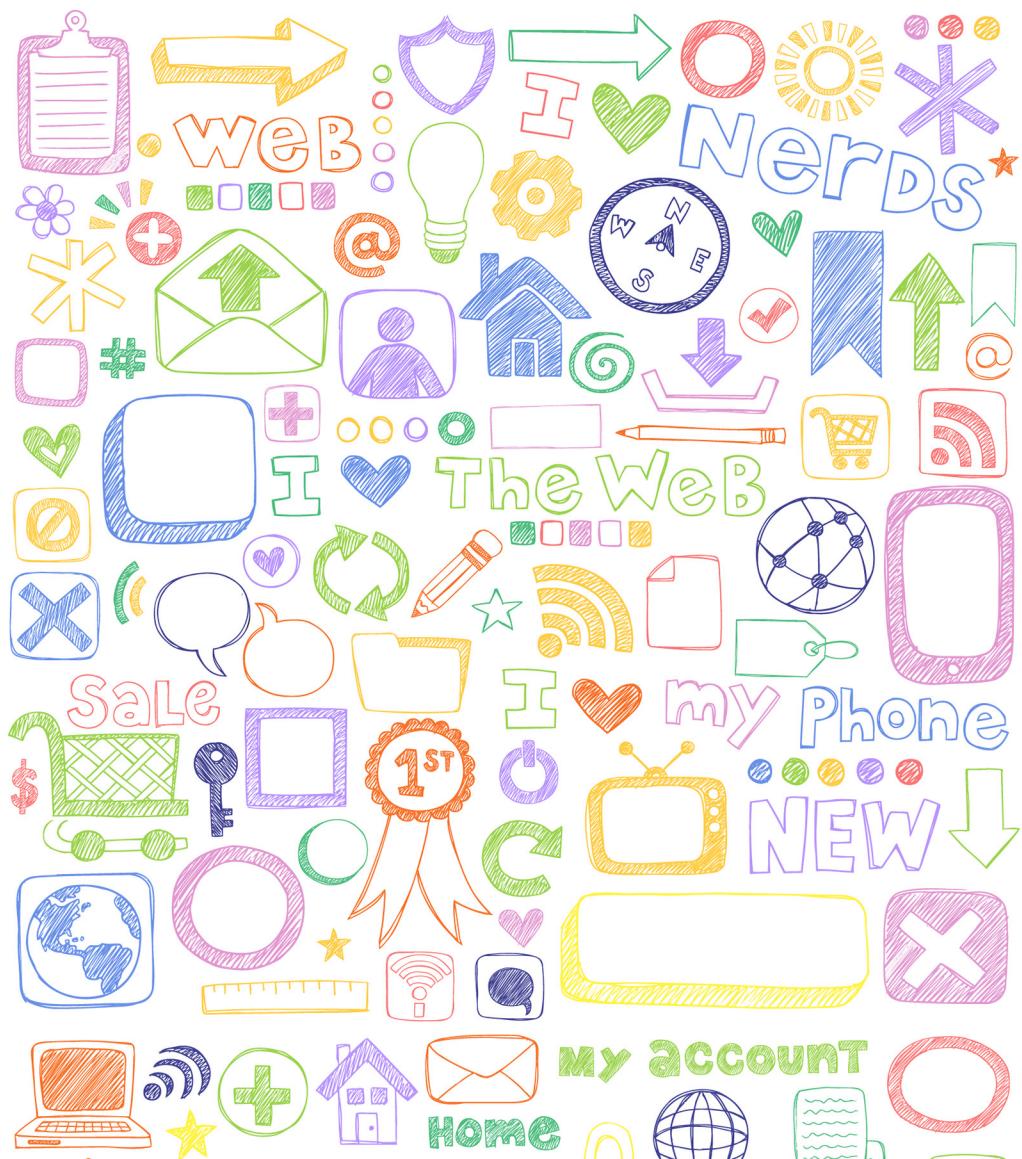


**Best  
Essays**

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT  
**WRITING**  
SPEAKING FROM PROFESSIONAL  
**EXPERIENCE**



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# RESEARCHING MATERIAL FOR WRITING A PAPER

All students, reputable authors, and ordinary people practicing academic writing in their life should know that it is not only a creative, but also complicated process that requires essential writing skills. The present paper is dedicated to the ways of successful academic paper creation, and is aimed to improve one's academic writing skills. In other words, the essay will provide valuable and helpful pieces of advice related to the crucial components of professional academic writing. According to Eby (2011), Livnat (2012), and Soles (2009), etc.), a thesis statement is central for writing a successful paper, but other components, such as sound arguments, effective topic sentences, successful transition sentences, and the logical, consistent, and interesting text, are essential as well. The essay will provide the detailed description and in-depth understanding of each of the mentioned crucial components that make an academic work successful.

## STRONG THESIS STATEMENT

A thesis statement is the most important component of an academic work that ensures the achievement of its purpose. One should remember that "the thesis statement is the framework, or guide, for your paper, so make sure it is as strong as possible" (Eby, 2011, p. 52). A strong thesis statement is a stated position or proposition (usually put at the beginning of a work) that offers a new point of view provided by an essay, research, or other academic paper.

For example, if the paper is focused on the impact of colonialism on Indian economy, a clear and strong thesis statement can be provided in the following way. Introduction into the topic is made through provision of information about British rule in India, a new policy established in Indian economy, its positive and negative consequences, etc.; at the end of the introductory part, the following strong thesis statement can be provided: "the implications of the

British rule and economic policy in India provide the information about the true British contribution to the Indian economy". As one may see, this thesis statement can be a final sentence in the introduction that clearly suggests the central argument of the paper, its core (in particular, implications of the British rule in India and its impact on the country's economy are viewed as the factors revealing the influence of the British Empire); on the basis of a thesis statement, research is then conducted (Soles, 2009). However, one should not forget that in order to create a strong thesis statement, a writer needs to prove its truthfulness with strong arguments provided throughout the paper.

## SOUND ARGUMENTS

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The importance of a strong argument for all academic works cannot be underestimated because it is one of the crucial elements that help a writer to create a persuasive paper. A writer usually develops an argument to strengthen the soundness of the key statements and most important standpoints of a work (Livnat, 2012). The purpose of an argument is to "convince reader that your opinion on an issue is thoughtful and reasonable" (Soles, 2009, p. 59). Undoubtedly, effectively constructed arguments often determine the success of the whole academic paper.

