

MODULE 1: REPORT WRITING

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a report is a statement of the results of an investigation or of any matter on which definite information is required. According to communication experts, a report is a structured written document in which a specific issue is examined for the purpose of conveying information in order to report findings, to answer a request, to put forward ideas and make recommendations or to offer solutions. Professionals such as administrators, scientists, business executives, and engineers have to write reports for different purposes. Reports may vary from one-page informal report to a 250-page formal annual report of an organization. Reports may be presented orally, electronically, or in written form.

1.1. Objectives of Report writing:

- Reports are logically organized:
- Reports are objective: Reports contribute to decision making and problem solving; therefore they need to be as objective as possible.
- Reports assist in problem solving process: It is important to recognize and define the problem, select a method for solution, collect and organize the data and document the sources, and find a solution.

1.2. Types of Report:

Reports are basically classified into oral and written reports which can be formal and informal in nature.

- 1.2.1. **Oral reports:** Oral reports are informal in nature. It also consists of face-to-face presentations of information. Oral reports may include reporting of accidents, sales, production, and so on. They are useful for brief information related to routine activities and developments. They provide quick feedback that may lead to fast action and decisions.
- 1.2.2. **Written reports:** Such reports are more convenient than oral reports. The advantage of using written reports is that it has a permanent value and it can be maintained for future reference and use.
- 1.2.3. **Formal reports:** It is usually the result of a thorough investigation of a problem, condition, or a situation. They are longer and elaborate with discussion and description. They can be informational, analytical, routine or special.
- 1.2.4. **Informal reports:** They are usually short and do not require elaborate descriptions and analysis.
- 1.2.5. **Informational reports:** reports that present detailed facts on a given activity without any suggestions, analysis, interpretations, or recommendations. The function of such types of reports is to collect, compile, and organize facts. Present the data as objectively as possible. The relevant information should be gathered systematically and in an organized way. Examples of informational reports are conference reports, seminar reports, excursion reports, industrial visits reports, and so on.
- 1.2.6. **Analytical reports:** reports that present the data with interpretation and analysis. The report writer analyzes the data, facts, problem, or situation in an objective manner. Based on the

analysis the conclusions, inferences, and recommendations are drawn. Examples of analytical reports are project reports, feasibility reports, market research reports, and so on.

- 1.2.7. **Regular or periodic reports:** Reports that document recent activities on periodic basis. Such reports are submitted periodically as and when required to assist the organization in decision making process in the matters related to day to day affairs. The reports may be prepared daily, weekly, biweekly, monthly, quarterly, semiannually, annually, or according to some other frequency. Such reports relate to the information about things happening in the organization and its progress. The decision is to be taken to solve the problems and the actions for smooth and efficient functioning of the organization. They are generally brief, factual and routine in nature. Some of the common reports are Sales reports, financial reports, Annual report, Personnel evaluation reports, and so on.
- 1.2.8. **Research reports:** Report based on some research work conducted by an individual or a group. The report will focus on the findings, and offer suggestions and recommendations. Suggestions are stated as conclusions in the report.
- 1.2.9. **Special report:** Report prepared and presented to convey special information related to a single condition, problem, issue, or occasion. They are the result of specific circumstances. Some of the most important decisions in an organization may be taken on the basis of the information mentioned in the special reports. Such reports could either be informational or analytical. Some of the special reports are inquiry reports, research reports, thesis, dissertation, and so on.
- 1.2.10. **Business plans:** Document that describes how a business is set up in a detailed form. It includes the business structure, its product and services, its market share and marketing strategy, complete budget for a set of five years and the backup plan.
- 1.2.11. **Progress review report:** It provides periodic reviews of the progress of an ongoing activity, or a study, or routine ongoing operations. An appraisal of the progress is required to determine whether the work is moving in the right direction or not, whether the goals are met or not.
- 1.2.12. **Completion report:** It gives solutions to some surveys or research findings that are based on data collection. Such reports are prepared at the end of a study or investigation. A report like this is designed to inform as well as to persuade by documenting what was done, learned, conducted, and recommended.
- 1.2.13. **Statutory report:** Reports that are presented according to the requirements of a particular law or rule. Some of the examples are auditor's report, compensation report, tax returns reports, and so on. These reports are in a particular format.
- 1.2.14. **Proposals:** A written description on how one organization can meet the needs of another, thus making such reports persuasive in nature. Proposals can be solicited or unsolicited. Solicited are invited and initiated when a potential customer or clients submits exact specifications or needs in a bid request or a request for proposal, commonly referred as an RFP(request for proposal). An unsolicited proposal is prepared by an individual or firm that sees a problem to be solved and submits a proposal.

