ALEC 604: Writing for Professional Publication

Week 4: APA, Grammar, & Punctuation

Activities
- Review APA standards for research manuscripts
- Examine grammar and punctuation rules, standards, and sources
- Discuss strategies for building a convincing argument

Why use in-text citations?
- Scholarly publications require accepted standards or rules (APA)
- Citations in scholarly writing:
  - Provide due diligence in the publication process
  - Give authority to your writing by showing your ideas are supported by others’ ideas
  - Identify and credit previous works used in your writing
  - Give readers a trail to retrieve sources

When to use in-text citations
- Use in-text citations when you:
  - Use a direct quotation
  - Restate, summarize, or paraphrase an idea, theory, or opinion by another author
  - Use dates or facts that might be disputed, especially if it is not common knowledge
    - Common knowledge is information that recurs in many sources
    - If you are uncertain it is common knowledge, cite it

Perils of no in-text citations
- No “absolute original” research exists
  - All research builds upon previous works
  - Reviewers know about previous works
- Your writing could be viewed as plagiarism
- Academia views in-text citations seriously
  - Inaccurate documentation is as serious as having no documentation at all

APA Manual
- Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association
- Used in many disciplines:
  - Psychology
  - Sociology
  - Business
  - Education
  - Agricultural Education
APA Style

- Rules for the preparation of manuscripts contribute to clear communication (APA, 5th edition)
- 5th edition includes:
  - Electronic references
  - Data sharing and verification
  - Statistics

Grammar & Punctuation

- Grammatical issues:
  - Subject-verb agreement
  - Verb tense (see Hacker, p. 173-176)
  - Pronouns
  - Adjectives and adverbs
  - Sentence fragments
  - Run-on sentences
- Punctuation issues:
  - Commas (necessary/unnecessary)
  - Colon/Semicolon use
  - Apostrophe
  - Quotation marks

Grammar & Punctuation

- How words fit together in patterns to communicate meaning
  - Subject + Verb + Object
    - Thomas baked the cake.
  - Subject + Verb + Complement
    - Bob looks thin.
- Too many grammar and punctuation sources exist to be repetitive...start at:
  - http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/content/view/71/99/

Build a Convincing Case

Developing Arguments

Plan a Strategy

- List the arguments that:
  - Support your problem statement
  - Oppose your problem statement
- Consider your audience
  - What do they know about the topic?
  - What is their position on the topic?
- Reassess your position
  - Review your research purpose and problem statement

Problem Statement

- The problem statement expresses the main point of your writing
  - Example:
    - RQ: Do students who participate in a graduate-level writing course prepare better research manuscripts than non-participants?
    - RT: There is no difference between research manuscripts written by participants in a graduate-level writing course and research manuscripts written by non-participants. (non-directional)
    - RT: Students who participate in a graduate-level writing course prepare better research manuscripts than do non-participants. (directional)
Build your Argument

- Your problem statement and arguments form the outline for your literature review
  - Students who participate in a graduate-level writing course prepare better research manuscripts than do non-participants.
  - Writing is a learned skill (common knowledge)
  - Only 7% of students sampled were able to demonstrate adequate writing (Murphy, Lindner, & Kelsey, 2002).
  - Graduate students have the greatest difficulty with argument, coherence, and grammar (Lindner, Murphy, & Wingenbach, 2002).

Deductive Reasoning

- Draws conclusions from two or more premises
  - Major premise: generalization
  - Minor premise: specific case
  - Conclusion: Apply generalization to specific case
  - Conclusions are true only if the premises are true

Deductive Reasoning

Top-Down Theory

- Hypothesis
  - Observation
  - Conclusion

Inductive Reasoning

- Draw a conclusion from an array of facts
  - Involves probability, not certainty
  - Evidence must be sufficient, representative, and relevant
  - Does not produce mathematical certainty
  - Gather information and combine with our knowledge and experience to make an observation about what must be true

Inductive Reasoning

Bottom-Up Theory

- Tentative Hypotheses
  - Pattern
  - Observation

Example

- Inductive
  - Every rabbit that has ever been observed has lungs
  - Therefore, every rabbit has lungs
- Deductive
  - Every mammal has lungs
  - All rabbits are mammals
  - Therefore, every rabbit has lungs
Flawed Arguments: Logical Fallacies

- **Hasty generalization**
  - Generalization based on insufficient or unrepresented evidence

- **Non sequitur ("Does not follow")**
  - Does not follow logically from preceding statements or is based on irrelevant data

- **False Analogy**
  - Assumption that because two things are alike in some respects, they are alike in others.

- **Either ... or**
  - Suggestion that only two alternatives exist

- **False Cause (Post hoc)**
  - Assumption that because one event follows another, the first is the cause of the second

- **Circular Reasoning**
  - The writer, instead of supplying evidence, simply restates the point in another form

- **Bandwagon Appeal**
  - A claim that an idea should be accepted because a large number of people favor it or believe it is true

- **Argument to the Person**
  - An attack on the person proposing an argument rather than on the argument itself

- **Red Herring**
  - Focusing on an irrelevant issue to distract attention from the real issue

**Summary**

- Published scholarship requires accurate citations and references
- Grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors keep manuscripts from being published
- Defensible, logical research statements start with a planned strategy for the literature review
- Inductive or deductive reasoning is useful in building your argument and avoiding logical fallacies