

Bio 1102 – Science Writing Assignment Workshop - script

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At the end of this workshop, students should be able to:

- Explain the process and structure of the Learning Journal assignment
- Describe source criticism and give examples of in-text scientific citations
- Utilize various revision techniques
- Become familiar with available resources (library, web, professor, AC tutors)

Concept

Learning Journal Assignment: relating content in class/lab, to the students' previously chosen news topic, where relevant.

Process

Collecting data:

Weekly notes, or “journal entries,” on class material and how it might relate to your news topic are incredibly important. Keep up with this; it will make your life SO much easier, and it only takes a few minutes. Be sure to record especially those “aha” moments, any difficulties, struggles, or confusions you wrestle with, as well as any connections you make as you absorb the new material.

Rewrite into a paper:

Don't submit your raw data.

Structure

This is like an English paper in form and structure, with a more scientifically analytical approach to the material and your own process of absorbing and making sense of that material. Therefore, you can learn about both English papers and science writing from this assignment; this workshop is a conglomeration of tips and strategies for both!

Intro:

Introduce your news topic, how you were drawn to it, and the basics of the material you covered in class that related to your topic. Don't forget to include any questions you had about your topic.

Body:

Unpack your data. Discuss how your understanding of the topic, its relevance, and its importance changed through the course of the class. Address any misconceptions you started out with and how they were dealt with throughout the semester. Focus on the news topic, and keep pulling it back to the class material. Be sure to illustrate your experiences whenever possible, and to explain the development of your learning process.

Conclusion:

State of the Union. Recap concisely what you learned, what you learned *about* what you learned, and what is still missing – whatever questions you still might have left unanswered.



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Key Points to Keep in Mind

- Relevance
- Content (your understanding of the material & analysis of it)
- Progress (of your learning)
- Sources (external research)
- Proof Reading (grammar, spelling, etc. – take the time to revise, it counts!)

Quoting, Paraphrasing, & Summarizing

- Quoting – With quotation marks, using the author’s exact words in your paper
- Paraphrasing – Without using quotation marks, putting the author’s point in your own words, usually more succinctly.
- Summarizing – Without using quotation marks, briefly stating the main idea in your own words.

Remember – Give authors credit for all three!!

CSE (Council of Science Editors Citations) Name/Year Format

(Jones 2011)

(Jones 2011, p 34)

(Jones and Briggs 1996)

Jones’ sequence of studies (2008, 2010a, 2010b, 2011)

A number of studies (Jones and Briggs 1996; Vandall 2011; Greggs 2002) have shown...

(Jones 1986, cited in Forbes 1994)

Note: the above in-text citations were taken from the CSE site

http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocCBE_NameYear_Intext.html

Source Criticism

Consider bias, source, audience, web domain, etc.

Sound vs. Sketchy – Libraries are great, and so are online journals, but be careful about websites.

Rule of Thumb – look for *their* citations. See if you can trace the author’s steps to their information.



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Writing Style Tips

- Be clear & concise, use precise words [see the handout on power verbs at http://averypoint.uconn.edu/ACweb/Resources/Power_verbs.pdf]
- Read your drafts out loud - you'll catch a lot of your own errors
- Make Reverse Outlines - write out a skeleton outline of your draft, to check your organization
- List your transitions - make a bulleted list of the first few words of each paragraph, to check transitions
- Check your paragraphs - bullet your sentences to check sentence length

Active vs. Passive Voice

For each sentence, write P or A in front of the sentence to identify whether it is in passive or active voice. Then if the sentence is passive, turn it into an active sentence; if the sentence is active, write it as a passive sentence.

1. Students from many different places, including London, Toronto, the US, and the Netherlands, will read this sentence.
2. There is a great deal of grammar expertise possessed by the members of this class.
3. The new budget has been opposed by skunks and squirrels alike.

Use Your Resources! 😊

- Academic Center resources: <http://averypoint.uconn.edu/ACweb/WLinks.htm>
- Use the Academic Center Tutors!
- Use your Professor's feedback!



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