Sound arguments can be constructed in different ways. For example, writers may address the opinions of reputable specialists on the chosen topic, and provide their point of view paying attention to statistical data, confirmed hypothesis, and other details that can make statements persuasive. Another way to provide a strong argument is to make a preliminary investigation of the topic, certain existing viewpoints, and authoritative sources, to accumulate necessary knowledge, and to make conclusion by supplying one's own opinion based on true premises (established evidence or research findings). For example, the thesis statement about the British impact on Indian economy mentioned above may have the following sound argument: "naturally, British colonial policy led to the inevitable changes in the Indian economy, which were not always bad, but very often progressive and positive". This statement can be supported by the following fact: although British dominance in India slowed down the country's national economic development, the posi-

tive impact of industrial revolution, rapid integration of India in international trade, and other essential processes should be taken into account. As one may see, a strong argument is a result of writer's accumulated knowledge about the defined issue; the analysis of related literature sources revealing positive and negative effects helped to substantiate this argument. A strong argument always sounds persuasive, valid, and truthful. Often, an argument presents supporting details for a thesis statement or a topic sentence.

## EFFECTIVE TOPIC SENTENCES

Topic sentences are very important, but they are rather hard to write. Hence, composing a good topic sentence is the key task of a writer. To do this, the following facts should be taken into account. A topic sentence is usually put at the beginning of the paragraph (it can be the first, second, or even third sentence), and then, it is supported by arguments. One should remember that "a good topic sentence should focus the paragraph and give the reader an idea of what the paragraph will cover" (Eby, 2011, p. 183). In addition, since the body of an academic paper consists of paragraphs, topic sentences serve miniature thesis statements for each of them. The topic sentence introduces the main point of the paragraph that should be supported in different ways: addressing the relevant idea provided by a reputable source, citing an author's work, representing facts or figures, etc. (Soles, 2009). One should know how topic sentences can be written effectively to ensure the success of one's paper.

An effective topic sentence indicates the focus of the paragraph clearly and concisely making a reader pay attention to the particular subtopic illustrated by this paragraph. Then, a writer provides supporting details, explanations, and analysis of the main meaningful point of a paragraph. Addressing the same research paper dedicated to the British impact on Indian economy, one may see how a topic sentence and its supporting details can be written. For example, a paragraph starts with a topic sentence in the following way, "there is much research in the field of the colonial period of the Indian existence, implying the agile interest to the exploration of Indian-British relations, especially in the period of the British reign in India". Then, a writer dedicates each

subsequent sentence to a supporting detail that clarifies the main point of the topic (many researchers have explored Indian-British relations in the specific period): “Roy (1999) was interested to examine the traces of Indian traditional industry in its economy of the colonial period”, “Watterson (1985) proved the success of British international policy and showed its essence for the developing countries”, etc.

As one may see, reputable sources provided a topic sentence with necessary supporting arguments and details. Hence, an effective topic sentence lets a reader know exactly what he or she may expect to read about in the paragraph. Usually, this sentence starts with the writer’s own words, and only then can be supported with direct quotes, precise facts, and other things that support the main point. A topic sentence may also start with a transition sentence.

## SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION SENTENCES

A transition sentence usually serves the bridge needed to connect paragraphs or ideas in order to allow a writer to proceed with the argumentation. Transition is “a word, phrase, sentence, or passage that links an idea or section to the idea or section following it” (Eby, 2011, p.281). Hence, a transition sentence (put at the end of a previous paragraph or at the start of the new one) refers back to the content of the paragraph, and, at the same time, prepares a reader for a topic sentence with a new point (Soles, 2009). In other words, transition sentences allow readers to follow the flow of the writer’s argument; they lead from one paragraph to another by connecting the narrative arguments.

Successful transition sentences fill the gap lying between different ideas and parts of the text by logical connections. For example, after the paragraph dedicated to the advantages and disadvantages of the British policy in India that serves as introduction to the research work, the following transition sentence can be provided: “hence, the research paper intends to reveal the problem of British colonialism in Indian economy from different points of view”.

This sentence completes the idea of the previous paragraph, and prepares a reader to proceed to the new one; in this context, it is the presentation of dif-



ferent points of view on the British colonial policy in the Indian economy. As one may see, a successful transition sentence helps a writer to wrap up the idea of one paragraph, and to prepare a reader for the introduction of a new idea stated in another paragraph. Often, transitions in academic papers help to make text readable and logically structured.

## COHERENT, CONSISTENT, AND INTERESTING TEXT

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A text in all academic works should be coherent, consistent, and interesting to maintain its easy readability and readers' interest throughout the paper (Soles, 2009). The structure of an essay or research paper should be coherent and consistent, which makes a reader to follow along (Eby, 2011). The text is coherent when all its parts are clearly connected; in other words, coherence is achieved when a writer links all structural and meaningful elements of the paper in the single narration that creates a natural flow of ideas, thoughts, facts that make a text easily readable and interesting. The text is consistent when it is created by logic and reason; consistency is achieved when a writer integrates the information related to the topic into the paper neatly making all meaningful and structural elements be in agreement with one another, and stand together in a natural manner. One of the most effective ways to make a coherent and consistent test is to use transition sentences and transition expressions or words, for example, "as has been noted", "nevertheless", "because of this", "although it is true that", "moreover", etc. Besides, a text should be interesting to grasp readers' attention making them absorbed by the writer's work. An interest in the academic work can be created by discussing important and burning problems, providing original, creative, and extraordinary ideas, thoughts, or quotes, evaluating certain phenomena from an untraditional perspective, etc. One should also not forget that a coherent, consistent, and interesting text makes a writer's academic paper successful and worth to read.

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# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WRITING: SPEAKING FROM PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

*Writing is an important form of communication that is used at various levels including academic, professional, business and personal (Graf, 2008). When people write, they intend to pass a message to a particular audience. In order for the message to be received as intended, there are important things about writing that the writer has to keep in mind. Of those important things are some common mistakes that writers make especially in academic spheres, some of which will be discussed in this paper. This paper focuses on four areas of mistakes that people make in writing.*

## GRAMMATICAL MISTAKES

Recent times have been characterized by different types of writing that are influenced by culture. For instance, the American style of speaking and writing in English is quite different from that of Britain. This is due to cultural disparities that have influenced language, not only spoken but also written. Consequently, students make numerous grammatical mistakes. One of the common grammatical mistakes made by students, which can be attributed to cultural influence, is the use of “sexist wording”. The pronouns “he” and “she” are usually incorrectly used by many students when describing males or females. In professional writing, it is advisable to avoid using sexist pronouns as much as possible, especially when the particular gender being addressed is not precise. For example, rather than writing, “When the subject finished the assignment, the professor asked him to fill a questionnaire”, it would be more appropriate to write, “When the subject finished the assignment, the professor administered a questionnaire”. Another grammatical mistake is the combination of both “he” and “she”. For example, instead of writing “One should take care of his or her own reputation”, many students would make a mistake and write “One should take care of their own personal reputation”.



