

Harvard Medical School / Office of Postdoctoral Fellows

OPF Writing Support Program

WSJP: Writing Science for Journal Publication Fall 2017

Class Meetings: Mondays, 3:00-5:00pm, TMEC 106
Fridays, 12:00-2:00pm, TMEC 128

10/9 Columbus Day / NO class
10/10, Tuesday, 3:00-5:00pm, TMEC 106

11/10 Veterans' Day / NO class
11/13, Monday, 3:00-5:00pm, TMEC 128

Instructor: Kathy Brenner
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Office hours: By appointment

Course Description: Writing a manuscript for journal publication is a daunting task, especially for non-native speakers of English. This 6-week course is designed for non-native speakers of English who are at the beginning stages of writing a manuscript. The course will focus on the IMRaD (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion) + Abstract template for journal publication, and the understanding of how language and structure produce the necessary component parts. As the weeks pass, the writers will construct and develop manuscripts, section by section. Topics such as culture, the western writing process, revising and editing, and grammar conventions will be discussed. Weekly grammar, structure, and vocabulary will target clarity of writing for the reader. The writers will utilize peer writing groups, peer editing/review, and teacher workshops to explain and describe research, and receive feedback on writing. Ultimately, all writers will learn that language matters – the contiguity of words matters.

Course Objectives: To develop an awareness of writing science in Western journal publications; to become familiar with the format and components of IMRaD, and clearly understand what is required of the writer in each section; to realize the benefits and usefulness of peer writing groups.

Texts / Materials: All materials provided by the instructor.

Academic Conduct: Each student is responsible for upholding the highest standards of academic integrity.

Classroom Conduct: Students are expected to be prepared and participate in each class. Assignments (at least partial) must be submitted on due dates. Contact the instructor by email with questions or to schedule appointments. Use of electronic devices is not allowed unless required for class-related activities.

Week 1

The Western Writing Process and IMRaD+Abstract

Overview: Introduction to the western writing process; cultural aspects of writing; pre-writing strategies; peer writing groups for editing, revising, reviewing; IMRaD+Abstract components; journal selection and guidelines

Learning objectives: To develop awareness of writing for journal publication in Western publications; to become familiar with the components of IMRaD and clearly understand what is required of the writer in each section; to realize the benefits and usefulness of peer writing groups; format; citing sources and plagiarism

In-class activities: Writing diagnostic; introductions; pre-writing strategy exercises; analysis of a literature model for grammar, structure, patterns, and vocabulary; review IMRaD+ Abstract handout; what are peer writing groups? peer writing group activity

Writing resources: IMRaD+Abstract components; pre-writing strategies; format; books and online references

Assignment: Write a one-paragraph biosketch (10-15 sentences); prepare “3MM”; start writing the Methods section

Week 2

The Methods

Overview: Analysis of the Methods section and required components; start looking at grammar conventions, rhetorical styles, and complex sentence structures

Learning objectives: To become familiar and more comfortable with required components; to better understand sentence structures and focus (topic, action, stress)

In-class activities: Start working in peer writing groups for review and feedback of first draft of Methods section; class discussion on complex sentence structures and sentence focus (topic, action, stress)

Writing points: Complex sentence structures; sentence focus (known to new)

Class 1

Assignment: Continue work on Methods section/first draft revisions

Class 2

Assignment: Continue work on Methods section/additional draft revisions

Week 3

The Results

Overview: Analysis of the Results section and required components

Learning objectives: To become familiar and more comfortable with required components; to better understand nominalization and strength of claim

In-class activities: Peer writing groups for review and feedback of first draft of Results section; class discussion on nominalization and strength of claim

Writing points: Nominalization; strength of claim

Class 1

Assignment: Continue work on Results section/first draft revisions

Class 2

Assignment: Continue work on Results section/additional draft revisions

Mid-Term course/teacher evaluation

Week 4

The Introduction

Overview: Analysis of the Introduction section and required components

Learning objectives: To become familiar and more comfortable with required components; to better understand lexical nuance, discourse markers, and verb tense/voice

In-class activities: Peer writing groups for review and feedback of first draft of Introduction section; class discussion on lexical nuance, discourse markers, verb tense/voice

Writing points: Lexical nuance; discourse markers; verb tense/voice

Class 1

Assignment: Continue work on Introduction section/first draft revisions

Class 2

Assignment: Continue work on Introduction section/additional draft revisions

Week 5

The Discussion

Overview: Analysis of the Discussion section and required components

Learning objectives: To become familiar and more comfortable with required components; to better understand parallel structure and “flipping” the sentence

In-class activities: Peer writing groups for review and feedback of first draft of the Discussion section; class discussion on parallel structure and “flipping” the sentence

Writing points: Parallel structure; “flipping” the sentence

Class 1

Assignment: Continue work on Discussion section/first draft revisions

Class 2

Assignment: Continue work on Discussion section/additional draft revisions

Week 6

The Abstract and Title

Overview: Analysis of the Abstract section and required components

Learning objectives: To become familiar and more comfortable with required components; to write the appropriate title; to better understand mechanics and other particulars for publication

In-class activities: Peer writing groups for review and feedback of first draft of the Abstract and title; class discussion on mechanics and other particulars for publication

Writing points: Mechanics and other particulars for publication

Class 1

Assignment: Continue work on Abstract section and title/first draft revisions

Class 2

Assignment: Complete draft of the manuscript; prepare for authorship team submission; final discussions on writing and resources; wrap up

Final course/teacher evaluation