

To Future AWD Students:

This summer, before taking AWD, I took a course in criminology. Up to that point, I had bounced around from major to major – behavioral neuroscience, psychology, linguistics – I had many interests, but no obvious career path. Taking AWD after the class in criminology proved to be the most significant of all my decisions at Northeastern. Not only did it solidify my choice in psychology and criminal justice, it also prepared me for the trials of my new discipline.

Despite what you may have heard about AWD and its learning goals, this class serves a purpose far more important than generating 5,000+ polished words, or learning appropriate citation conventions. What I found was that the class guided me towards my future career and taught me how to write for my newly chosen profession. In order to succeed in AWD you should have a general idea of what you would like to do, however, you do not need to be certain; AWD helps you realize the level of interest you have in writing for your field, how skilled you are in completing this type of writing, and where you need to improve.

There are many keys to success in AWD. The first, which has been lightly touched upon, is a general knowledge of what you would like to do. Many individuals, my classmates included, feel that having been on co-op prior to AWD is essential for success, but I disagree wholeheartedly. Although having a previous co-op experience may be helpful to some, it is not necessary for success. In fact, I feel as though learning to write for your discipline before having to face written tasks in a professional setting may be more useful; I believe that my experience in AWD before being on co-op has prepared me for the challenges that my discipline may hold for me. In summary, it is necessary that you know roughly what you would like to do, but experience is not needed. AWD can aid you in uncovering a new appreciation for your discipline and all the fine points of its writing.

Another key to success in AWD is the ability to self-motivate. Having taken this course in the summer, at an accelerated pace, I have learned to value deadlines and have

gained an understanding of what is required of me in both professional and academic settings. I would also like to stress the importance of peer reviewing, an essential aspect of AWD. Having the ability to accept constructive criticism from others in your field is vital to success. Incorporating suggestions for revision leads to the improvement of your work, and results in a more polished document.

Meeting the AWD learning goals is another aspect of the class that should be addressed. AWD is not simply about producing 5,000+ words; they should be polished and revised, incorporating the ideas of others and using the appropriate language of your discipline. The learning goals are helpful when it comes to understanding what it takes to write a professional document. You must always mind your audience and genre; to whom are you writing and what type of document are you working to produce?

My experience in AWD has been a very positive one. I have learned to appreciate the ideas of others in regards to my work and I have learned to cite appropriately, using APA citation, for the field of psychology and criminal justice. I have learned to meet deadlines and work at a fast pace, producing 5,000+ words that are polished and revised to the best of my ability. I have learned that psychology and criminal justice is the field that I want to work in, as I enjoyed writing about it in depth and in different contexts. Taking AWD set me on a more solidified career path, which I am sure I will thoroughly enjoy.

The most pertinent advice I can give to you, future AWD students, is to try to grow based on your experience in AWD. Learn to love your field and all of its modes of writing. Don't view your assignments as simply a production of X amount of words, view your assignments as way in which to better your understanding of your field and complete it to the best of your ability. Utilize all of the resources you have access to in AWD in order to better know what your discipline will demand of you. Lastly, work to meet your learning goals, not because it's required of you, but because it will guide you towards an understanding and provide you with a better appreciation of your chosen profession. [770]