Other grammatical mistakes include the use of punctuation such as commas, writing too long sentences (the longer the sentence, the more difficult it is for the reader to understand) and the combination of both formal and informal languages in writing. For example, it is inappropriate in professional writing to use the word ad instead of advertisement.

## CONTEXTUAL MISTAKES

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There are different types of writings that students might be required to engage in by their professors. Some of the writings include research papers, reports, reflective essays, professional reports, business plans, proposals and dissertations. Regardless of the type of writing and the academic level of the paper to be written, it is important for a student to understand the context of the paper. Many students have been reported to lose many points because of missing context of the paper. While reading instructions, a student should take quality time to decode and understand the instructions. This is particularly important in establishing the precise expectation of the professor or any other instructor. When this is achieved, a student is able to achieve relevance while writing a paper thus avoids losing marks through such simple mistakes.

The wording of the instructions is of particular importance to the student because it determines the content as well as the context of a paper. It ensures that the student does not shift to an irrelevant topic. For example, if the instruction given by the professor indicates the need to “compare”, it means that the student should mention the similarities, as opposed to differences. If the professor requires the student to “discuss”, then the student should gather points for or against the particular subject and state his or her own stand. A discussion should always include an introduction (which outlines the points), main body (which bears the arguments) and a conclusion (which gives the author’s stand). When a paper is in such a layout, it is easy for not only the student to include all the relevant content, but also for the reader to understand the precise context of the paper.

## PAPER STRUCTURING

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Sometimes, the questions students are expected to answer may be extremely simple with readily available materials. In such cases, students may be tempted to include all sources of information in the paper context. With all that done, the paper might still be difficult for the reader to follow. This is because many students fail to follow correct structure/arrangement while writing papers. A well-written paper should give a reader an insight of what is to be discussed in the body, within the first two or three minutes of reading regardless of the length. There are different types of readers. While some would intend to cover the entire content of the paper (and have time to do that), others would just want to evaluate the relevance of the content discussed in the paper.

To facilitate an understanding of what is in a paper, a good paper should be structured in such a way that it takes a short time to understand the content. In most essays and research papers for example, it is advisable to include an outline or table of contents of what is discussed in the paper in order to guide the reader to the areas of interest (Ratcliffe, 2007). With all the necessary information gathered, the writer should structure his or her paper in a manner that demonstrates absolute clarity and coherence. To achieve this, the writer should identify and prioritize the materials in terms of their levels of relevance. In other words, different content materials have different levels of relevance such as central relevance (first priority), partial relevance (second priority) and simple relevance (third priority). Structuring a paper in this way helps in the achievement of logical flow of information throughout the paper.

## THE RIGHT AUDIENCE

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In some cases involving students' writing, the audience may not necessarily be the class professor. A good writer should be able to connect directly to the intended audience. He or she should address the interests, needs, expectations and motivations of the audience (Burrows, 2012). The ultimate goal of writing is to ensure that the message reaches home – to the intended recipi-

ent. As indicated in the introductory part, it is not the content of the writing that matters; what matters is the message the intended audience receives. A good writer ensures that the intended message reaches the intended recipient. In order to achieve this, the writer should use the right language for the audience and develop the right tone for the paper. This is very important in capturing the interest of the reader. If the writer, for example, writes to invoke a friendly argument in a business negotiation, he or she should use business language and make it as professional as possible. It would also be important to create a tone that invokes thought towards the direction of his or her point, which will ensure that the objective of the writing is achieved. In short, writing is all about the right message to the right recipient.

## CONCLUSION

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While writing is always aimed at driving a message to an intended audience, the message might not reach home depending on the approach adopted by the writer. An observation of the language rules, particularly grammatical rules, is of absolute importance in ensuring that the aim for writing is achieved. Wrong punctuation, for example, may completely alter the meaning of a statement. It is also important to understand the context of a writing exercise because this is one of the major factors that determine whether or not the goals of the exercise will be achieved. Further, a well-structured paper ensures that the information flows smoothly, and is well understood by the reader. Finally, using the right language and tone for the right audience ensures that the right message is delivered.

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# WRITING AN ESSAY: WHAT NOT TO DO

*Writing an essay may be fun; those whose creative spirit allows them to analyze any topic, to expand their arguments on it, to offer both pros and cons, and to conclude with a synthetic argument are happy from nature, especially when it comes to academic studies surely including the need to write essays from time to time. However, what should those not talented in this way do? There are many challenges they come across even in cases when the students follow all recommendations of supervisors, and try to follow the best essay samples displayed at the college site, in the library, or for free in the Internet.*

*The truth is that the art of writing an essay is a complex and continuous process of improvement and hard work, and even the most talented and creative students sometimes make mistakes because of which they lose their points. However, there are some grave mistakes that will guarantee a failing grade for any student; they have to be known for sure, and should be remembered at every stage of writing an essay. All students make mistakes, but it is in their power to reduce them to minimum – the only thing they need for this is to adhere to some simple rules that will be illustrated further in the present paper.*

## COMPOSING A THESIS STATEMENT – DO NOT WAIT FOR LONG

There is much advice regarding the ways of composing the thesis statement; almost every student knows where it should be, and how many words it should contain. Indeed, the thesis statement is the core of the whole essay, no matter how many pages it is. However, the secret power of the thesis statement is not only the presence of the key idea in it – it should be properly placed, with the proper beginning that prepares the reader for it. Do not put the thesis statement at once, in the first or second sentence of the paper –

this way, it will lose its charm, and the argumentation will at once become explicit, which will deprive the paper of the intrigue.

To avoid this mistake, students should carefully investigate the issue, and prepare the general background for its introduction. They should not state at once what they think, and what they will investigate – they have to choose facts, statistics, several general statements that will make the reader guess what is implied, and come to the topic themselves. After that, the thesis statement may be announced; however, here one more don't is concealed – do not make your thesis statement evident, and try to retain some charisma in it. The thesis statement should offer an alternative viewpoint, it should grab the attention of the reader, and not reaffirm his or her guesses about the work they are reading. Hence, only creativity and a fresh look on the topic can help avoid the common mistakes in essay writing – the greatest mistake ever has been to choose the most traditional, the most correct, and the most uninteresting thesis statement.