1.3. Language and Style in a report:

The steps involved in the process of writing a report are

- Identify the characteristics of a report. Normally reports travel in an upward direction. They are usually requested by the higher authorities.
- Identify the type of audience.
- Objectivity is mandatory in a report.
- Adopt the right problem solving process and method.
- Use problem statements, statements of purpose, and Hypotheses.
- Limit the scope of the problem.
- Define the terms clearly.
- Document the methodology and procedures.
- Arrive at a solution.
- Use appropriate printed, electronic, and primary sources of information.
- Choose the database or search engine appropriately.
- Use useful reference sources.
- Ensure that the internet references are credible.
- Use techniques such as observational studies, experimental research, normative survey research, and sampling.
- Validate the data.
- Check for reliability, consistency and accuracy.
- Collect and organize the data.
- Use direct quotation method and paraphrase method of collecting data.
- Adopt survey method to collect data which includes mailed surveys, telephone surveys, personal interviews and email polling.
- Avoid data gathering errors.
- Document sources of information through citations and referencing methods.
- Analyze the data in a systematic manner.
- Interpret the data to maintain the objective, integrity and design.
- Use graphics effectively and ethically.
- Various types of graphic aids are tables, bar charts, pictograms, line charts, gantt charts, simple line chart, multiple line charts, pie charts, maps, flow charts, blueprints, floor plans, cartoons, photographs, and so on.
- Integrate the graphics within documents.
- Avoid plagiarism.
- Be less discursive. Adopt a more direct and economic use of language.
- Understand the purpose of the report brief and adhere to its specifications.
- Structure the material in a logical and coherent order.

- Make thoughtful and practical recommendations where required.
- Avoid first-person pronouns as a rule.
- Use active voice.
- Use tense consistently.
- Avoid placing two headings consecutively without any intervening text.
- Use transition sentences to link sections of a report.
- Use a variety of coherence techniques such as time connectors, contrast connectors, similarity connectors, and cause-effect connectors.

1.4. What makes a good report?

Two of the reasons why reports are used as forms of written assessment are:

- to find out what you have learned from your reading, research or experience;
- to give you experience of an important skill that is widely used in the work place.

1.5. Formats of the report:

There are four common formats of reports, that is, printed form, letter form, memo form, and manuscript form. Depending on the nature, length, scope and function, choose the right form.

Format	Description
Printed	Printed for routine and repetitive data.
Letter	Short informal reports that are written to be communicated outside an organization.
Memo	Short informal reports that are written to be communicated within an organization.
Manuscript	Formal reports printed on plain paper.

1.5.1. Printed reports:

Such reports are used to collect the routine information. An organization may keep printed forms for recording the data periodically for analyses. Examples for the same are: trip reports, laboratory reports, conference reports, inspection reports, confidential performance reports, and so on. Such reports are simple in nature because it does not need to give detailed descriptions or discussions. Such reports are systematic and they make easy reading. They are more objective and factual with little scope to be subjective. They save time as it is less time consuming to prepare a report in a printed form.

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1.5.2. Letter Form:

This format is used in short reports where the communication is carried out outside the organization. It contains all the elements of a letter with some additional sections such as illustrations, references, and so on. This format may be used for analytical, routine, special, feasibility reports, survey reports, legal reports, or non-formal types of reports.

333 West Avenue South
Anywhere, ON L9T 4Z8

March 29, 1996

Mr. Paul Byrne Vice-President, Academic
Mohawk College, Fennell Campus
35 Fennell Avenue West
Hamilton, ON L8N 3T2

Dear Mr. Byrne

In response to your request to look into evaluation methods at Mohawk College, I have completed a report on the evaluation of courses here at Mohawk College.

