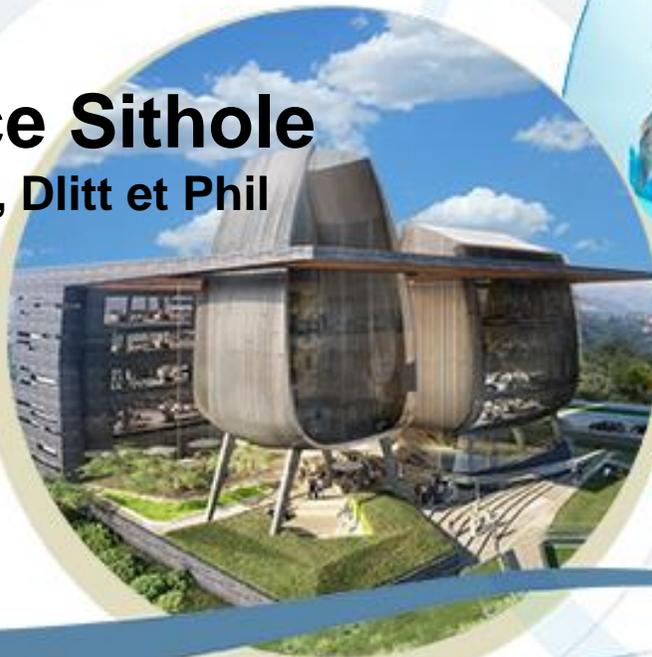


Considerations for Manuscript Writing

Dr Lawrence Sithole
Boptom, Moptom, Dlitt et Phil



Purpose of Presentation

- The purpose of this presentation is to give a guide on paper writing skill development, with the aim of assisting the you in gaining proficiency in academic writing.
- This presentation will not make you proficient in paper writing. It is your activities after you have listened to this presentation that may result in your proficiency.

What is Manuscript Writing?

- Manuscript writing is usually a scholarly conversation that is written by researchers for academic purposes (for other researchers)
- They have to be written STRICTLY in a particular fashion or format.
- Published in accredited journals
- Original research, case report and review

Involves Academic Skill Development

- Each of us has written one academic document or another, one time or another.
- Hence we are all conversant with academic writing.
- But as in every endeavour in life, one can improve one's skill in an area by further training, practice, self development etc.

In the Beginning

- Read studies similar to what you want to write or research on
- Professional journals, dissertations/theses, Google scholar
- Abstracts
- Literature Reviews
- Conclusions/Discussion
- Recommendations for Future Study
- Take notes
- Summarize/paraphrase passages

Attitude for Writing Skills

- Hard Work
- Persistence
- Regular writing (everyday!!!!)
- Patience
- Diligence
- Obedience (obey the guidelines)
- Self-belief (you can become a proficient and great writer!!)

Variations in Writing

Academic writing varies significantly, depending on factors such as the:

- Purpose (Proposal, Dissertation, Thesis or Article)
- Academic area (Sciences or Arts)
- Academic subject (Medicine, Law, Psychology, History, etc.)

However, there are common areas !!!

Aspect of Project Management

- Paper writing (Dissertation, thesis etc) require effective management in terms of time.
- Therefore, you need to give it a **reasonable time schedule**, otherwise, it may take longer time than you anticipate.
- Writing up often take more time than the time spent on data collection!!!!!!

Writing Style

- Write in a style appropriate to your discipline
- Always use:
 - formal grammar (not colloquial language)
 - formal vocabulary
- Be clear, concise and precise
- Academic writing should be *literal*
- Error (in whatever form) is not permitted!!!!

No factual errors, structural, analysis error, grammar errors, spelling errors, punctuation errors etc.

Avoiding Slang/Colloquial language

Academic writing is formal: not just to use complex words, no inappropriate informal language is used.

Here are examples:

- It is widely accepted that election campaigns go the extra mile in their final weeks.
- The company, in an attempt to cut costs, fired 5% of the workforce in 2004.
- Bradshaw (2009) decides that the conclusion is clear as crystal: sporting activity should be promoted more to kids at a young age.