## ARGUMENTATION AND FALLACIES

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The ways of organizing the argumentation are plentiful, and each sophisticated idea of writing an essay may find its own way of writing to attract the readers' attention to it. However, excessive sophistication is more relevant to the choice of words and ideas, and not to the organization of argumentation. In this field, everything is boring – the clearer you are in your arguments, the more chances for understanding you have. It is obvious that you may have composed a sentence for four or five lines, and you really understand what you are trying to say, but please beware the inattentive and lazy readers – they are less likely to stop and re-read the sentence to try to elicit its meaning. They are much more likely to finish reading, and to say that they have understood nothing. Supervisors also do not like such sophistication in expression, since it usually balances on the verge of senselessness, which is never evaluated highly.

Writing should be clear and logical, and you should always keep track of the logical inferences you make; they may seem obvious to you, but once you discuss them with detached reviewers and listeners, you may surprisingly



discover that they do not support your reasoning, and see no causal relationships between the notions you find evident. Hence, the next don't in an essay – don't try to use fallacies in an essay, even if they seem attractive and powerful to you. The readers do not know you and your reasoning, so they are more likely to see a weakness in the logical fallacy, which will spoil the overall impression from the work.

## ANTHROPOMORPHISMS

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Nothing in essay writing is funnier and sillier than the use of anthropomorphisms is. Indeed, you may see nothing bad in the fact that your paper tells a story, or your inquiry is interested in some questions, but those who read the work will always ask you questions about when your paper has become alive. This will be a very embarrassing experience; however, anthropomorphisms are still considered some of the most widespread mistakes in academic writing. Before using a certain verb such as “saying”, “asking”, “interested in”, etc., ask yourself a question – can the subject do that? Or is it possible only in the figurative meaning? After you have answered “no” to your question, look for other ways of expressing the thoughts you have. There are a great number of variants to use to avoid anthropomorphisms; for example, instead of saying “the chapter will tell”, you may say “the chapter contains information about”, or when you say “the paper is interested in…”, you may change it for “the focus of the paper is”. This way, the inanimate things will remain inanimate, and your scores for the work will be saved.

## CHOOSING THE TONE OF THE ESSAY

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The choice of vocabulary and tone in which the paper should be written is one of the initial endeavors undertaken by the writer; however, all attempts to make the paper tuned in one tone may fail in case there is no outline, and there is no consistency in the paper's structure. For this reason, one more don't may be outlined – do not jump from one topic to another one, do not try to grasp the whole topic or the whole field of inquiry, since only the focus of

the study can save it from a failing grade. To be successful in these terms, you need to understand who will read your essay – is it for the peer review, or the supervisor will check it? Is it for the historical class, or for the English class? Is the requirement for its writing formal or informal? Is creativity encouraged? Is any slang and emotionality encouraged? Answering these questions may help you identify the proper tone in which the work should be kept from the first line until the final word of the conclusion. This way, you will express yourself as a responsible writer who has what to say, and knows how to frame it in the linguistic means.

## POINT OF VIEW

All people are individualities, and they are valued by their friends, relatives, colleagues, children, and other people constituting their social circle for being original, unusual, individual, and authoritative in certain issues. However, you should always remember that academic writing is usually devoid of a personal opinion, so the next don't that has to be kept in mind when writing an essay is – do not emphasize your point of view unless required. There are some essays such as the reflective essay, or a persuasive essay, or an argumentative essay, in which students are encouraged to speak from the first person, and answer the question from their individual, personal standpoint. However, it is mostly rare, and the majority of students lose the valuable grades on trying to speak on behalf of the state politicians, famous researchers, or outstanding historians when the only thing needed from them is to comment on what had been found out in the field, and what is still a mystery for the modern science.

Overall, the point of voicing one's opinion in an essay is a very ambiguous and contradictory aspect of any essay's writing process. On the one hand, you will never succeed, and will never get an "A" grade in case you only summarize what others have said on the topic, and do not figure out what this means, why it is valuable, and what else remains interesting and uncovered in the point. However, on the other hand, once you start to offer your opinion, the supervisor may mildly (or not mildly) point out that your opinion is non-authoritative, and does not present any significant value for the present re-

search. Judging from these obstacles that arise in both introducing and excluding one's personal opinion, you have to remember how to present your opinion in a milder, academic way. Instead of saying "I think", "in my opinion", etc., you may note, "as research evidence indicates, ..", or "it therefore seems possible to assume that...". This way, you will achieve the balance between grounded opinion and depersonalized academic writing.

## CONCLUSION

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Essay writing is an art, and not all people can act as artists in composing their writing pieces. However, even under the condition that you lack inspiration, and you do not know what to write about, the simple rules outlined in the present work may help every student to avoid the most widespread mistakes, and save the precious grades that may be lost in some other aspects of writing. Hence, being logical and concise, retaining the intrigue in the thesis statement, avoiding anthropomorphisms, voicing personal opinions modestly, and keeping the essay in one tone may save any essay, and can win a fairly good grade.

# FIVE GOLDEN RULES OF WRITING A COURSEWORK

*Writing has never been as easy as it is now – with all those books dedicated to the secrets of brilliant writing, and Internet sites from which one can download samples of works to be guided by their contents. However, no matter what experts say, one can feel that the process of writing has become even harder, not simpler – with all examples being so different, a student may get lost in the variety of alternatives, and may finally end up not knowing what to do at all. This situation is the critical dead end, but one can avoid it in case he or she follows some golden rules that have formed within decades of writing courseworks.*

## CHOOSING A CATCHY TITLE

Every student wants to write a memorable work that every tutor will appreciate, and will distinguish among other works. To do that, a student has to conduct something extraordinary, since tutors see hundreds of works every week, and they are not likely to become sentimental only because of the perfectly written and referenced work. An academic writing piece, as well as a person, has to have an intrigue, a charisma inside it for the sake of attracting attention. There are some celebrities, outstanding personalities whom everyone knows and recognizes – why does that happen so? Such people possess a certain unexplainable charm, which is usually reflected in their charismatic behavior, the way they look, speak, or treat people. The same can be done with a coursework – in case you manage to find a catchy title that will grasp everyone's attention from the first page of writing, you may be sure that the success of the work is guaranteed, and sometimes even small mistakes may be forgiven for the sake of content of the work.

