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Revisão de Inglês para Artigo Acadêmico

Writing Research Papers

Escrevendo Trabalhos Acadêmicos e Científicos

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How positive are you about your research paper getting disseminated?

Have you considered checking if your research is comprehensible by your reader, which could lead to successful dissemination?

Writing in an understandable manner and structuring the report are major challenges faced by most inexperienced researchers and few experienced researchers.

This guide aims to help inexperienced researchers in writing research papers that can be deciphered by fellow scientists.

I. Identifying the purpose of the report

The first stage of preparing a research report is identifying the purpose of the study. For this, it is crucial that the author identifies (and understands) the audience of the paper. This helps achieve proper distribution of research information.

For a report to reach a selected audience, it should address issues and concerns relevant to that community. Similarly, to reach a broad and general audience, the research report must also address general concerns.

The best practice is to write clearly and concisely, without using discipline-related jargon.

II. Structuring the Headings in a Report as per Level of Importance

Written reports can be divided into several segments with each contributing an element necessary for the reader to understand the content of the research. These elements, i.e., headings, are supportive structures that help form an outline for readers to follow. Headings are classified into different levels according to importance and are sometimes listed alphabetically (A, B, C, and D).

A-level heading:

- Entirely in capital letters
- Centered or flush left on the page
- Bold type

In scholarly writing, this heading type is reserved for announcing the major divisions in the written work.

Example:

EXAMPLE OF AN A-LEVEL HEADING

B-level heading:

- First letter of each word capitalized (articles and prepositions are lowercase)
- Centered on the page
- Bold type

This heading type signifies subdivisions related to the topic of its corresponding "A" heading.

Example:

Example Of A B-level Heading

C-level heading:

- First letter of each word capitalized (articles and prepositions are lowercase)
- Written flush left
- Followed by a period

This heading type is used to categorize or explain information relevant to the topic indicated by the corresponding "B" heading.

Example:
Example of a C-level Heading

D-level heading:

- Indented from the left
- Only first letter of first word capitalized
- Underlined
- Ends with a period (or occasionally with a colon).
- May run in with the paragraph; indented to line up with the other paragraph indentations on the page.
- Three spaces after the heading and before the first word of the paragraph.

This heading is used to label a specific definitional point, or to enumerate a categorical listing with explanations.

Example:

Example of a D-level heading. (:) The paragraph would begin here.

III. Requisites Sections in a Research Report

A report typically consists of a series of sections (denoted by A-level headings):

1. *Abstract*: Usually the first section, containing a brief description of the entire report
2. *Introduction*: Contains a brief background of reasons for conducting the study and basic research questions
3. *Literature review*: Contains a detailed examination of the existing research literature relevant to the study in question
4. *Methodology*: Comprehensively describes the methods used for gathering and analyzing data in the study
5. *Findings or results*: Describes information uncovered during the research process
6. *Discussion and/or implications*: Examines the findings and the consideration of how they may affect relevant groups, communities, or agencies
7. *References, notes, and/or appendices*: Contains evidence that supports the research report

III. (a) The Abstract

An abstract is a brief summary of the study's most important research findings, mentioning the key methodological features of the study and relevant implications of the findings.

Although found at the beginning of any research report, abstracts cannot be created until the report has been written.

The abstract's main function is to provide potential readers with sufficient information to both capture their interest and help them decide whether the article is relevant to their needs. Researchers often scan collections of abstracts to identify potentially useful elements for their own literature reviews. It is therefore critical that an abstract be concise and precise.

As a broad guide to writing an abstract, the following key facets should be included (regardless of the researcher's particular substantive interests):

1. **A statement identifying the key focus or issue considered in the study.**

   Example: This is the first study of drug trafficking in the United States that penetrates the echelons of the marijuana and cocaine business. The main concern of the study is the smugglers and their primary dealers.

2. **The nature of the data analyzed in the study.**
Example: We spent six years observing and interviewing these traffickers and their associates in southwestern California and examined their typical career paths.

3. **The major finding or result examined in the report.**
Example: We show how drug traffickers enter the business and progress, how they become disenchanted because of the rising social and legal costs of upper-level drug trafficking, how and why they voluntarily or involuntarily leave the business, and why so many end up returning to their deviant careers or to other careers within the drug world.

Certain instances of studies may require a fourth element suggesting the relevance of the research to a given agency, policy, or discipline:

4. **Potential use or implication of the reported finding.**
Example: The findings of the current study outline the multiple conflicting forces that lure drug dealers and smugglers into and out of drug trafficking.

These four elements suit almost any research enterprise and may adequately produce an abstract consisting of as few as four sentences.

III. (b) The Introduction

An introduction orients the reader to the study (or report) and should acquaint the reader with the basic research question or problem.

The introduction should be written in clear and concise sentences that will reflect the writing style to follow. It places the research problem into theoretical and/or historical context and offers a sequential presentation plan for the report. The helps the reader to anticipate the different sections of the report as well as their corresponding content.

It is important to note that good introductions can entice readers to continue reading, whereas poorly written ones may deter them from doing so.

