

# **Writing Strategies & Ethical Considerations**

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CS 7123, Spring 2025

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# Agenda

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- General Structure or outline
- Writing practices that make proposal easy to read
- Ethical issues that need to be anticipated

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# Sample Format for a Quantitative Proposal

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## Example 4.3 *A Quantitative Format*

### Introduction

Statement of the problem (issue, existing literature about problem, deficiencies in literature, relevance of study for audiences)

Purpose of the study

Research questions or hypotheses

Theoretical perspective

Review of the literature (theory may be included in this section instead of the introduction)

### Methods

Type of research design (e.g., experimental, survey)

Population, sample, and participants

Data collection instruments, variables, and materials

Data analysis procedures

Anticipated ethical issues in the study

Preliminary studies or pilot tests

Appendixes: Instruments, timeline, and proposed budget

# Suggestion on General Structure

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- First, develop a general outline, and then, complete each section
  - Refine as you work on proposal
- Find proposals of other students in your lab
- Ask your advisor for guidance; e.g., any preferred format, etc.

# Writing as Thinking

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- Write the ideas (rather than talk about them) early in the process
- Iteratively write, review, and re-write (rather than one draft)
- Consider Franklin's (1986) three-stage model

1. First, develop an outline; it could be a sentence or word outline or a visual map.
2. Write out a draft and then shift and sort ideas, moving around entire paragraphs in the manuscript.
3. Finally, edit and polish each sentence.

Source: Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, by John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell.

# The Habit of Writing

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- Writing regularly and continuously
  - Boice (1990) ideas about establishing good writing habits
- With the aid of the priority principle, make writing a daily activity, regardless of mood, regardless of readiness to write.
  - If you feel you do not have time for regular writing, begin by charting your daily activities for a week or two in half-hour blocks. It is likely you'll find a time to write.
  - Write while you are fresh.
  - Avoid writing in binges.
  - Write in small, regular amounts.
  - Schedule writing tasks so that you plan to work on specific, manageable units of writing in each session.
  - Keep daily charts. Graph at least three things: (a) time spent writing, (b) page equivalents finished, and (c) percentage of planned task completed.
  - Plan beyond daily goals.
  - Share your writing with supportive, constructive friends until you feel ready to go public.
  - Try to work on two or three writing projects concurrently so that you do not become overloaded with any one project.

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# The Readability of Manuscript

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- Use consistent terms; e.g., same terms for each variables
- Use coherence
  - Ideas tie together, and logically flow from once sentence (paragraph) to another one
  - The hook-and-eye exercise (Wilkinson, 1991)

# The Readability of Manuscript

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- Use consistent terms; e.g., same terms for each variables
- Use coherence
- Voice, Tense, and “Fat”
  - Use active voice as much as possible
  - Pay attention to the *tense* of your verbs; e.g., APA Publication Manual (APA, 2010) suggests:
    - Past tense or present perfect for literature review
    - Past tense to describe results
    - Present tense to discuss the results and conclusion
  - Trim additional words that are not necessary to convey the meaning; e.g., excessive prepositions

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# Ethical Considerations at Different Stages

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- Prior to conducting study
- Beginning the study
- Collecting data
- Analyzing Data
- Reporting, sharing, and storing data

# Examples of Ethical Considerations

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- Prior to conducting study
  - Seek IRB approval
  - Gain local permission from site or participants
  - Select a site without a vested interest in outcome of study
- Beginning the study
- Collecting data
- Analyzing Data
- Reporting, sharing, and storing data

# Examples of Ethical Considerations

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- Prior to conducting study
- Beginning the study
  - Disclose purpose of study
  - Don't pressure participant into signing consent form
  - Find out about cultural, religious, gender, and other differences that need to be respected
  - Be sensitive to needs of vulnerable populations
- Collecting data
- Analyzing Data
- Reporting, sharing, and storing data

# Examples of Ethical Considerations

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- Prior to conducting study
- Beginning the study
- Collecting data
  - Respect the site, and disrupt as little as possible
  - Avoid leading questions
  - Avoid deceiving participants
  - Avoid exploitation of participants
- Analyzing Data
- Reporting, sharing, and storing data

# Examples of Ethical Considerations

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- Prior to conducting study
- Beginning the study
- Collecting data
- Analyzing Data
  - Avoid siding with participants
  - Avoid disclosing only positive results
  - Respect the privacy and anonymity of participants
- Reporting, sharing, and storing data



# Examples of Ethical Considerations

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- Prior to conducting study
- Beginning the study
- Collecting data
- Analyzing Data
- Reporting, sharing, and storing data
  - Report honestly
  - Do not plagiarize
  - Keep raw data and other materials (e.g., details of procedures, instruments) for a reasonable time period
  - Provide complete proof of compliance with ethical issues and lack of conflict of interest, if requested
  - State who owns the data from a study