Making a powerful title is possible in a series of ways. Some of the most common ones are syntactic – you may put a question mark, or an exclamatory mark at the end of the title to catch the reader's attention (Rajan, 2009,

p. 13). These techniques are traditionally used in complex titles, for example – the issue of abortion or euthanasia, the future of the climate change, etc. Instead of putting the title “The Debate about Legalizing Euthanasia”, you may intrigue the reader – “What Is the Future of Legalized Death?”, or “Euthanasia – Death upon Permission!”. The question has to contain a conflict that will make the reader think – what is really the answer? Is it contained in this work? These thoughts are most likely to attract attention to the work much more than the plain title simply informing the readers about the contents of the work will.

## DOCUMENTING THE RIGHT MATERIALS

Literature search has always been the hardest task for all students of all levels of writing proficiency. No matter how long you have been studying at the university or college, and how many papers you have already written – searching the literary sources, reading them carefully, documenting your literary findings, and further on – synthesizing the findings may become the task not accomplishable for the majority of the most diligent students. How can you escape the horror of literature search? There is no way to do that, but there are some recommendations on how to simplify and speed up this process.

The first step is to focus on a definite topic – do not step away from it, even if your search gives you many related books, and takes you away from the focus you have made. Never yield to this temptation – it is true that the Internet has millions of books, and the search will bring results on any topic you choose. The best variant to keep to a single focus is to choose a short list of keywords that will guide the literature search among books and articles – the shorter the list, the more focused the results will be.

The next stage, after having found the necessary number of sources, is to process them correctly, which presupposes not reading them from the beginning until the end, but nevertheless extracting all necessary information for the coursework. To do that, the writer should also search inside the sources according to keywords. It is also helpful to look through the table of contents first, and to identify the chapters needed for the chosen topic. This way, the

writer will save time, and will study all information relevant to his or her work. Finally, here comes the stage of results' synthesis and writing the paper. The golden rule of any coursework, as well as any other writing work, is not to plagiarize; hence, no-one can use the raw results of literature search in the coursework. The results should be processed – the writer should make a step back from the work, and think over the literary findings. What do they imply? What did the authors note regarding the issue? Is there any agreement or disagreement among them? What do their ideas imply? What has not been researched? What do they speak about more often? These and other questions may help the writer take a detached look at the literary findings, and form his or her own opinion on the issue. The sources should surely be cited, but in the paraphrased manner – you give your opinion, and substantiate it with the data from reputable sources. This is the secret of keeping from plagiarism, and synthesizing literature successfully.

## KEEPING THE STRUCTURE CONCISE

The coursework, even the smallest one, is still different from an essay, so it has to have a coherent and clear structure. There are surely many different requirements in various educational institutions, but the most common list of components of any coursework is as follows:

- ✓ Abstract
- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Literature Review
- ✓ Analysis of Findings
- ✓ Discussion and Conclusion
- ✓ References
- ✓ Appendices

The abstract is optional – some educational establishments do not require it to be included; however, in majority of cases, it is a must for an academic work more complex than an essay. Therefore, students should be aware of the ways of writing abstracts – this part of the work should not exceed one

page, and should contain the brief overview of the study purpose, the thesis statement, the methods used in the study, the findings, and conclusions at which the writer has arrived. As for the introduction, it should give the overview of the topic, the problem statement, the objective of the study, the proposed methodology, significance of the present coursework, and the limitations thereof.

The literature review has always been the most fascinating and the most complex part of any academic writing endeavor. It is fascinating to embark on writing a literature review because it introduces the writer to the topic, informs him or her what is known and what is unknown on a certain issue, who worked on the problem and when, who was the pioneer in the particular field of research, and who is the current researcher in the field. Here, one has a wide range of alternatives to choose from, and there are a great number of possibilities to make a literature review interesting and attention-grabbing.

## **KEEPING THE ARGUMENTATION TRANSPARENT**

The work may be interesting or not for the writer, but the main rule that everyone should keep before starting the first line is to know the subject, and to have a certain personal opinion on it. It will not do if the writer has a scarce idea about what the subject is, and cannot make any personal judgments about it. The reason for the failure of the majority of such works is that the writer cannot figure out whether he or she is for or against, and what the arguments provided by a range of writers really mean for the topic. In such cases, the lack of information and proficiency on the subject is evident at once, which will result in a failing grade.

To avoid this problem, the writer should at first make the background search in newspapers, articles, even student forums – all subjects are discussed by people, and sometimes it takes about 2-3 posts to understand the most complex issue. For example, if one has to write a paper about “transcendence of the false illusions of ego in the pursuit of bliss”, he or she may get into despair, since the topic is absolutely unclear. However, searching forums and articles, as well as yoga books, one can come across much simpler interpretations of this concept – the ways of living one’s own life, getting rid of social

prejudice, and becoming truly happy. Therefore, the argumentation will be built much easier judging from this interpretation, though it will actually remain the same for the first and the second formulation.

## KEEPING THE THESIS STATEMENT IN MIND

Finally, the golden rule of coursework writing is to keep one and the same idea in mind when writing – it often happens that students get involved in the topic, find several interesting subtopics, stick to them without even noticing that their thesis statement was about one notion, and the conclusion referred to a completely different issue. In this case, the argumentation seems fully logical, and the flow of information is logical as well, but the focus is lost, which will inevitably cause the reduction of the grade. To escape this problem, students have to make a preliminary draft of their work – the first draft may be very raw, and may include only general points that will be covered. Once the literature search is over, and the opinion on the subject is formed, one can make a more detailed draft, with the indication of sources – which one will go to which section. This way, the work will be focused, and the thesis statement will not be lost up to the end of the work.

## CONCLUSION

Writing a coursework is not hard at all, in case students follow some golden rules, and stick to the initial plans of writing they have. The most common mistakes students make are to grasp too many or too few literature sources, to jump from one topic to another one, and to mix argumentation and structure. In case these mistakes are kept in mind and avoided, the success of the coursework is guaranteed.