Aside from the title, the main device for grabbing a reader's attention is the opening sentence to an introduction. Authors may use a startling finding from the research, suggest some interesting problem from literature, or cite a relevant, recent news event.

III. (c) Literature Review

The literature review provides a comprehensive review of previous works on the report’s general and specific topics, sometimes the researcher's own work. This section must also report on the state of the literature, i.e., its limitations and research directions.

In cases when a researcher wants to challenge a previously accepted idea, improve on or replicate a previous study, and improve on their use of theory or methods, he/she should highlight the findings of the previous studies here to allow for a suitable comparison.

The literature review should contain references to classic works related to the investigation as well as recent studies. Omitting relevant recent studies may leave researchers open to criticism for carelessness. The more thorough the literature review, the more solid the research report's foundation.

Remember that different sources of information have varying levels of significance: not all sources are considered equal or can be legitimately used in writing literature reviews. The following is a generally accepted hierarchy of the significance of cited information sources.

1. Scholarly empirical articles, dissertations, monographs, etc. (this includes electronic articles from referred online journals on the internet)

2. Scholarly non-empirical articles and essays (referred or non-juried)
3. Textbooks
4. Trade journal articles
5. Certain nationally and internationally recognized news magazines (e.g., Time, Newsweek)
6. Papers, reports, or other documents posted by individuals on various Websites
7. Certain nationally and internationally recognized newspapers (e.g., The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The LA Times)
8. Acceptable, lower order newspapers (e.g., The Boston Guide)
9. Only when all other sources are unavailable, or when you want to add texture or detail, should you (sparingly) use a local newspaper

Elements 1 through 3 offer the strongest documentary support in scholarly writing; 4 through 7 offer moderately strong support; and items 8 and 9 offer useful, albeit somewhat informal, documentary sources of information.

It is important to note that though omitting a recent relevant article can create problems for a report, an overdone literature review can also be detrimental. As a rule of thumb, keep the literature review long enough to cover the area but short enough to remain interesting.

III. (d) Methodology

The Methodology section reports on the processes followed during the course of a research project.

Essentially, it describes how the research was accomplished, i.e., the content of the data and the methods for data collection, organization, and analysis.

Salient features of research methods:

Subjects: Include references to the subjects' general identity, the selection process, information disclosed to them, and steps taken for their safety. Supporting details include number of participants, what determined their numbers, and number of participants that refused to take part and reasons for such.

Data: In addition to identifying the nature of the data, include the methods used for data collection and analysis.

First, this section should help readers decide the amount of credence that the results warrant. Second, should readers desire to replicate the research study, this section should provide the necessary detailed steps, which can help establish that the research endeavor is objective and reproducible.

Finally, data-collection sections are frequently among the most interesting aspects of a research report—particularly when researchers include details about problems and how they were resolved.

III. (e) Findings or Results

Findings refer to what the data say, whereas results offer an analysis of the data.

In quantitative research reports, the finding or results sections present percentages and proportions of the data in the form of charts, tables, and graphs.

In qualitative research reports, this section is not as easily explained. Researchers may choose to present it throughout their analysis to demonstrate and document various patters and observations.

Findings of an ethnographic research are more accurately represented and are labeled as ethnographic narrative, followed by a separate analysis.

Similarly, observations from a content analysis of interview data or other written documents may be reported either by separately presenting the findings or by interweaving findings and analysis.

III. (f) Discussion/Conclusion

This section's content depends on whether the researchers have presented an analysis section or a findings section.

In case of an analysis section, the discussion frequently reiterates and elaborates the key points of the analysis and provides suggestions regarding how the findings pertain to existing literature on the topical study area.

In case of a findings section, the discussion elaborates on presented observations and states what is still to be realized in terms of the subject area.

In short, the discussion section allows researchers to outline areas that require further research and provides an opportunity to consider the study alongside the results.

III. (g) References, Notes, and Appendices

References should include claims, statements, and allegations throughout the sections of a report.

Following are two broad styles for referencing:

Notes: Notes give further explanation to the text highlighted. They can be located either at the bottom of the page (Footnotes) or at the conclusion of the report (endnotes) and are referenced in the text by using superscript numerals.

Source references: Source references are used for documenting statements made in the text. They appear in parentheses immediately following the point in the text where a quote, a paraphrase, or a statement in need of documentation is made. These are identified by the last name of a referenced author, publication date, and direct quotation page number.

The following points concerning source reference should be observed:

1. If the author's name appears in the text, only the date of the publication appears in parentheses.
   Example: According to Naples (1997)...
2. If the author's name is not used in the text, both the last name and the date of publication appear in parentheses
   Example: The use of ethnographic narrative offers details on reflexive voice and anxiety (Michalowski, 1997).

