

Syllabus: Professional Writing in Public Health
January, 2012
NahmaSandrow

1. Read Arthur, R. & Diamond, J., (2011, Nov. 18), "Understanding Tribal Fates," Science, 334, p. 911-912 and Rhodes, R., (2008, Jan. 10), "Death or Damnation: An Adolescent's Treatment Refusal," The Hastings Center Bioethics Forum Blog.

Analyze organizational structure, particularly thesis and paragraphing,

Write single-paragraph abstract of first article as basis for class discussion of focus and compression. Assignment: Write single paragraph explaining decision to enter Public Health program.

Choose topics for Paper #1 on some aspect of one of the following: obesity, Plan B contraceptives, or taxing sweet carbonated beverages.

2. Outline ("X-ray") "Understanding Tribal Fates" to see underlying structure. Read Brower, V., (2011, Dec. 8), "Developing Nations Face Challenges as Breast Cancer Rises," Journal of the National Cancer Institute, 103 (24), pp. 1812-4. Outline and analyze its organizational structure and transition techniques for guiding the reader step by step.

Proofreading techniques.

Students present their paper topics for class discussion of focus, possible approaches, and potential difficulties.

3. Read Philipson, T. & Sun, E., (2010, June), "Cost of Caution: The Impact on Patients of Delayed Drug Approvals," Manhattan Institute Project FDA Report (2), pp. 1-18. Analyze organizational structure: thesis, paragraphing, order of paragraphs, introduction, conclusion.

4. General vs specific. How much evidence is necessary, what kind, and how to select it. Analysis of use of specific evidence in the articles we have read together.

Workshop in groups: read and discuss each other's first drafts of Paper #1.

5) Patel, A., Hampton, K. (2011, Aug.), "Encouraging Consumption of Water in School and Child Care Settings: Access, Challenges, and Strategies for Improvement," American Journal of Public Health (101, 8), pp. 1370-9.

Analyze thesis, transitions, paragraphing. Analysis of good model paragraphs taken from student papers.

Students present topics for next paper, on some aspect of tuberculosis, vaccination, obesity, Plan B contraceptive, or taxing sweet carbonated beverages. Class discuss focus, possible approaches, and potential difficulties.

6) Analyze “Water” article, X-ray to see structure.

Paragraph coherence; various ways to organize paragraphs. Hand-out exercises on paragraphing. Analysis of selected paragraphs in “Water” and other articles we have already read.

7) Workshop in groups: read and discuss each other’s first drafts of Paper #2.

Introductions: hand-outs, good models from class papers, models from articles read so far.

Read Dean, C., (2011, Aug.22), “Fishing Gear is Altered to Ease Collateral Costs to Marine Life,” NY Times. Analyze.

9) Read 4 op eds: Garrett, L. (2009, June 11), “When is a Pandemic Not a Pandemic?” NY Times; Kristof, N. (2011, June 12), “When Food Kills,” NY Times; Kristof, N. (2011, June 22), “The Breast Milk Cure,” NY Times; Gunlock, J., (2012, Jan.3), “New Ad Campaign Targets Fat Kids,” Independent Women’s Forum.

Analyze for thesis, organization, use of evidence, and formal vs informal diction and voice,

10) Workshop: All students read their op eds (i.e. Paper #3) aloud for class responses

Writing grant proposals. Hand-outs downloaded from NY State Health Foundation Special Projects and Diabetes and other funding foundations in public health: eligibility, process and following instructions, model successful proposal, including narrative and budget. Hand-out of actual grant proposal.

Notes

A. Every class session includes work on at least one of these and sometimes on as many as three or four, using hand-outs.

- Joining ideas with transition words (therefore, however, then)

- Joining ideas into single sentences with conjunctions (and, but, although, since) and eliminating run-on sentences.
- Relative pronouns
- Eliminating wordiness
- Accurate placement of modifiers.
- Parallel structure.
- Punctuation: commas, quotation marks, apostrophes, semi-colons, dashes.

B. Every paper will be submitted in at least 2 drafts; most students will be required to submit 3 or more drafts of each paper.

C. Individual student conferences, to be scheduled in the hours before and after Class #5.