the writing you do each day?

A Beginning *Definition*: Academic Writing

- Topic-based, structured research
- Informed authoritative, objective, fair-handed author
- Presentation of new knowledge through reviewing what is currently known and providing a foundation for the author's new views
- Writing is thesis-driven (establishing, proving or disproving arguable statements)
- Distinguishing what is known with what new ideas may emerge, or be thought/questioned about the topic, via logically developed, factually-based argumentation

Defining a *Process*: Academic Writing

- Argument for proof through reasoning, evidence, and example
- Question that "tests" knowledge, offers revisions and qualifications, shows creativity and contribution
- Organization designed for clarity and effective persuasion
- Revisions and re-arrangements that consider discovery through composition
- Proofreading for appropriate diction, register, and economy
- Formatting and style for convention

Defining a *Register*: Academic Writing

- ☐ Writing in the 3rd person (focus on topic/ideas)
- ☐ Formal register (avoiding abbreviations, slang, jargon, contractions, phrasal verbs)
- ☐ Formal tone (avoiding loaded words, tone that carries a subjective "attitude," creating a biased mood)

- ✓ **Subject position** Who am I writing about this topic? Personal stories
- ✓ Clarity and conciseness in writing (avoiding Latinate words, "edu-speak")
- ✓ Writing with a particular and unique voice and style (including passion, avoiding authoritarianism and uncautious certainty)

Seeking the Balance: Qualified Academic Language

- Evidence can only be based on what is currently known, but it *changes* as new knowledge emerges
- Language must take into account the impossibility of certainty/other experiences

- This report appears to show that . . .
- But on page 357,
 Virtanen seems to feel differently . . .
- In this context, Alanen apparently disagrees with Virtanen . . .
- These two writers thus have views which differ from present textbooks on Finnish history, as represented by Alanen, Nenonen and Salminen.

Academic Register

- It is often difficult to incorporate additional workload into an already heavy agenda.
- You may find it difficult to incorporate additional workload into an already heavy agenda.

✓ Impersonal construction

- A significant commitment of time must be made in the production of a lengthy work.
- High lexical density
- The production of a year-end report necessarily involves time management
- ✓ Highly
 nominal style

- To produce a year-end report you need to consider how you manage time effectively.
- One might suggest that pre-reading would likely shorten the total meeting time.
- Pre-reading shortens total meeting time.

✓ Hedging and emphasizing

Definition & Process: Academic Writing

Old model – divides various social process into distinct "spheres"

Bad model – today's political demands are more complex that what the model can account for

Alternative way – "spatial" rather than "spheric"

Why? – integrate analytical approaches to show where processes converge

Significance – when you keep them separate, its too simple

Solution – Use an approach that emphasizes place and context

Register & Academic Writing

Assess this excerpt for its **register**:

- ✓ Impersonal construction
- ✓ High lexical density
- ✓ Highly nominal style
- ✓ Hedging and emphasizing

Assignments, Argument, & Academic Writing

You may be asked to

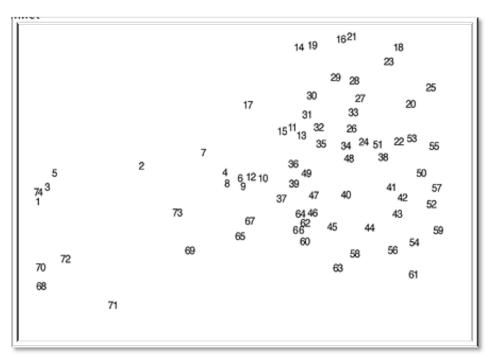
- Summarize and critique
- Express personal opinions
- Develop a central idea
- Take up a position
- Adopt a particular perspective
- Draw a conclusion
- Analyze
- Be critical
- Use evidence to support an argument
- Put forward points for and against a particular position
- Explore possible positions
- Link theory and evidence