The study revealed that the current typical course evaluation breakdown involves marks for assignments and examinations as well as some for attendance and participation. Advantages and disadvantages for each were discovered.

However, my conclusions were that in order to help students experience ongoing success in today's organizations, the College needs to equip them with team skills. They can do this only by putting more

emphasis on the importance and development of team-based skills rather than on individual achievement.

Based on these findings, Mohawk College's weighting system will have to be adjusted to make it more compatible with the requirements of today's organizations.

Based on my conclusions, I make the following recommendations:

- focus more on team-oriented assignments
- implement mandatory team workshops that teach students how to work effectively in teams (this might be done most effectively during orientation at the college)
- compile the breakdown on course grades as follows:
 - 40% content and examinations
 - 15% group examinations
 - 15% contribution and participation (class discussion and team assignments)
 - 10% contribution and participation (helping other teams in the class)
 - 10% attendance
 - 7% meeting deadlines
 - 3% early submission of assignments

Sincerely

Student Name

1.5.3. Memo format:

This type of format is used for short reports where communication takes place within the organization. It contains the standard elements of a memo. It is used in informational, analytical, routine, special types of reports.

TO: (My Instructor, Professor, College)
FROM: (students' name, student information, class designation)
DATE: Feb. 1, 2009
RE: A proposal to study the effectiveness of grading practices at Mohawk College

SUMMARY

Based on the shift of organizational needs to a team-work approach in the workplace, I want to determine how much the current evaluation system at Mohawk College is based upon team work. I will be investigating and reporting on the curriculum for the three-year Accounting program at Mohawk College as the basis for my report. May I have your authorization to carry out such a study?

BACKGROUND

Over the past two years, I have continuously heard and read about the move organizations have made towards a team-oriented workplace. Despite this change, my success at Mohawk College has been almost a direct result of my individual examination scores.

OBJECTIVE

With this study, I plan to investigate the balance between individual and team-work evaluations. I will survey courses and tabulate information on the current evaluation systems used within Mohawk College. I hope determine if an imbalance exists, and, if so, provide a reasonable recommendation that could make the evaluation system more compatible with today's organizational demands with regard to team-work.

SCOPE

I will restrict my research to Mohawk College students and courses in the three-year Accounting program to accomplish a more reflective sample.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To carry out the study, I propose doing the following:

- review course outlines to determine course evaluation methods in the 3-year Accounting program
- interview Mohawk College students within this program to determine their impressions of current evaluation methods
- distribute a student questionnaire to those students currently enrolled in the third semester of the program to determine the effectiveness of the current evaluation methods
- interview course instructors to determine the rationale behind current evaluation and team-work evaluations
- complete an Internet search of other colleges to determine if there is any information of evaluation methods on their websites
- perform a library search of periodical indices to see if there are any articles on the importance of team-work and its evaluation.

SCHEDULE

I will conduct my research and prepare my report using the following tentative schedule:

Complete Internet Research	Feb. 7
Complete Library Research	Feb. 14
Conduct Interviews	Feb. 21
Complete Questionnaire	Feb. 28
Distribute Questionnaire and Tabulate Results	March 7
Draft Report	March 14
Final Report	March 29

I will be forwarding a research report and a progress report before the final report is completed.

APPROVAL

May I have your authorization to proceed? You can reach me at (111) 111-1111.

Student's Initials

1.5.4. Manuscript format:

Such types of formats are used in long and formal reports. They are divided into sections and sub-sections. These sections are arranged in a logical manner. A structured report will reveal the thoughts in a clear and logical manner. It makes reading easy too.

Basically there are three parts which are prefatory/preliminary part, main/report text part and appended/addenda part.

Prefatory/Preliminary	Main/Report Text	Appended/Addenda
Half Title page(title fly)	Body of the report	Appendix
Title page	Introduction	Bibliography
Authorization	Literature review	References
Acknowledgement	Methodology	Glossary
Letter of transmittal	Limitations	Index
Table of contents	Results/findings	
Table of figures	Discussions	
Executive Summary	Conclusions	
	Recommendations	

1.5.4.1. Title page

It includes the title, author, date, and the name of the person or organization that requested the report. Such a page is often added to long reports such as manuscripts rather than a letter or memorandum. The title should be descriptive, concise and comprehensive and should reflect the contents of the report. Avoid short, vague and very long titles. Create a good title for the report. Avoid “the,” “a,” as much as on can. Be creative in giving the titles. Do not have judgmental titles.