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# FIVE COMMON MISTAKES WHEN WORKING ON A DISSERTATION

*Writing a dissertation is always hard, even for experienced students who have been getting only A's on essays, research papers, and course works. Any dissertation represents first of all the new scholarly work that has to be properly structured, and should have a fixed number of constituent elements mandatory for inclusion. The dissertation writing process is usually complex and time-consuming, since students need to identify the field of studies in which they will make their inquiry, and then focus on a particular topic after confirming that it is under-researched at the present period. However, choosing the title is only the first step out of a few thousand other small steps on the way to seeing the words "dissertation complete". Therefore, even consulting friends, faculty staff, and supervisors may sometimes not help students achieve good results of their work – at times it happens that students become so absorbed by the process of writing (or not absorbed by it at all) that they make some common mistakes that have contributed to failures of many students for many decades. Not repeating this experience should be the goal of every self-respectful student; moreover, these mistakes are easy-to-avoid, so knowing them and keeping farther from making them may save any dissertation from the fail grade.*

## AVOIDING MEETINGS WITH THE SUPERVISOR

It is the most stupid mistake students can make, but nevertheless they keep making and making it every year. In case the supervisor is ignorant of the research a student is conducting, he or she may not even hope for a good mark – hundreds of troubles are guaranteed. The worst about avoiding the meetings with the supervisor is that the latter indeed knows what the writer needs, and even in case the reproach is unavoidable, the student has to accept an idea that it will not be eternal, and after the reproach, he or she will get valuable advice, recommendations, amendments, and other remarks that he or

she will need for the successful completion of the work (Winstanley, 2011, p 305).

It is vital to remember that avoiding one's supervisor has a set of implications, all of which are absolutely negative for the outcome of the dissertation. First, the supervisor is a representative of the university's scholarly community; he or she has been working on dissertations for many years, and he or she knows much better than you do how you should write your work. Therefore, even if your work is good, you will never receive a good feedback at once – every supervisor will enjoy the possibility of making you nervous regarding some trifles, some corrections, some amendments, etc. he or she may even exaggerate their meaning at first, making you believe that you have failed the whole work, and will have to rewrite it from scratch.

However, playing on the student's nerves is not the worst outcome of supervisor avoidance. In fact, at times they are not mocking at students when they say that the dissertation needs full rewriting, and it is not because they hate them for not coming for consultation – it is because the works are so awful that there is nothing to edit or correct. This is surely the worst variant of independent dissertation writing outcomes – not many students have come across such troubles, and the only thing needed to avoid this catastrophe is to at least look up the university dissertation writing guide. This way, students may familiarize themselves with the process of writing, and keep to the offered structure, making the work at least partly correct.

## REASONABLE TOPIC CHOICE

No matter how conventional it may sound, the topic choice plays the decisive role in the outcome of the dissertation, especially in case it is a PhD dissertation. One has to understand that in case he or she aspires for obtaining a scholarly degree for dissertation writing, he or she has to be ready to offer something substantially new and extraordinary for the panel. Therefore, checking the information on the topic, research gaps, current research, etc., is essential for the sake of being consistent in scholarly conclusions (Winstanley, 2011, p. 306). It is awful to realize that the field you have intensely researched has already been explicitly covered by some researcher

half a year ago. It is also inconsistent to base certain arguments on the incomplete data set about a certain phenomenon under investigation. In case you do that, your dissertation may become a failure of all times – the basic requirements for any researcher is to be able to conduct literature search professionally. In case gaps in research are identified, the quality of writing, and the confidence in the writer's qualification are definitely going to fall.

## VOLUNTARY WORD LIMIT CHOICE

It is true that the majority of guidelines regarding the word count of the dissertation are more or less vague – up to 10,000 words, or from 8,000 to 9,000 words, etc. However, this does not mean that the writer has an opportunity to make them even more arbitrary. This means that in case the upper limit is indicated at 40,000 words, there is no use writing 50,000 words and hoping that the dissertation will be accepted with pleasure by the supervisor. Dissertation writing is initially the training for discipline and attention, precision in writing, and diligence in compliance with requirements. Therefore, in case the basic requirements such as the format, the word limit of the dissertation, spacing or margins are not observed, there is no possibility of approval of any dissertation, no matter how much scientific value it has.

One of the simple recommendations for avoiding this mistake is to divide the work into chapters, and to allocate a certain number of words for each chapter. In case several chapters are written, and they exceed the word limit initially established for them, the writer has to reconsider the allocation of words, and either cut some pieces of chapters already written or reduce the word count in further chapters. This way, the word limit will be constantly in control by the writer, and he or she will be able to see transparently which part requires reducing, and which part may be extended within the established word limit. However, it is also necessary to remember that the writer should keep the appropriate balance between parts of the dissertation – the introduction cannot be larger than the literature review, and the methodology section cannot exceed the chapter of results' presentation. All parts of the dissertation have certain proportions that have to be retained for the sake of validity, reliability, and academism of writing.

## ARBITRARY TIMELINES

Once the writer has embarked on a dissertation writing endeavor, he or she has to work on a strict deadline allocation. It is the issue of self-discipline, so the responsibility for dissertation writing is the case for only the writer him- or herself. However, not keeping to the timeline of dissertation writing is one of the most common, and the gravest mistakes of all dissertation writers. It is obvious that one cannot keep to a day-to-day timeline, and compose a certain number of words and pages a day. Therefore, the timelines are better composed in weeks – the writer can keep some time for him- or herself during the week if there are some urgent family or personal issues, but he or she will know that by the end of the week, he or she will have to sit down to writing the dissertation, and will have to come up with a certain number of pages by the end of that time. Or vice versa – the writer can concentrate on the writing process at the beginning of the week, finish and proofread the planned part, and leave the weekend for personal issues.

Anyway, no matter how the deadlines are written, they are often tracked by the university or the panel to which the writer is accountable. Therefore, one he or she has violated personal deadlines, it is OK, but once he or she has failed to present the necessary parts of work for the committee, this situation results in falling grades, which is very negative for the dissertation. Hence, the recommendation here is to bring one's deadlines in full compliance with the university's deadlines, and to leave a week or two in store just in case, to be able to compensate the lost time, and submit the parts of work on time.

## METHOD OF INQUIRY

There are no more mistakes that could be so dreadful and so widespread. The main danger of this mistake is that it is hard to avoid, so this is the part at which each beginning writer has to pay special attention, and should discuss with his or her supervisor. The reason for such danger of this mistake is that in case the method of inquiry is wrongly chosen, and the study has already been conducted, it means double or even triple work to fix the dissertation,



which almost always means rewriting it from scratch. Once the method of inquiry does not suit the elicited research questions, and does not fit the research objectives, the writing one has produced cannot be even considered a draft of the dissertation.