Academic Writing vs Writing in Academia

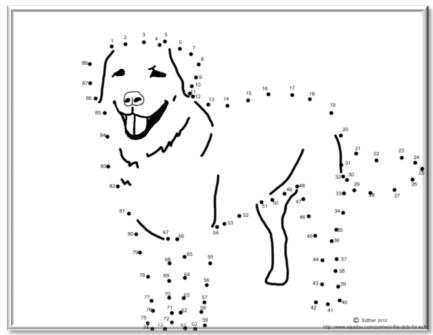


Academic Writing: Persuasion

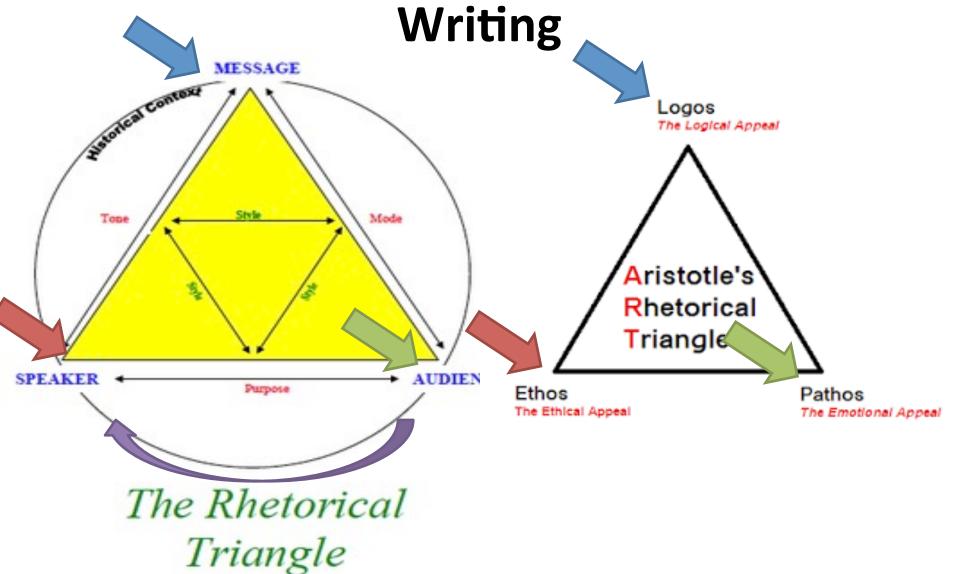
Writing Like a Writer



Writing Like a Reader



The Rhetorical Triangle For Academic



Assignments, Argument, & Academic Writing

Assess this excerpt for:

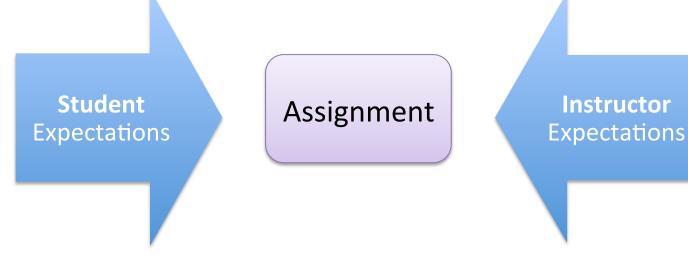
- Message (*logos*)
- Speaker (*ethos*)
- Audience (pathos)
- Context (kairos)
- Purpose
- Mode
- Tone

(Ungenerous) Advice from "Real World University" by Prof. Joe Martin

- 1. Most professors have HUGE egos
- 2. Most professors love what they teach
- 3. Most professors don't like to defend the grades they give
- 4. Professors LOVE students who accept responsibility
- 5. Professors stereotype students
- 6. Most professors are more concerned about your effort than your grade

Online Instructor-Student Communication

Instructor Expectations & Seeking Clarity (Zimmerman et al. 2014)



MATCH

- ✓ Engagement
- ✓ Motivation
- ✓ Self-Efficacy
- ✓ Enhanced learning environment

No MATCH

- Disengagement
- De-motivation
- Lack Self-Efficacy
- Diminished learning environment

Assignments: Expectations of Rigor and Equity (Office of the Ombudsperson)

The Senate policy Evaluation of Undergraduate Academic Performance - Departmental Responsibility reads:

"The department (or faculty where applicable) shall devise procedures to ensure that evaluative methods are academically rigourous and as equitable as possible."

Assignments should

- Reflect materials taught in class
- Use and rely on skills that have been taught or practiced
- Be consistent with emphasis on topics in course
- Offer a level of difficulty is appropriate to course
- Be a length that reduces feeling rushed, foregoing what is valued, pride in work, anxiety
- Be in formats that are understood or explained
- Be graded with validity, consistency, and objectivity
- Reduce plagiarism/cheating

Instructor Expectations & Seeking Clarity (Zimmerman et al. 2014)

INSTRUCTORS

- Discuss (and validate) student concerns
- Being open to changes in response to student comments
- Encourage metacognition about assignments and roles (reflection)
- Clarify expectations:
 "Clear only if known"
- Encourage an environment where students feel comfortable asking questions

STUDENTS

- Re-read course info (especially grading rubric)
- Ask instructor specific questions
- Adhere to rules of engagement
 - Communicate how instructor prefers
 - Use professional, courteous, respectful tone
 - Be proactive, honest, and upfront), explain your understanding
- Show positive contribution: Plan next steps, provide solutions or alternatives
- Follow up

Online Posts, Responses, and Academic Quality

Discussion Posts: Formal or Informal Academic Writing?