Use of Drugs in youth population

Submitted to:

Department of Humanities

University of Mumbai

Submitted by:

Angus Taylor

Assistant Professor

Date:

1.5.4.2. Authorization

It provides written authorization to complete the report in case if the report is incomplete for some valid reason. This is optional in the structure.

1.5.4.3. Acknowledgement

Acknowledge any help received in collecting the information and writing the report. It is just a thank you note. Example:

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors wish to thank the other members of the hydrogen-maser and molecular-beam groups at Harvard for their help throughout the course of this work; in particular D. Larson provided many useful discussions. We thank V. Reinhardt for the computer program used to solve the equations of motion and F. Robie for help in cavity design.

1.5.4.4. Letter of transmittal

It is a formal record of the delivery of the report. It transmits the report from the report-writer to the person who commissioned the report. It provides the report-writer an opportunity to write directly to the reader.

Waycool Consultants, Inc.
1313 Mockingbird Lane Waycool, OK 12345 (405) 456-7899

November 8, 2000

Ms. Ima Bigshot, CIO
Lots-O'- Money, Inc.
5432 Bigbucks Drive
Swank, OK 73000

Dear Ms. Bigshot

Here is the report of desktop videoconferencing that you requested in your letter to us on October 15th. As you will see, desktop videoconferencing has many attractive features and is being implemented by a wide range of businesses.

Because Lots-O'- Money is looking for an alternative to telephone conference calls, we carefully researched this emerging communication market. Our report first identifies the benefits of desktop video conferencing versus telephone conference calls. We then compare the top three desktop video conferencing products using four common evaluation criteria. Finally, our conclusions and recommendations identify the best videoconferencing hardware and software solutions for your company within the limitations that you specified.

Thank you, Ms. Bigshot, for the opportunity to prepare this report. Please call if you have any questions or would like further information. We hope you will think of Waycool Consultants for your future research needs.

Sincerely

Rufus T. Firefly
President and CEO

1.5.4.5. Table of Contents

It provides the reader with an analytical overview of the report and the manner and order in which the information is presented. This aids in understanding the report and in locating the exact and specific location. The list includes the name and location along with page numbers of every report part except those that precede the contents page.

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1.5.4.6. Table of figures

It aids the reader in locating a specific graphic in a report with many graphics. The write may include a list of figures separate from the contents. The list should include a reference to each figure that appears in the report, identified by both figure number and name, along with the page number on which the figure appears.

1.5.4.7. Executive summary

The executive summary is also called as abstract, overview or précis. The summary should briefly describe the content of the report. It should cover the aims of the report, what was found and what, if any, action is called for. Aim for about 1/2 a page in length and avoid detail or discussion; just outline the main points. Remember that the summary is the first thing that is read. It should provide the reader with a clear, helpful overview of the content of the report. It is one of the most important parts of a report. It presents the report in miniature. It assists the reader in understanding the long, complex report. Avoid any visual in a summary.

Exposure of rocks belonging to the Charnian Super group (late Precambrian) were examined in the area around Beacon Hill, north Leicestershire. This report aims to provide details of the stratigraphy at three sites - Copt Oak, Mount St. Bernard Abbey and Oaks in Charnwood. It was observed that at each of these sites, the Charnian Super group consists mainly of volcanoclastic sediments (air-fall and ash-flow tuffs) interblended with mudstones and siltstones. These rocks show features that are characteristic of deposition in shallow water on the flanks of a volcano (e.g. welding and alteration of ignimbrites). Further studies are required to understand depositional mechanisms and to evaluate the present-day thickness of individual rock units.

1.5.4.8. Report Text

1.5.4.9. Introduction

The introduction orients the reader to the problem. It includes the following items:

- what the topic is
- why it is being reported on
- the scope and limitations of the research
- where the information came from
- an explanation of special terminology
- a preview of the major sections of the report to provide coherence and transitions
- how the topic is divided into parts
- the order in which the parts will be presented

1.5.4.9.Literature review

It is a critical review of published literature that is relevant to your specific study.