Avoiding this mistake is very simple, but many students are very ambitious, and they prefer to fail rather than to consult their supervisor regarding the ways of designing their study the best way. In case you are writing a dissertation and do not want to go to your supervisor, you should remember that exact sciences, such as chemistry, economics, marketing, medicine, etc., most often require the quantitative methods of inquiry. In case you need to find a correlation between certain figures, or to forecast the changes in pricing, etc., you will certainly need statistics. Once you conduct the social science research, it is acceptable to use qualitative methods such as interviews, surveys, case studies, etc.

## CONCLUSION

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Indeed, it is very hard to write a dissertation correctly from the beginning until the very end. However, avoidance of five common mistakes listed in the present work may help anyone avoid the most widespread reasons for failing grades. Therefore, diligence in research, a collaborative relationship with the supervisor, and attention to contents, research methods, and word limit are likely to increase anyone's chances for the success.

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# HOW TO AVOID PLAGIARISM AND CITING A PAPER PROPERLY

*Plagiarism is an issue that has been a problem to very many authors. Students in particular are required to refrain from plagiarizing papers or else get into trouble. Therefore, it is important that authors ensure that they present papers that are free from plagiarism. There are various methods of citing a paper. Proper citations help to avoid plagiarism. This article will primarily focus on discussing how to avoid plagiarism and how to cite a paper properly.*

## DISCUSSION

Plagiarism is defined as the act of using the words or ideas of another person and presenting them as one's own without properly citing that information. It is perceived as theft of literature and considered a serious offence (Marsh, 2007). It is an act that is prohibited by law and viewed as a social ill in the community. In various institutions, students get into a lot of trouble for plagiarizing. Therefore, it is important that authors ensure that they avoid plagiarizing. Authors can avoid plagiarism by ensuring that they give credit to the author of the source of information they use. Paraphrasing is one of the common methods that authors use to ensure that they refrain from plagiarizing. Direct quotations can also be used to show that some information has been derived from a certain source. However, it should be noted that although an author can use such methods, he or she is still required to cite a paper appropriately.

Citing sources helps an author to avoid plagiarism and gain credibility. In the case of students, they are expected to develop academic papers through the use of research. Research is usually derived from other research work conducted in the past. Therefore, students ought to give credibility to the source of information for their work. In the case of the non-academic environment, plagiarism is more widespread. Authors can easily learn how to cite sources

so as to claim ownership of their unique and credible work. They will be able to set their work apart from the rest of the many plagiarized works in the Internet and other places.

Some students may buy papers from various Internet sources. This can be considered as one of the worst types of plagiarism. This is because it is deliberate and students deprive themselves of the important research skills. If a student is caught with such kind of plagiarism, he or she should be punished in the most severe way possible. It has been noted that more and more individuals in high schools, colleges, and universities are engaging in this form of plagiarism. Although many of these institutions are using plagiarism detection services, many students are still engaging in this vice. Many instructors have reported having seeing similar papers being presented by several students each claiming to be the original author. This is a result of using the online writing services, which may sell a similar paper to different buyers. This form of plagiarism can simply be avoided by refraining from purchasing papers from others. Students should learn how to write their own papers so as to gain the necessary research skills.

There are a number of ways that an author can use to cite his or her papers. Many of the publications give clear specifications of the specific format required for a paper. When an author is not given any guidelines on which format to use, he or she should choose any format, especially the one he or she is most comfortable with. There are a number of referencing styles that authors can choose from. Some of the most common ones include American Psychology Association (APA), Turabian, Chicago Manual of Style, and Modern Language Association (MLA). It is important that an author chooses a specific writing style and sticks to it throughout the paper. Students are often taught how to cite papers in the various styles. Therefore, they should ensure that they have a good understanding of the various styles and keep themselves up to date since some aspects may change with time.

Most students are often instructed to use APA while developing their academic papers. APA provides authors with various citation and editorial guidelines. Generally, authors in the field of social science are instructed to submit articles for publication that are in line with this format. This article is formatted according to the APA guidelines. Basically, a paper formatted in APA should

have a cover page and a reference page. The paper should have page numbers on every page and a running head. Also, all paragraphs should be indented. To properly cite a paper in APA, it should have both in-text citations and a reference page with the complete details of all sources used in the paper.

In-text citations should be placed right after the information to be referenced. It should be placed in brackets and include the surname of the author and year of publication. For example, (Adams, 2011). In some cases, an author may be required to insert the page number of the information right after the year of publication. However, it should be noted that this is not a must, but may be preferable where direct quotations have been used. The reference should then be inserted in the reference page at the end of the paper in full. For example, in the case of a book by a single author, it should be inserted in the reference page as; Surname of author, Initial of his or her first name. Initial of his or her middle name. (Year of publication). Title of the book. Location of publication: Name of publisher. There are other sources of information such as magazines, newspapers, journals, electronic sources, among others. Authors should seek information on proper referencing of the various sources from reliable sources such as the purdue website.

Another common citation style is MLA. It is mostly used by authors in the field of humanities. Similar to APA, authors are required to insert in-text citations. However, the format is different in that, within the brackets, one should insert the surname of the author and the page number. For example, in the case of a book with a single author, it should be inserted as (Adams, 39). Quotations exceeding four lines should be double indented and single spaced. Page numbers should be inserted on every page together with the surname of the author. A title page is not required, but complete citations should be placed at a separate page at the end of the paper entitled works cited. At the works cited page, a book by a single author should be inserted as; Surname of author, first name and the initial of the middle name if available. Title. Location of publisher: Name of publisher, year of publication. Medium of publication. Further information should be sought from the purdue website or from other reliable sources.

The Chicago style has a number of versions. One can either use the author-

date version, notes without a bibliography page, notes with a bibliography page, and full notes with a bibliography page. Usually, articles related to humanities, history, or arts are presented with the note with bibliography format. The author-date version is often used for papers related to sciences. A title page and page numbers are required. Authors should ensure that they have a good understanding of how to insert notes in form of either footnotes or endnotes.

Turabian style of referencing has many similarities to the Chicago style. It is considered as easier to apply as compared to the Chicago style and it is usually used by undergraduates. Non-academics can also be able to easily learn how to use the Turabian style. Notes and a bibliography are usually required.

## CONCLUSION

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In conclusion, it is clear that plagiarism is a serious offence. It is important that authors ensure that they refrain from plagiarism. Authors should ensure that they always present original papers. Any information derived from other sources should be properly referenced. This helps authors to avoid being accused of plagiarism. Authors should ensure that they learn how to correctly apply the various styles of referencing.

