

Writing to Persuade

A worked example for
Pharmacy 387: Pediatrics & Geriatrics

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As Director of Writing Across the Curriculum, I'll be working with faculty and students across the university to improve student writing. I consult with instructors and departments, and I teach writing in a wide variety of courses when students in those courses are starting a writing assignment. I will also be working with students and faculty in the Department of English and Film Studies, my home department.

I am the author, co-author, or editor of six books and 29 articles, including *Writing Instruction in Canadian Universities*. My current research interests include the development of doctoral student writing, writing assignments across disciplinary fields, and rhetorical approaches to text encoding. Currently I serve as co-President of the Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing (CASDW), the

Recent presentations to classes

This page contains links to slides displayed at presentations I've given to classes.

Research and faculty presentations

Digital rhetoric



<http://www.ualberta.ca/~graves1/index.html>

Writing Across the Curriculum



Writing Initiatives
University of Alberta

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Today:

9/2/2009 10:31:23 AM

C4W

WRS Courses

Roger Graves

Blog

Academic Honesty

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Would you like to improve the writing of your students? Improve their learning of your lecture material? Are you looking for new ways to engage your students in your course materials? If this interests you, contact [Roger Graves](#): or 492.2169

What can we do for individual instructors:

- meet to talk about ways to incorporate informal (short, impromptu) writing assignments into any class, small or large
- review via email any assignment you give students that has a writing component to help make it clearer for students and to help develop grading rubrics to improve the speed and accuracy of grading
- visit your class to help students get started on your writing assignments

What can we do for departments:

- hold workshops on creating good writing assignments
- host discussions of how to improve the writing of students in your programs
- conduct reviews of writing assignments in your departments courses to identify exactly what your students are being asked to write—and to ensure that they have access to resources on how to write (online and on-campus)

Upcoming Presentations and Workshops:

<http://www.humanities.ualberta.ca/WAC/>

Centre for Writers



Writing Initiatives
University of Alberta



Centre for Writers

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Welcome to the Centre for Writers

We offer **free** one-on-one writing coaching and support to all students, instructors and staff at the University of Alberta - in any faculty or at any level of study.

Our writing coaches are available to assist clients with higher order concerns in their writing, such as thesis formation, organization and idea development, as well as more specific details, like grammar and documentation style. Clients can bring in any writing project at any stage of development: essays, lab reports, creative pieces, scholarly articles, thesis drafts, application letters - and more. Our coaches will also help students read instructor comments on already-graded papers. ESL and EAL students are welcome!

[Request a class room visit by a tutor.](#)

Welcome back for the Fall 2009 term! Tutoring hours will begin on Monday, September 14. The online appointment-booking schedule will be available to clients as soon as possible prior to this date. We look forward to working with you!

9/2/2009 10:34:15 AM

Express News

Twitter Updates

The Centre for Writers will open for the fall term on Monday, September 14! 5 days ago

[follow me on Twitter](#)

GramWOW



<http://www.c4w.arts.ualberta.ca/>

The assignments



The deliverables:

Part 1: Topic proposal

Part 2: Annotated bibliography

Part 3: Evidence-based position paper

- ◆ Note: Assignments are linked: the proposal leads to the annotated bibliography which is the research you will report in the paper

The writing process

Getting started

- ◆ Explore the assignment
- ◆ Make rough notes
- ◆ Pick a tentative topic

Getting feedback

- ◆ Make an appointment at the writing centre for later in the week
- ◆ Get feedback on your draft/revise

Revising

- ◆ Work on style and lower order concerns
- ◆ Proofread, consult checklist for assignment

Sample Topic for 387



- ◆ Placebo treatments
- ◆ Exclusion of older adults from clinical trials
- ◆ Mandatory influenza vaccination in facilities
- ◆ Circumcision in males
- ◆ Blood transfusions (refusal)
- ◆ Suntanning
- ◆ Saviour siblings

Thesis statements

- ◆ Specific
- ◆ Manageable
- ◆ Interesting

A sample thesis statement

According to new approaches in pain management, nurses must obtain **three kinds** of knowledge if they are to **respond effectively to a patient's pain: knowledge of self, knowledge of pain, and knowledge of standards of care.**

Specific
Manageable
Interesting

[original/passive voice] New approaches to pain management stress three kinds of knowledge for nurses to obtain if they are to respond effectively to a patient's pain: knowledge of self, knowledge of pain, and knowledge of standards of care.¹

Sample thesis

- ◆ While contraceptive drugs can be viewed from religious, political, and scientific viewpoints, I believe that safety and efficacy of the drug should determine whether or not pharmacists should distribute them. The new contraceptive pill, ella, highlights why efficacy and safety are the most important criteria for distribution.