1.5.4.10.Methodology

Information under this heading may include: a list of equipment used; explanations of procedures followed; relevant information on materials used, including sources of materials and details of any necessary preparation; reference to any problems encountered and subsequent changes in procedure. The methodology section is important because it provides details that others can use to replicate your study.

1.5.4.11.Limitations

In this section you can mention the issues that came in the way of way of making your report 100 percent accurate. In order to make your report realistic, you may outline any problems that you encountered during your investigations.

1.5.4.12.Results/findings

This section should include a summary of the results of the investigation or experiment together with any necessary diagrams, graphs or tables of gathered data that support your results. Present your results in a logical order without comment. Discussion of your results should take place in the main body of the report. While writing this section, the following points should be kept in mind:

- Restrict the content of this section to factual information of high credibility. Opinions should be located in the discussion section of the report.
- Divide the section into sub-topics and use sub-headings.
- Arrange the sub-topics in accordance with a basic plan or logical progression.

1.5.4.13.Discussion

The main body of the report is where you discuss your material. The facts and evidence you have gathered should be analyzed and discussed with specific reference to the problem or issue. If your discussion section is lengthy you might divide it into section headings. Your points should be grouped and arranged in an order that is logical and easy to follow. Use headings and subheadings to create a clear structure for your material. Use bullet points to present a series of points in an easy-to-follow list. It is often called as the heart of the report. Present your expert opinions but avoid any emotional statements.

1.5.4.14.Conclusion

In the conclusion you should show the overall significance of what has been covered. You may want to remind the reader of the most important points that have been made in the report or highlight what you consider to be the most central issues or findings. However, no new material should be introduced in the conclusion.

1.5.4.15.Recommendations

If the purpose of the report requires suggesting actions that should be taken, they should be included in the recommendations in a numbered logical sequence. While writing this section, one must keep the following points in mind:

- Make recommendations based only on your findings and inferences.
- Be clear and specific.
- State clearly what action should be taken and who should be carrying it out.
- Do not put more than one step in each recommendation.
- Always number your recommendations.
- Keep explanations out of recommendations.

1.5.4.16.Appended/ Addenda

Any material that is too technical or too detailed to go in the body of the text should appear in appended.

1.5.4.17.Appendix

It contains supplementary information that supports the report but it is not appropriate to include in the report itself. It may include questionnaires, transmittal letters, summary tabulations, verbatim comments from respondents, complex mathematical calculations and formulas, legal documents, and a variety of items the writer presents to support the body of the report. Each item included in the appendix must be mentioned in the report.

1.5.4.18. Bibliography

It is a record of the bibliographic details such as – author, title, edition, publisher, place of publication, and year of publication – for the sources of information used in the report. Use a particular format like MLA (Modern Language Association), APA (American Psychological Association), or Chicago Manual of Style.

MLA:

"Blueprint Lays Out Clear Path for Climate Action." *Environmental Defense Fund*. Environmental Defense Fund, 8 May 2007. Web. 24 May 2009.

Clinton, Bill. Interview by Andrew C. Revkin. "Clinton on Climate Change." *New York Times*. New York Times, May 2007. Web. 25 May 2009.

Dean, Cornelia. "Executive on a Mission: Saving the Planet." *New York Times*. New York Times, 22 May 2007. Web. 25 May 2009.

Ebert, Roger. "An Inconvenient Truth." Rev. of *An Inconvenient Truth*, dir. Davis Guggenheim. *rogerebert.com*. Sun-Times News Group, 2 June 2006. Web. 24 May 2009.

GlobalWarming.org. Cooler Heads Coalition, 2007. Web. 24 May 2009.

Gowdy, John. "Avoiding Self-organized Extinction: Toward a Co-evolutionary Economics of Sustainability." *International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology* 14.1 (2007): 27-36. Print.

An Inconvenient Truth. Dir. Davis Guggenheim. Perf. Al Gore, Billy West. Paramount, 2006. DVD.

Leroux, Marcel. *Global Warming: Myth Or Reality?: The Erring Ways of Climatology*. New York: Springer, 2005. Print.