3. When a reference has two or three authors, the last name of each author is included in text. For reference material with more than three authors, the first author is shown in text followed by "et al."
   Example: Link and Cullen (1987) and Johnson et al. (1985) have examined various aspects of deviant behavior.
4. For institutional authorship, the agency that produced the document is considered to be the author.
   Example: Information on Index crimes suggests an increase (FBI Uniform Crime Report, 1985).
5. When several sources are offered to document on claim or statement, each complete citation is separated by a semicolon and presented in chronological order.
   Example: This has been suggested throughout the literature, especially by Beschner, 1986; Cullen, 1982; Glassner and Berg, 1980; Johnson et al. 1985.
6. When quoting directly, it is important to offer the page reference as well as the author's name and publication date in one of two forms.
   Example: Doerner (1983, p. 22) states, "......." or "........" (Dorner, 1983, p. 22

References are listed alphabetically by the author's last name, in a separate section entitled "References." This section must include all source references included in the report.

The citation style for the reference section is specified by journals and changes from time to time. Hence it's advisable to consult the concerned journal to ascertain the style (format) for the reference citations.

The following is a format recommended for most journals:

1. ***Books:***

   Ribbens, J., & Edwards, R. (1998). *Feminist Dilemmas in Qualitatitve Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

2. ***Periodicals:***

   Berg, B. L. (1986). Arbitrary arbitration: Diverting juveniles into the justice system. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal* 37, 31-42.

3. ***Collections:***

   Peterson, B. H. (1985). A qualitative clinical account and analysis of a care situation. In M. M. Leininger (Ed.), *Qualitative Research Methods in Nursing*, 267-281. Orlando, FL: Grune & Stratton.

IV. Presenting Research Material

There are at least two major outlets for sharing one's research: professional association meetings and professional journal publications.

Professional meetings can reach a great number of persons from different facets of the same discipline. It provides opportunities for researcher to present their own work and hear about the work of their colleagues. Meetings help student researchers by allowing them to present their work in a forum that is less intimidating than their main sessions.

Publishing articles strengthens the discipline and improves the chances of being hired and recognized in a vastly competitive academic market. Getting published, however, requires skill and scholarship as well as timing and luck. This process of getting published is complicated by the blind referee system that better journals rely on. This system involves having a manuscript reviewed by two to four scholars who possess expertise in the subject and from whom the author's identity is concealed. Based upon their recommendations, the journal will either publish or reject the manuscript. Although the rejection of one's manuscript might be disheartening, it is important not to take this rejection personally.

Becoming familiar with the publication process from start to finish helps researchers gain perspective:

- When a research project has been completed, the next step is to do some research in the library to find suitable journal for publication. Experienced researchers often write their reports with a particular journal in mind.
- Researchers should carefully note the subject area of different journals and the types of studies published.
- Next, researchers should identify the journal's prescribed writing style and format. Maintaining the correct format in the initial draft of the manuscript often saves considerable time and helps avoid problems later.
- Researchers should make a final assessment of their manuscript after it has been written; perhaps the most difficult decision to make honestly is how good the manuscript really is.

The critical concern is choosing the journal. The choice of a journal should be made after due deliberation and consideration.

First, it is advisable to submit the manuscript to the journal in which there is a realistic chance of publication. Making the correct choice will help reduce the time required for the article to get published.

A second reason for carefully choosing a journal is the restriction that academic journals have regarding multiple submissions; it is unethical to submit the same manuscripts to more than one journal at a time. Hence, choosing the wrong journal may result in missing an opportunity for timely publication.

A researcher should not hesitate to check with the journal on the status of their manuscript. After waiting for a reasonable time (i.e., 12 to 15 weeks), it is not only acceptable but also recommended to contact the journal (e.g., via telephone, fax, or email) to check the status of your manuscript.

V. A Word about the Content of Papers and Articles

Although reports should include accurate, truthful, and documented information, the content also has to be interesting. However, for a quantitative and statistical report, a certain amount of monotony is to be expected.

On the other hand, it is unacceptable for a qualitative report to sound “boring” because it is a reflection of real events. It should reveal elements unknown or unnoticed by others. There are no dull facts about social life, only dull ways of presenting them.

Write it, Rewrite it, Then Write it again!

Experienced researchers realize that the process of writing a research consists of multiple stages. Although most books on writing insist on revising and recomposing, students in general believe that it is enough to write a single draft and then edit it for typographical and spelling errors.

The idea of rewriting substantive portions of the report or adding interesting information learned after completing the first draft may not occur to inexperienced researchers/writers; most are simply unaware that virtually all effective writing has to go through a series of revisions. Most research goes through many stages of development, versions of presentation, and editions before it ever reaches its intended audience.

There is no single all-purpose method to compose a report that reaches all audiences. In some cases, it may be necessary to write multiple drafts of different versions for the manuscript to reach several distinct audiences.

When researchers write for their own disciplines, they do so for a limited audience that is not only thoroughly familiar with their particular field of study but with whom the researches share similar educational backgrounds. When an audience consists of different kinds of readers, special limitations must be set on the form the written report should take.

A common problem with writers is trouble to get started. After writing a weak introduction, researchers suddenly find that the words begin to flow with ease. Only if writers reread their weak opening section do they realize that they must rewrite the report; if they do not bother to reread and rewrite the opening material, readers will probably not read beyond the poor beginning, thus missing the well-written later sections.

Similarly, when authors distance themselves from their own writing, it allows them to view their presentation from a different perspective. These self-reflective examinations require sometime between the actual penning of the words and the revisions.

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