Skills for Writing Scholarly Reviews: A View from Across the Curriculum

Dr. Emily H. Wughalter, Professor
Department of Kinesiology, College of Applied Sciences and Arts

SJSU SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

Abstract

I am a professor who supports student learning in kinesiology by implementing a variety of teaching approaches, such as active learning and multimedia. I use an assortment of assignments engaging diverse learners. The purpose here is to focus on the evolution of a scholarly writing assignment applied across all of my undergraduate and graduate classes, specifically focusing on a change agent and new strategies. In 2013, my participation in an AANAPISI supported, two-day faculty writing workshop resulted in development of detailed assignments with comprehensive guidelines including explicit grading rubrics. As well scaffolding for all final writing assignments now strengthens the student experience.

Exemplar from Undergraduate Motor Learning

Writing Essay Prompts posted on Canvas

Develop writing prompts for scholarly writing assignment

Articulate content expectations and guidelines including submission due dates, assignment point values, and file name requirements

Incorporate a grading rubric for 10-point assignment

Align assignment goals with course and/or program learning outcomes

Open Canvas dropbox for assignment submission with Turnitin.com

Lab 1 - Identify prompts and keywords

Present PowerPoint highlighting expectations for the specific content and structure required for the essay

Define scholarship and its different forms: theoretical, empirical, and review types (active learning exercise)

Provide examples of how to conduct an electronic scholarly search using the MLK Library (active learning exercise)

Illustrate the narrowing of a topic for conducting research

Lab 2 - Develop a summary of topic

Prepare a strong paragraph identifying the topic defined

Share with partner for peer evaluation and understanding of inclusive excellence

Finalize essay submission

Goals and Method

In the late summer 2013 I attended a 2-day faculty writing workshop sponsored by the AANAPISI grant. My proposal focused on improving student writing of scholarly reviews and thus their skill in demonstrating an understanding of a disciplinary approach in kinesiology.   Immediately following the workshop I implemented specific variations of the lesson plan, *Writing Scholarly Reviews*, into each of the undergraduate and graduate courses I teach. The lesson plan includes a PowerPoint presentation to advantage all students including definitions of different forms of scholarship (theoretical, empirical, and review types), and how to search and uncover appropriate scholarship for a specific disciplinary idea. When faculty include writing in the disciplines, they can help students by setting up early scaffolding assignments for the development of strong final essays. Scaffolding assignments may be short and may yield only low-point values whereas final assignments may yield high-point values. With this scaffolding students start earlier and their weaknesses can be revealed in initial drafts, explicit feedback on their ideas and the content selected can be provided, the format and structure of the presentation can be corrected, and the selection and application of source materials can be checked. Topics included in the PowerPoint presentation are selecting appropriate topics, searching for appropriate articles, weeding and narrowing the focus, and constructing appropriate responses for scholarly reviews in kinesiology. In this AANAPISI writing workshop I developed the necessary tools and the processes necessary to improve the written communication of students, specifically for scholarly writing . The scaffolding to support students' experience of writing also provides the construction of writing as a process rather than just a product. Critical analyses from multiple colleagues and experts during the workshop and from students in subsequent semesters have helped improve the presentation and the writing samples our graduates.