



RUTGERS

Graduate School of Education

Tips for Academic Writing

Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education

Doctoral-level Writing

Common Aims:

1. Review a body of knowledge
 - Identify relationships across authors/articles/studies
 - How studies contribute to the body of knowledge
 - Analyze, not just summarize
 - Cocktail party metaphor
2. Build an argument
 - Evidence for the argument comes from publications
 - Frame your argument in reference to prior work

Novice writing

- Extensive quotes
- Variation of terms (e.g. collaborative, cooperative, collegial)
- A “laundry list” of authors and studies

Lieberman and Miller (2004) argue that teachers are important leaders in instructional improvement. Smylie, Conley and Marks (2002) found teachers were heavily influential in efforts to reform math instruction. Similarly, Hart (1995) described teachers as natural instructional leaders due to their proximity to students.

* Repetitive and fails to synthesize across articles

Expert writing

- Consistent use of clearly defined terms
- Synthesizes across sources
- Focuses on ideas, not authors

Teachers' connections to the classroom give them a situated perspective on teaching and learning, making them the logical leaders of instruction (Hart, 1995; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Smylie, Conley, & Marks, 2002).

* Focusing on ideas, not authors, allows you to develop your voice as an expert who knows the field of research.

Expert Writing

- Claims are supported by more than one source of evidence
- Explicates connections between studies and their contribution

Research on various aspects of the instructional coach role includes, the attributes of coaches (Blamey, Meyer, & Walpole, 2009), conditions that facilitate coaching (Killion & Harrison, 2006), and the types of activities that coaches most typically perform as reported in survey data (Bean & Carroll, 2006; Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007; Roller, 2006) and in case study research (Bean, Draper, Hall, Vandermolten, & Zigmond, 2010; Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010).

Expert Writing

- Builds an argument

In recent discussions of _____, a controversial issue has been whether _____. On the one hand, some argue that _____. From this perspective, _____. On the other hand, however, others argue that _____. Still, others point out that _____. These competing understandings suggest we need to know more about _____. Without additional information _____ is at stake. The purpose of this study is _____.

(Adapted from Graff & Birkenstein, 2007)

Editing yourself

- Be concise and specific
- Wordiness obscures meaning
- Too many prepositions signals wordy writing

In order to evaluate outcomes from students in grade four, researchers in the field of education need to assess students using data from pre- and post-testing procedures. (27 words)

~~In order to~~ To evaluate grade four student outcomes ~~from students in grade four,~~
education researchers ~~in the field of education~~ need to assess students using pre-
and post-test data ~~from pre- and post-testing procedures.~~

To evaluate grade four students' outcomes, education researchers need to assess students using pre- and post-test data. (17 words)

Good luck!