

DISTINCTIVE BY DESIGN



UNIVERSITY OF
CANBERRA



WRITING WORKSHOP

'Nuts and Bolts' of Writing Assignments

Today

- Structuring your work
- Answering the question/task
- Why you should write several drafts
- Expressing your ideas
- 'Sentence starters'
- Using quotes (direct and indirect)
- APA Referencing
- Different ways to proof read
- Allowing enough time and procrastination

Structuring your Work

- Generally, follow the structure of the assessment question.
- Your assignment should flow, taking the reader/marker by the hand from start to finish. Assume that the reader knows nothing about the topic.
- The order should be logical. Once you have covered a given point don't return to it.
- Use headings and sub-headings to break your response into the different parts. This helps the marker to see that you have covered everything. Again, this is in a logical order that should typically follow the structure of the essay task.
- If a marker can't easily see/find something they will simply award you minimal marks for that part and move onto the next section. In real terms we have limited time to spend on your assignment.
- Regarding headings and subheading, Word has 'Heading 1' 'Heading 2' 'Heading 3' etc. These three levels of heading should be adequate for your work.

Answering the Question/Task

- This might seem like an obvious point but read the question and marking rubric many times to make sure that you answer the task in full and don't miss anything out.
- Often people 'jump' at writing their responses and don't pay enough attention to the full scope of what is required, missing key parts out. What that means is that the marker can only offer minimal marks/no marks for that point.
- My tip would be to read the question enough times to get a real sense of what it is about. Then give your self a couple of days to digest the topic in your head, when you are traveling, at the gym or doing your everyday chores. What often happens is that ideas about how to approach the assignment present themselves.

Why you Should Write Several Drafts

- Writing is not easy for any of us.
- No-one writes a good piece of work in 'one go.'
- Published work such as the articles we get you to read are the result of many drafts often over two or more years.
- What does that mean for your assignments? It means starting as early as you can and like a creating a painting, your response starts to take shape as you carefully add, restructure, revisit and shape your assignment response over time.
- The more time you spend on it the better it becomes – like anything in life pretty much.
- Like going to the gym, it is about developing a writing habit. Setting your self some time where you commit to writing – anything between 30 minutes to 2 hours in one go. If you do that regularly, words soon start to accumulate.
- Be careful of over-reading and 'kidding yourself' that you are doing work.
- You should be scan reading articles for the main parts – a sentence or two of content that relates to your assignment rather than reading articles in depth. If you do the latter you will never get to the actual writing.
- Writing several drafts allows you to refine your ideas and connect different arguments.

Expressing Your Ideas

- In most of your Faculty of Education assignments, writing about your own ideas will not be enough. Typically, and as is the case in the 9916 and 9893 assignments you need to back your ideas and arguments with evidence from the literature and only using quality sources/references.
- Always write in the third person and avoid colloquialisms or everyday expressions of speech. Aim to write in the past tense as much as you can and where it seems right. More about this in the next slide about sentence starters.

Sentence Starters

Sometimes people struggle to know how to begin sentences. Here are some examples that might help you and with expressing your ideas.

According to Pill (2015)...

The research would suggest... (Ashworth, 2020; Pine, 2008).

Davies (2020) argued that...

Given that....

Consequently...

Nonetheless...

Specifically, it has been shown...

It can be seen that....

It would seem...

In particular...

In summary.....

Perhaps it could be the case...

With regard to....

I (first person for specific parts of 9916 assignment) concur with.....

Sentence Starters

More suggestions:

Pill (2015) argued...

Ashworth (2020) contended...

Peters (2017) maintained...

Williams (2020) observed...

It may be the case that...

Typically...

In essence...

While Williams (2017) suggested...

On the other hand...

Alternatively...

In contrast...

The previous section explained...