Critierium	Formal Discussion Forum	Informal Discussion Forum
Participants	Expected participation; netiquette	No prescribed rules
Assessment	Marks allocated to quality and/or quantity	No assessment
Question	Pre-determined discussion questions	General, special topic, or self- directed posts
Facilitation	Active managers help to clarify/ solve problems	Groups/threads start by students
Unacceptable Behaviour	Correctives to behaviour	No policed behaviour
Encouragement	Management includes supportive/ encouraging comments	No encouraging comments
Summarize/Close Discussion	Threads limited, closed, removed	No summaries or closed thread

(Van Rooyen & Pieterse, 2010)

Academic Writing, Quality, and Blog Posts

Assess this excerpt for its quality as an online discussion post. Consider:

- Definition question, or test of new knowledge
- Process logic, example, rational argumentation
- Register Impersonal construction, high lexical density, highly nominal style, hedging and emphasizing
- Level of formality

Discussion Activity: Making a Quality Post/Responding to a Post

HALF: Give advice to a new classmate on WHAT and HOW to form a high quality online discussion post. Give examples. Consider:

OTHER HALF: Give advice to a new classmate on how NOT to respond to online discussion posts. Give examples. Consider:

- Strategy, frequency, and timing
- First posting
- Topic
- Stance
- Questions
- Thread title

- Valuable contributions
- Negativity/Positivity
- Agreement/disagreement
- Language/tone
- Staying on topic
- Additional information

Tips for Better Online Posts

- ✓ **EXAMPLES (PERSONAL)** Are you able to draw from personal experience when applicable, but then extrapolate from that relative knowledge to make some larger critical claim? Do you retain only the **necessary** details of the example that you draw from your personal experiences?
- ✓ ANSWER AND RESPONSE Are you making an effort to respond sincerely and thoughtfully to previous posts? Or have you just typed "I agree" and moved on to your own thoughts? Do you always begin new discussion threads? Do you acknowledge your classmates by name when you discuss their ideas?
- ✓ "SELECTIVE POSTING" Do you agree with every idea said in a discussion thread? Are you re-stating what has already been said? Do you find that you are writing claims that are somewhat self-evident or provide nothing new to the discussion thread? Do you not really know much about this topic? If you say "yes" to any of these questions, try to find another thread upon which to post, or start your own thread.
- ✓ YOUR VIRTUAL PERSONA Are you cultivating your *own* "virtual persona" in these discussions? Are you aware of how *what* you say and *how* you say it are contributing to your authority as a writer? In your responses to others, are you using language that is positive, constructive, and generous towards your classmates?

Tips for Better Online Posts

- ✓ **COHESION** Does your post have a mini-thesis statement, some central "nugget" that is the main point you wish to convey to your readers? Do you provide that nugget near the beginning or the end of your post? Is there cohesion in your post so that all thoughts, ideas, and examples cohere to support your main point(s)?
- ✓ **CONTEXT** Do you avoid making universalizing or generalizing statements? Do you give sufficient contextual information (that is, biographical, historical, summative) to explain how, why, or in what circumstances you argue for the validity of your ideas? Are you citing the lecture notes where appropriate?
- ✓ **SPECIFICITY** Are you making general claims or considering a particular example? Does defining terms and giving evidence add specificity and focus?
- ✓ **DEFINITIONS** Are you using the terms from the lecture notes in your answers? Do you clarify or define briefly the key term(s) you that you discuss? Do you show how re-visiting the definition of a term may clarify or complicate an idea?
- ✓ **EXAMPLES (TEXTS)** —Are you able to draw examples directly from textual evidence to support a specific idea or argument? Do you provide a summary or an explanation of that evidence to support your ideas? Do you cite the line and page numbers so that other students may use them as references?