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# GRADING WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: HOW PROFESSORS ACTUALLY DO IT

*Appraising and giving constructive remarks on student writing is always a difficult task. Grading assignments is much more than understanding a paper and striking a grade on it, especially if the intention is to facilitate students to turn into better intellectual writers. As mentioned earlier grading writing assignments is much more than striking a grade on students' written assignment, therefore professors have adopted a unique way of actually grading students' efforts. The notion is to promote self assessment among students and giving them the idea where do they stand. Nonetheless, if professors grade by using those strategies which suit their style of teaching, the process of grading can turn out to be less complex and time-consuming.*

## IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATING GRADING INTO THE WRITING PROCESS

Process of writing is recurring and takes account of a variety of phases of reviews. Professors must think about the relationship between the grading procedure and a grade while incorporating grading into the writing process. The grading process results in the final assessment of efforts of students on assignments in which professors give grades either to an individual assignment or to a series of assignments that include grades for individual writing assignments within the series.

The grade is one of the essential parts of the grading process and not the main focus of the process. Without a doubt, the grading process broadens from the development of a writing assignment to the management of a final grade. When the grade is diverted from the grading process, students would wonder how the grade derived. Moreover professors may possibly feel being in an awkward position of clearing up and defending a grade and appraisal may be cut off from the procedure of writing. (Chapter 13: Grading, 2011) However, incorporating grades and the writing process has a number of diffi-



culties that especially includes anxiety and nervousness between the role of professor as a mentor and a judge. The dual responsibility of mentor and judge mostly give rise to ethical issues in relation to the grading process and the grade and, in some quarters, destabilize the writing process in favor of the grade. Such destabilization is adverse because the writing process helps out students to be capable of learning approaching a writing task successfully and also to appraise theirs' and their writing of their fellows.

## HOW PROFESSORS ACTUALLY GRADE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS?

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When professors evaluate students' written work they ensure that use of essential writing elements is made by students. As the writing assignments indicate what students are anticipated to do and how students' written work and efforts are evaluated, the writing assignments must include essential information in relation to readers and reason. Readers and purpose are the two main pillars of writing. If a piece of writing misses the element of being attractive and interesting for readers that piece of writing is worthless. Variation in content of writing comes with variation in discipline under discussion.

Every discipline has its own norms of writing and is also suitable time for discussing discipline-specific customs and principles for writing. All the writing assignments must go through a course that consists of peer review. This enables professors to enlist colleagues and students to review writing assignments before the assignments are officially introduced.

Professors not only intend to put grades on students' written work but he or she carries out such activities as to students know how well they are doing via self assessment. Moreover; professors ensure fair grading to avoid demotivation among students.

Before grading students' writing assignments professors must ensure that their assessment must be fair, encourage self assessment, encourage learning and self improvement in weak areas.

## **Professors ensuring that their professional judgments are fair.**

Fair grading is most essential element of grading. Fairness in grading assignments is promoted via use of rubric or some other concrete look of grading decisive factor. In fact, fairness is related with professional decisions, because professors are the grading power in the classroom. Thus, professors have to be responsive to their accountability for fairness when they grade students' papers.

Professors do not look for the crammed bookish knowledge of students but he or she looks for capability of students to demonstrate and link concepts regarding the subject with the real world applications. Marking students on what is already written in books does not specify student as a genius and creative one. (Chapter 13: Grading, 2011)

## **Professors using their authority to promote students' learning**

Professors encourage a powerful way of promoting students' learning by involving them in the grading process. To do so, professors train students to perform efficiently, effectively and fairly while grading assignments. When students are given the chance to work as professionals in the classroom, they learn more regarding making informed decisions about quality and style of writing. Moreover; involvement of students in grading assignments makes student capable of doing self-assessments. Self assessments make them know how well they are doing and in which disciplines. This encourages self improvement in weak areas of students. (Chapter 13: Grading, 2011)

## **Helping students to learn to respond effectively to writing**

Providing effective feedback to students facilitate learning to revise their piece of writings. For these professors are required to learn how to provide effective, efficient and timely feedback on students' assignments. This can be done by taking a step toward providing useful response by being familiar with the threats encountered while students' writing assignments are read.

When professors behave responsive towards these threats, they adopt more



careful and more positive approach towards understanding and replying to students' writing assignments. For instance; it really gets difficult for students to think if students try to do their assignments at night before it is due or at two o'clock in the morning. In that case professors reads their work many times thinking that these people knew accurately all what they were required to talk about but they were either in a rush or they just could not put everything together.

Meticulously, professors give written comments on students' writing assignments by having a conversation while writing responses, spotting out writing, abstaining from making dishonorable comments, summarizing the general idea of insignificant remarks at the end of assignments , providing students with choices for revising the paper and delaying the grade of an assignment as long as possible. Positive and well written feedbacks make the art of providing effective feedback to students perfect and give out as examples of pleasing piece of writings.

Grading is a way of telling students how well are they doing in a subject in relation to the understanding of the course content and skills developed. Therefore timely grading and giving feedback is an effective communication between professors and students and helps out students in improving their performance. (Chapter 13: Grading, 2011)

### **Helping professors grade students' writing assignments timely.**

Effective and efficient grading of students' writing assignments is a laborious task and consumes a great deal of time and a dedication. Professors have to think just how much time and energy they are supposed to devote to promote the interlinking of writing and grading processes without strong managerial support which includes suitable class sizes and coaching loads.

To facilitate students; professors opt for the use of the interlinked processes which might think about setting up a plan to put together the processes in their classes over a comprehensive period of time and to seek advice from the literature on the grading of classroom writing assignments and for comprehensive information about efficiently and effectively promoting the writing and grading processes.

# CONCLUSION

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Grading written assignments is an effort to measure intellectual progress and reflects human psychology and personal philosophy. Professors make constant efforts to maintain grading standards and ensure fair and reasonable grading.

Grades measures skills, they are indicators of relative knowledge, based on present expectations and criteria, and they are subjective assessment of performance of students about what they have learned. While grading assignments professors quantify what is learned by students and give feedback and measure their performance against a metric to know how much students actually learned.

# RECOMMENDATION

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Grading written assignments of students is one of the responsible. Professors have to be very attentive while grading them as any mistake in assessment can de-motivate and discourage students leaving them uninterested in the writing assignments.

A professor must be efficient enough, must know his or her students very well and must know where, when, how and in what condition his or her student had written an assignment. Professors should not use the threat of unannounced quizzes or tests; this discourages many students as every student has different capabilities and degree of intelligentsia.

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