Milken, Michael, Gary Becker, Myron Scholes, and Daniel Kahneman. "On Global Warming and Financial Imbalances." *New Perspectives Quarterly* 23.4 (2006): 63. Print.

Nordhaus, William D. "After Kyoto: Alternative Mechanisms to Control Global Warming." *American Economic Review* 96.2 (2006): 31-34. Print.

"Global Warming Economics." *Science* 9 Nov. 2001: 1283-84. *Science Online*. Web. 24 May 2009.

Shulte, Bret. "Putting a Price on Pollution." *Usnews.com*. *US News & World Rept.*, 6 May 2007. Web. 24 May 2009.

Uzawa, Hirofumi. *Economic Theory and Global Warming*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. Print.

APA:

BOOK

Geissler, E. M. (1998). *Pocket guide to cultural assessment* (2nd ed.). St. Louis, MO: Mosby.

BOOK CHAPTER, ESSAY, or ARTICLE when author is credited

de Paula, T. C. M., Lagana, K., & Gonzalez-Ramirez, L. (1996). Mexican Americans. In J. G. Lipson, S. L. Dibble, & P. A. Minarik (Eds.), *Culture and nursing care: A pocket guide* (pp. 203-221). San Francisco: USCF Nursing Press.

BOOK CHAPTER, ESSAY, or ARTICLE when no author is credited (paper version)

Russians. (1998). In T. L. Gall (Ed.), *Worldmark encyclopedia of cultures and daily life* (Vol. 4, pp. 332-339). Detroit, MI: Gale Research.

BOOK CHAPTER, ESSAY, or ARTICLE when no author is credited (online version)

Russians. (1998). *Worldmark encyclopedia of cultures and daily life*. Retrieved January 9, 2003 from Discovering Collection database.

ARTICLE in a STANDARD ENCYCLOPEDIA (paper copy)

Islam. (1992). In *The new encyclopaedia Britannica* (Vol. 22, pp. 1-43). Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica.

ARTICLE in a STANDARD ENCYCLOPEDIA (web site version)

Islam. (1992). In *Britannica.com*. Retrieved February 9, 2002 from Britannica.com database.

JOURNAL ARTICLE (paper copy)

Oguisso, T. (1999). Professional nursing in Brazil. *International Nursing Review*, 43, 81-94.

JOURNAL ARTICLE (from an online database)

Kavanagh, K., Absalom, K., Beil, W., & Schliessmann, L. (1999). Connecting and becoming culturally competent: A Lakota example. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 21, 9-31. Retrieved March 26, 2001 from ProQuest/Nursing Journals database.

JOURNAL ARTICLE (online, on a web site)

Outbreak news. (2001, February 23). *Weekly Epidemiological Record*, 76, 57-64. Retrieved February 28, 2001 from <http://www.who.int/wer/pdf/2001/wer7608.pdf>

MAGAZINE ARTICLE (paper copy)

Ulrich, T. (1997, September 22). Linking an Amish hereditary disease with cerebral palsy, a pediatrician challenges a dark inheritance. *Time*, 150, 30-33.

MAGAZINE ARTICLE (from an online database)

Ulrich, T. (1997, September 22). Linking an Amish hereditary disease with cerebral palsy, a pediatrician challenges a dark inheritance. *Time*, 150, 30-33. Retrieved March 1, 2001 from InfoTrac/Expanded Academic ASAP database.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE (paper copy)

Padilla, H. (2000, June 6). Hugo prohibits custom animal slaughter; the vote will officially close a Hmong slaughterhouse, where animals were sacrificed for religious reasons. *Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN)*, p. 1B.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE (from an online database)

Padilla, H. (2000, June 6). Hugo prohibits custom animal slaughter; the vote will officially close a Hmong slaughterhouse, where animals were sacrificed for religious reasons. *Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN)*, p. 1B. Retrieved February 28, 2001 from Lexis-Nexis Universe/General News database.

PAMPHLET / BROCHURE

Research and Training Center on Independent Living. (1993). *Guidelines for reporting and writing about people with disabilities* (4th ed.) [Brochure]. Lawrence, KS: Author.