Tips for Better Online Discussion

- ✓ TITLES Are you providing compelling titles to your discussion posts to "lure" other students into responding to your post? How can effective titles be used to pique interest as well as add meaning to your post?
- ✓ EXAMPLES (WEB/MULTIMEDIA/CURRENT EVENTS) Is there online material that might be helpful in exploring these discussion questions? Have you seen a web page or a Youtube video that might stimulate further discussion? Do you make an active link to that online material so that readers have an easy time following the link to the example you provide?
- ✓ AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT Can you find a way to both agree and disagree with the question and/or the previous post? How can your contribution via counterpoint add richness to the issues you discuss? Can you complicate, elaborate, or nuance your ideas depending on the particular example or certain set of circumstances? Will you play the "devil's advocate" to provide a new perspective on threads where there is a lot of agreement?
- ✓ **ANTICIPATING OBJECTIONS** As you write or respond to posts, are you attempting to anticipate objections to the claims you are formulating? Might you find a way in your posts to engage in the limitations of your own claims, or to reinforce your logic by way of undermining the objections before they are made?
- ✓ REFERENCES/RESOURCES Do you know of a text beyond the course that
 offers a supporting or challenging perspective? Is the bibliographical
 information correct?

More Tips for Better Online Discussion

- ✓ **ECONOMY AND ELEGANCE** Is there a way to express your idea using language that is economic yet elegant? How can a term, perspective, event, or phenomenon be expressed in a way that is clear yet not overly simplistic, precise without being exhaustive?
- ✓ **QUOTATIONS AND PARAPHRASE** Are you using effective quotations and accurate paraphrases of the readings to support your ideas? Are there other outside sources that you can bring into the conversation to provide new perspectives, ideas, and examples?
- ✓ TRANSITIONS Do you make clear transitions between the ideas in your post as well as between your ideas and those of others? Do you simply say, "I agree with what Harry said" without summarizing what he said or explaining why, how, or under what circumstances you agree with what he said?
- ✓ **ANALOGIES** Are you thinking about an abstract idea that you might clarify for others by using an analogy as an example? Are you careful to understand the implications of the analogy that you make? (I.e. one part of the two things compared might fit, but the other "parts" of the analogy might not correspond so accurately.)
- ✓ **RHETORICAL QUESTIONS (?)** Are you using rhetorical questions sparingly but to good effect? If you offer a rhetorical question for other classmates to ponder, do you also attempt to answer the question yourself?

Seeking Clarity on Discussion Posts Evaluation

STUDENTS

- Re-read course info (especially grading rubric)
- Ask instructor specific questions
- Adhere to rules of engagement
 - Communicate how instructor prefers
 - Use professional, courteous, respectful tone
 - Be proactive, honest, and upfront), explain your understanding
- Show positive contribution: Plan next steps, provide solutions or alternatives
- Follow up (or seek support)

Conciseness, clarity & frequent writing errors

Write What You Mean to Say: **Connecting the Dots for Readers**

Writing Like a Writer Writing Like a Reader

Wagenmakers (2009)

"In order to write clearly, academics should make the life of their readers as easy as possible" (2009: 1).

How to Make Your Writing Not Suck: Adding Sugar and Water

SHORT & SWEET

- State the goals of your paper explicitly – don't test reader's patience (#1)
- Use concrete examples abstractions need clarification (#2)
- Combat wordiness (#3)
- Do not express more than one or two ideas in a single sentence (#9)

FLOW

- Avoid statistical prose (#4)
- Integrate the presentation of your results and their interpretation (#5)
- Add structure using constructions, subheadings, transitions (#6-8)
- Start sentences with old information, and end with new information – sequences flow (#10)



Clarity and Conciseness in Academic Writing



Assess this excerpt for "sweetness and flow":

- Goals clear
- Concrete examples
- Wordiness
- 1-2 ideas per sentence
- Statistical prose
- Results & interpretation synthesis
- Structure (constructions, sub-headings, transitions)
- Start with old, end with new

A division of social processes into different, mutually exclusive 'value spheres' such as 'cultural' or 'economic' derives from a nineteenth century, European model of civil society. This model cannot respond to current political demands for cultural recognition and redistributed justice which characterize multicultural societies. Spatially located analyses, such as in urban and regional research, offer an ideal opportunity to marry analytic approaches to capture the convergences of cultural and economic processes in given localities. Attempts within political economy to integrate culture as a force of governance have tended to oversimplify the cultural aspects of economic activity as, for example, discourse. A 'culturaleconomic' approach emphasizing place and context is proposed. (Shields, 1999: 303)

Frequent Writing Errors

Word Choice/Style

- Clarity
 - Vague words
 - Absolute words
 - Incorrect words
- Conciseness
 - Redundancy
 - Unnecessary modifiers
 - Expletives
- Careless errors