Specific
Manageable
Interesting

Other possible thesis statements

- ◆ In jurisdictions that have legalized assisted suicide, pharmacists must accept their role to prescribe drugs to patients who plan to end their lives because they have a responsibility to the law, to respect the right to self-determination of their patients, and to ensure that patient suffering is minimized.

The proposal: example

- ◆ **What is the health care issue?** The issue is whether or not pharmacists should distribute ella, a new contraceptive that works up to 5 days after unprotected sex. This drug is more effective than Plan B and can be taken later. Although ella is a chemical relative of RU-486, it has little effect on women who are already pregnant. Anti-abortion groups argue that it works by reducing the lining of the uterus and thus aborts the new fetus.
- ◆ **What is your position?** While contraceptive drugs can be viewed from religious, political, and scientific viewpoints, I believe that safety and efficacy of the drug should determine whether or not pharmacists should distribute them. The new contraceptive pill, ella, highlights why efficacy and safety are the most important criteria for distribution.
- ◆ 125 words so far

Outline



- ◆ Title:

Argument structure

Claim: efficacy and safety are the most important criteria for distribution

Stated reason: **because** other bases for deciding — such as religious faith—do not consider the health of the patient as the primary value

Grounds/evidence: anti-abortion groups warn that “men might slip ella to unsuspecting women,” a clear instance of fear-mongering rather than considering patient health

Argument structure

Unstated assumptions

- ◆ Health promotion should trump religious-based ideas in public policy

Evidence supporting unstated assumption:

- ◆ Religious organizations are buying hospitals in major American cities and then refusing to allow abortion procedures in them. Public health policy is circumvented through this tactic.

Part 2: Annotated bibliography

- ◆ Sample: *Brief Penguin Handbook*, pg. 208-210
- ◆ Title
- ◆ Introduction (edited from proposal)
- ◆ Citation/annotation 1
- ◆ Citation/annotation 2
- ◆ Citation/annotation 3
- ◆ Citation/annotation 4
- ◆ **Note:** Audience is non-medical reader

Analytical/critical annotations

An objective evaluation of a work's contents, quality, and limitations. Length is typically between 100-200 words.

- ◆ Gives full bibliographic information for the work.
- ◆ Gives the authority and the point of view of the author.
- ◆ Evaluates the contents, scope, and quality.
- ◆ Points out the merits and deficiencies.

Annotations



- ◆ Summarizes the article (2-3 sentences; 45-60 words)
- ◆ Evaluates (“discuss the value”)

Citations



Use ICMJE style

- ◆ Phillips, C. D., Spry, K. M., Sloane, P. D., & Hawes, C. Use of physical restraints and psychotropic medications in Alzheimer special care units in nursing homes. *American Journal of Public Health* 2000;90: 92-6.

Sample summary

- ◆ The authors question whether or not Alzheimer's patients are less likely to be restrained or medicated as a result of residing in Special Care Units (SCU) in nursing homes. They found, however, that these patients were no less likely to be restrained and, in fact, they were more likely to receive psychotropic medication. (53 words)

Hints for summarizing



- ◆ Previous summary took 5 pages of article and turned it into 2 sentences
- ◆ Look in the article's Introduction for the question they are asking (in this case, paragraph 2)
- ◆ Look in the Results for the findings (in this case, the last paragraph of the Results)

Sample Evaluation

- ◆ This study looked at a large amount of data (1100 residents in 48 SCUs) from a small geographical area—only four U.S. states. The extent to which the findings of this study apply to Alberta are unclear, particularly since these standards vary considerably from state to state. Nevertheless, the authors speculate that SCUs led something of a revolution in Alzheimer's patient care—these units demonstrated that the use of physical restraints could be avoided, and that may account for the similarity in use in both SCUs and regular units. (89 words)

Part 3: The paper



- ◆ About 2 pages long
- ◆ Consider using the introductory paragraph from the annotated bibliography as the intro
- ◆ Use the summaries of research from the annotated bibliography in the body of your paper
- ◆ Include a summary of other, alternate positions on the topic and an explanation of why you did not adopt them

Drafting/Revising

- ◆ Get a “trusted reader” to get feedback
- ◆ Consider using other students in the course, the Centre for Writers, or the WAC TA for this
- ◆ Ask readers to read for specific purposes: thesis, structure, transitions, development of a particular paragraph or idea

Don't hand in a first draft



Towards the due date, switch your focus from

higher-order concerns (arrangement, arguments, evidence) to

lower-order concerns: proofreading, grammar, citation format, grammar/spelling

Good luck



- ◆ Get help from the WAC TA
- ◆ Use print resources like books—copies of the Brief Penguin Handbook are in the Centre for Writers
- ◆ Revise