ERIC DOCUMENT

Fredrickson, M. (2000). *Parent/child communication in migrant communities*. Miami, FL: Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 377 236)

DISSERTATION

If you obtain an actual dissertation (not just its abstract), in print or on microform, check the *Publication Manual of the APA* for complete directions on citing it properly.

DISSERTATION (abstract only, obtained on CINAHL)

Crow, G. K. (1988). *Toward a theory of therapeutic syncretism: The Southeast Asian experience: A study of the Cambodians' use of traditional and cosmopolitan health systems*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Utah, 1988). Abstract retrieved March 19, 2001 from CINAHL database.

DISSERTATION (abstract only, obtained from DAI on FirstSearch)

Crow, G. K. (1988). *Toward a theory of therapeutic syncretism: The Southeast Asian experience: A study of the Cambodians' use of traditional and cosmopolitan health systems* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Utah, 1988). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 49(08B), 3101. Abstract retrieved March 19, 2001 from First Search/Dissertation Abstracts International database.

WEBSITE (NOT from an online database)

The Amish, the Mennonites, and the Plain People. (n.d.). Retrieved May 30, 2000 from Pennsylvania Dutch Country Welcome Center Web site: <http://www.800padutch.com/amish.shtml>

INTERVIEWS, E-MAILS, PHONE CONVERSATIONS, etc.

"Because they do not provide recoverable data, personal communications are not included in the reference list. Cite personal communications in text only. Give the initials as well as the surname of the communicator, and provide as exact a date as possible." (*APA Manual*, section 3.102) Example: I. M. Certain (personal communication, April 1, 2000).

PRESENTATIONS, SPEECHES, POSTER SESSIONS, etc.

Like the example above, if they do not provide "recoverable data," these would not be included in the reference list and would be cited in the text only. If, however, something tangible exists (e.g. handouts of PowerPoint slides, an abstract in a conference program, etc.), it might be citable. See the *APA Manual*, section 4.16 D and F. Here is an example of a **poster session**:

Worral, P. S. & Levin, R. (2004, June). *Developing a statewide research agenda*. Poster session presented at the biannual meeting of the American Nurses Association, Minneapolis, MN.

Since they ask, I have suggested to students who wish to cite a presentation *unofficially*, for an *undergraduate paper*, that they could cite it like this:

Twohy, K. (2004, January 15). Testimony given at Health, Human Services and Corrections Budget Division, St. Cloud, Minnesota.

1.5.4.19. Glossary of Technical Terms

It is useful to provide an alphabetical list of technical terms with a brief, clear description of each term. You can also include in this section explanations of the acronyms, abbreviations or standard units used in your report. Some authors like to present such terms as footnotes.

1.5.4.20. Index

The Index is an alphabetical guide to the subject matter in a report. The subject and each page number on which the subject appears to be listed. Word processing software can generate the index automatically. If the report is 20 pages long, then include an index to locate specific information within the report more easily.

1.6. Writing convincing and effective reports – the essential steps:

All reports need to be clear, concise and well structured. The key to writing an effective report is to allocate time for planning and preparation. With careful planning, the writing of a report will be made much easier. The essential stages of successful report writing are described below. Consider how long each stage is likely to take and divide the time before the deadline between the different stages. Be sure to leave time for final proof reading and checking.

1.6.1.Stage One: Understanding the report brief

This first stage is the most important. You need to be confident that you understand the purpose of your report as described in your report brief or instructions. Consider who the report is for and why it is being written. Check that you understand all the instructions or requirements, and ask your tutor if anything is unclear.

1.6.2.Stage Two: Gathering and selecting information

Once you are clear about the purpose of your report, you need to begin to gather relevant information. Your information may come from a variety of sources, but how much information you will need depends on how much detail is required in the report. You may want to begin by reading relevant literature to widen your understanding of the topic or issue before you go on to look at other forms of information such as questionnaires, surveys etc. As you read and gather information you need to assess its relevance to your report and select accordingly. Keep referring to your report brief to help you decide what the relevant information.

1.6.3.Stage Three: Organizing your material

Once you have gathered information you need to decide what will be included and in what sequence it should be presented. Begin by grouping together points that are related. These may form sections or chapters. Remember to keep referring to the report brief and be prepared to cut any information that is not directly relevant to the report. Choose an order for your material that is logical and easy to follow.