Grammar

- Adjective/adverb confusion
- Pronoun case
- Subject-verb agreement
- Double negative
- Dangling construction
- Verb tense shift
- Sentence fragment
- Verb form
- Comma splice
- Run-on sentence
- Parallelism

http://grammar.about.com/od/tests/a/Exercise-In-Eliminating-Deadwood-From-Our-Writing_2.htm

Eliminate "Deadwood" for Clarity and Conciseness

- Reduce long clauses to shorter phrases
- Reduce phrases to single words
- Avoid There is, There are, and There were as sentence openers
- Avoid redundancies
- Don't overwork modifiers
- Use active verbs
- Avoid using noun forms of verbs
- Replace vague nouns with more specific words

Eliminate "Deadwood" for Clarity and Conciseness

- Modifiers (nouns, adjectives, intensifiers)
 - Very, really, extremely, super, fully, rather
- Use active verbs
 - The window was broken [by me.]
- Avoid using noun forms of verbs, especially at the beginning of sentences (gerunds, "verbing")
 - Signatured, impacted, googled, Building
- Replace vague nouns with more specific words
 - Good, bad, many, hot, household, loaded words: spirituality, euphemisms: collateral damage

 Emission allowances are issued every year on an annual basis.

 Open wells in hard-rock formations are usually rectangular in shape.

 A wide variety of inhaled corticosteroids are now currently available.

 As a facilitator, you should be noticing what is going on and making sense of it. Then you can make a decision about what to do about it.

 Beginning in the decade of the 1950s, NASA first initiated a program to develop and launch a series of passive satellites.

 A good file format will include a mechanism to allow the addition of more data later in case the need becomes necessary.

- The use of hormone-replacement therapy (HRT) has produced benefits for many women.
- In 1972, President Nixon and his counterparts in Beijing took a number of important steps that would result in an improvement in relations between their respective countries.

- In addition, the design team must also perform an analysis of the decisions that have to be made by crew members as the mission progresses.
- It is possible to speculate that the reason the polymer melted was due to the fact that heat had been generated by way of internal friction within the bed.

- 1. Lay vs. Lie transitive/intransitive
- Literally vs. metaphorically
- 3. Two independent clauses
- 4. That vs. who
- 5. For sell vs. for sale
- 6. Who vs. whom pronoun subject/pronoun object
- 7. Their vs his/her everyone
- 8. Catcher in the Rye, Sex and the City
- 9. Nip it in the butt/bud
- 10. I couldn't care less

- 11. alot vs. a lot
- 12. Lose vs. loose
- 13. Fewer vs. less (count/non-count)
- 14. Could of/could've
- 15. For all intensive purposes
- 16. Subjects vs Objects
- 17. Me vs. I (went to Starbucks)
- 18. Anxious vs. eager
- 19. Good vs. well (adjective/noun or adverb)

- 20. If vs. whether (condition vs. two choices)
- 21. Bring vs. taken
- 22. Historic vs. historical
- 23. You're vs. Your
- 24. It's vs its
- 25. There vs They're vs Their
- 26. Who is vs. whose
- 27. Emigrate vs. Immigrate
- 28. Two vs. too vs. too

- 29. Allusion vs. illusion
- 30. Bear vs bear vs bear vs bare
- 31. Ellicit vs. illicit
- 32. Led vs lead
- 33. Stationery vs. stationary
- 34. Whether vs. weather
- 35. Affect vs. effect
- 36. Than vs. then
- 37. Principal vs. principal vs principle
- 38. Accept vs. except

Strategies for Eliminating Careless Writing Errors

- ✓ Write initial drafts without concern for errors
- ✓ Do not look at your paper for 24 hours
- ✓ Print your paper you'll see mistakes that you might not see on a computer screen
- ✓ Start with the last sentence of your paper and read your paper sentence by sentence, going backwards
- ✓ Cover all the other lines with another piece of paper
- ✓ Point your pen at each word
- ✓ Think about the grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, meaning... of every word
- ✓ Proofread for only one aspect of writing (tone, word choice, sentence structure) for each reading
- ✓ Read your writing out loud
- √ Have a friend proofread

Last Slide!

- This session recorded (June) + self-directed reading
- Another meeting? –
 August
- Fall 2014
 - APA Session
 - Writing for the EdD II

 (Purpose of writing, transitions, incorporating technology, proposal and literature review)
- More on thesis and supervisors in Fall 2014

- ✓ Use web to troubleshoot your writing
- ✓ Read, purchase, borrow, download a graduate studies writing guide
- ✓ Read, download, borrow an Education thesis