Avoid the use of emotive language

Understanding the vocabulary in your study area NB

- Horrible
- Disgraceful
- Disgusting
- Incredible
- Dire
- Tragedy
- Wonderful

Avoid use of contractions

- Can't
- Won't
- He's
- Shouldn't
- There'll

All not acceptable

Recommended Guidelines

- Strictly follow the guidelines (**Author guidelines**)

Use and stick to:

- Appropriate lay-out pattern
- Appropriate paragraph lengths
- Recommended number of words, pages etc

Recommended Guidelines

- You may need to review a write-up (e.g manuscript) up to 5-10 times (over few weeks or months).
- Will help you to systematically reduce and minimize the error contents of the write-up.
- If you read your draft only once and send it to your supervisor, it may come back with many red lines.

Recommended Guidelines

Use of Personal Pronouns

- **You** can see these trends in Figure 2. X

These trends can be seen in Figure 2.

- **We** can identify three types. X

Three types can be identified.

- **I** will examine this issue. X

This issue will be examined

Recommended Guidelines

Repetitions of Words

Avoid repetition:

- Several problems were encountered when attempting to address this problem. X

Several obstacles were encountered when attempting to address this problem.

- This problem is compounded by a number of other problems. X

This problem is compounded by a number of issues.

Recommended Guidelines

Transitions

- Words and phrases used to:
 - help the reader move easily from one sentence to the next
 - show the logical relationships between the sentences
- Make sure that the transitions you choose convey the precise meaning intended.
- Some common transitions
 - **Addition:** moreover, besides, furthermore, also
 - **Comparison:** similarly, likewise, in the same way, Like X, Y
 - **Contrast:** however, nevertheless, on the other hand, yet
 - **Example:** for instance, for example, specifically such as
 - **Result:** Therefore, thus, consequently, hence
 - **Sequence:** first, second, next, finally,
 - **Time:** meanwhile, since, then, after that, later

Recommended Guidelines

Theses/dissertations

- **Guideline will always include:**
- **Layout of the document** (Title, Author and affiliation, Corresponding author's details, Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, Acknowledgements, References.....)
- Number of words or number of pages
- Font type to be used
- Number and format of references or bibliography
- Mode of referencing in the text or Ref. List.

Title

- Choose an appropriate title for your research. Discuss the title with your supervisor
- You need your supervisor's agreement before you proceed
- Your title should show:
 - The phenomenon being researched
 - The participants or subjects
 - The confined area of the research

Abstract

Some **guidelines** require structured Abstract:

- Background
- Purpose
- Method
- Results
- Conclusion

If your abstract is not structured **when required**, the document will be sent back for correction or rejected.

Recommended Order of Writing

- Title
 - Introduction
 - Methodology
 - Results
 - Discussion
 - References
 - Abstract (**Why abstract last??**)
 - Acknowledgement, Conflict of interest
- ▶ **WHAT DOES EACH OF THE ABOVE MEAN?**

Punctuation

- Punctuation is used to create sense, clarity and stress in sentences.
- Use punctuation marks to structure and organise your writing
- Punctuation is a way of using special marks to divide ideas into phrases, clauses and sentences to make them clearer to the reader.
- The most common punctuation marks in academic writing are:
 - [.] **full stop**: written at the end of a sentence to show the completion of a statement /used with abbreviations, such as e.g. and i.e.
 - [,] **comma**: divides words in a series or list; introduces direct quotations (e.g.The informant said, 'I agree with this statement.')
 - [;] **semi-colon**: divides independent clauses that are closely related (Traffic jams have worsened in the last two years; these jams have become a concern for the majority of drivers)
 - [:] **colon**: introduces a list of examples (There are three main causes of road congestion: heavy traffic, careless driving and inadequate roads)
 - [“.....”] **quotation mark**: indicate the directly quoted words of others

References

- Referencing or citation is an important part of academic writing
- It means acknowledging the work of others
- Providing references:
 - gives respect and credit to others
 - shows academic rigour
 - indicates good research
 - shows knowledge of relevant literature
 - helps to avoid plagiarism

References

- Two most referencing styles are:
- APA and Havard

References

- What I do not need to reference
 1. General knowledge
 2. Scientific truths
 3. History dates
- What I do need to reference
 1. Opinions, theories, statements/claims, graphs/tables, statistics, etc

References

- **One source by one author**

Author surname (no suffixes or initials)

Eg. Herbet (2015) found that.....

- **One source by two authors**

Name both authors in the sentence or in brackets

Used 'and' between the authors' names within a sentence and use the ampersand (&) in brackets

Appendices

- Include your questionnaires/interview questions used for data collection
- Ethical clearance certificate
- Permission request letters
- Granted permission letters (responses)

Thank you

UNISA