1.6.4.Stage Four: Analyzing your material

Before you begin to write your first draft of the report, take time to consider and make notes on the points you will make using the facts and evidence you have gathered. What conclusions can be drawn from the material? What are the limitations or flaws in the evidence? Do certain pieces of evidence conflict with one another? It is not enough to simply present the information you have gathered; you must relate it to the problem or issue described in the report brief.

1.6.5.Stage Five: Writing the report

Having organized your material into appropriate sections and headings you can begin to write the first draft of your report. You may find it easier to write the summary and contents page at the end when you know exactly what will be included. Aim for a writing style that is direct and precise. Avoid waffle and make your points clearly and concisely. Chapters, sections and even individual paragraphs should be written with a clear structure. The structure described below can be adapted and applied to chapters, sections and even paragraphs.

- **Introduce** the main idea of the chapter/section/paragraph
- **Explain** and expand the idea, defining any key terms.
- **Present** relevant evidence to support your point(s).
- **Comment** on each piece of evidence showing how it relates to your point(s).
- **Conclude** your chapter/section/paragraph by either showing its significance to the report as a whole or making a link to the next chapter/section/paragraph.

1.6.6.Stage Six: Reviewing and redrafting

Ideally, you should leave time to take a break before you review your first draft. Be prepared to rearrange or rewrite sections in the light of your review. Try to read the draft from the perspective of the reader. Is it easy to follow with a clear structure that makes sense? Are the points concisely but clearly explained and supported by relevant evidence? Writing on a word processor makes it easier to rewrite and rearrange sections or paragraphs in your first draft. If you write your first draft by hand, try writing each section on a separate piece of paper to make redrafting easier.

1.6.7.Stage Seven: Presentation

Once you are satisfied with the content and structure of your redrafted report, you can turn your attention to the presentation. Check that the wording of each chapter/section/subheading is clear and accurate. Check that you have adhered to the instructions in your report brief regarding format and presentation. Check for consistency in numbering of chapters, sections and appendices. Make sure that all your sources are acknowledged and correctly referenced. You will need to proof read your report for errors of spelling or grammar. If time allows, proof read more than once. Errors in presentation or expression create a poor impression and can make the report difficult to read.

1.6.8. Feedback

Any feedback from tutors on returned work can be used to create a checklist of key points to consider for your next report. Identify priority areas for attention and seek out further information and advice. Speak to your tutor or an adviser from the Learning Development. Used in this way, feedback from tutors can provide a useful tool for developing and improving your writing skills.

1.7. Literature

1. Report writing for Business by Lesiker and Pettit, published by McGraw Hill
2. Technical Communication by Raman and Sharma, published by Oxford University Press
3. Effective Technical Communication by Ashraf Rizvi, published by McGraw Hill
4. Business Correspondence and Report Writing by Sharma and Mohan, published by Tata McGraw Hill
5. Model Business Letters, Emails and Other Business Documents by Shirley Taylor, published by Pearson
6. Technical Report Writing Today by Riordan and Pauley, published by Biztantra
7. Business Communication – Essential Strategies for Twenty-first Century Managers by Shalini Verma, published by Pearson.
8. BCOM by Lehman, Dufrene and Sinha, published by Cengage Learning.

Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DoY4Ri3i6PE>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kL2C8GI_7mE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSVEsZjGf30>

Websites:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Report>

<http://esl.about.com/od/businessenglishwriting/a/bizdocs.htm>

<http://library.bcu.ac.uk/learner/writingguides/1.02%20Reports.htm>

<http://www.write.co.nz/Resources/Writing+tips/Report+writing+tips.html>

<http://biggsuccess.com/bigg-articles/how-to-write-a-great-report/>

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/726/05/>

<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/business-report-example.html>

http://www.ou.edu/class/bc2813/sample_letter_of_transmittal_.htm

http://spin.mohawkc.on.ca/rr_de/uf/rsamples.htm#progress%20letter

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/12/>

<http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/writing/writing-resources/reports>

<http://4ltrpress.cengage.com/bcom/thebcomstory.html>