Thesis Seminar
Academic reading & academic writing

Dr. Theresa Treffers

Technical University of Munich

TUM School of Management

Chair for Strategy and Organization

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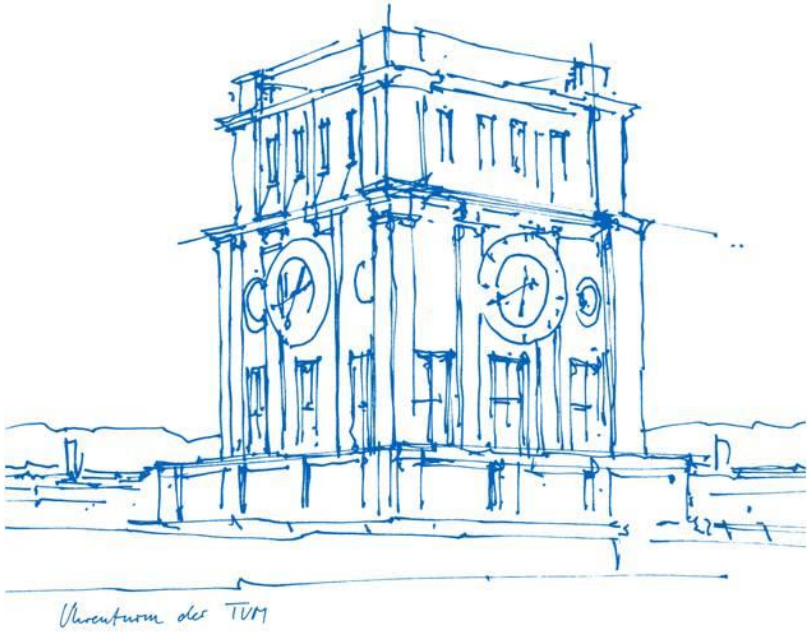
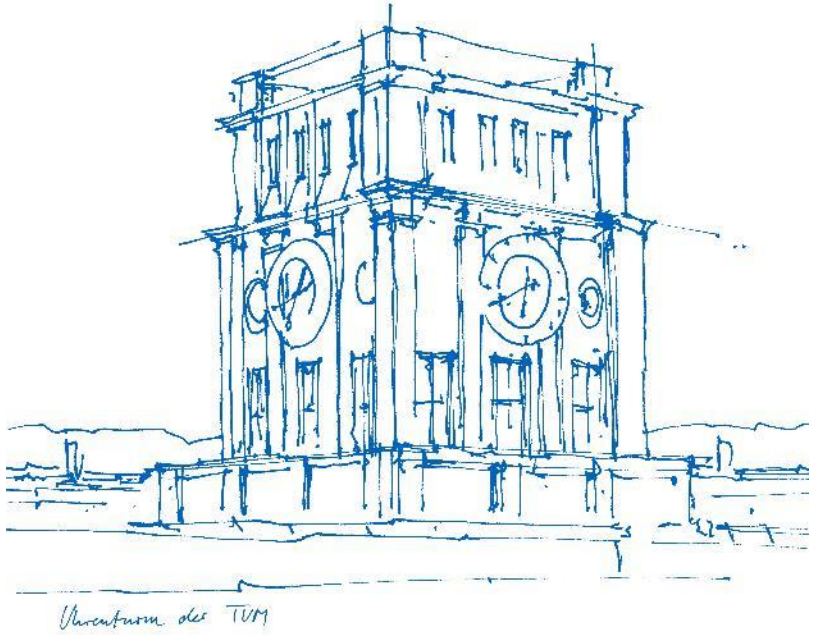


Academic reading



What were/are your challenges with academic reading?

Read with an objective (research topic / research question)!!!

Jordan & Zanna (1999): How to Read a Journal Article in Social Psychology

What is the structure of empirical articles?

What is the structure of empirical articles?

1. **Title**
2. **Authors + Affiliations**
3. **Abstract + Keywords:** The paper in 150-300 words
4. **Introduction:** The paper in about 5 paragraphs
5. **Theory**
6. **Hypothesis development**
7. **Methods**
8. **Results**
9. **Discussion**
10. **Conclusion (optional)**
11. **Acknowledgments**
12. **Appendix**
13. **References**

1

Sample: Paper titles

A 50-Year Review of Psychological Reactance Theory: Do Not Read This Article.

Stress and Birth Weight: Evidence from Terrorist Attacks

PROSPECT THEORY: AN ANALYSIS OF DECISION UNDER RISK

Referendum voting in road **pricing** reform: A **review** of the evidence.

"I THINK I CAN, I THINK I CAN":
OVERCONFIDENCE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOR

Born to be Unemployed:

Unemployment and Wages Over the Business Cycle*

De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum

Sample: Authors and affiliations

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James J. Lee[1,58], Robbee Wedow[2,3,4,58], Aysu Okbay[5,6,58*], Edward Kong[7], Omeed Maghzian[7], Meghan Zacher[8], Tuan Anh Nguyen-Viet[9], Peter Bowers[7], Julia Sidorenko[10,11], Richard Karlsson Linnér[5,6,12], Mark Alan Fontana[9,13], Tushar Kundu[9], Chanwook Lee[7], Hui Li[7], Ruoxi Li[9], Rebecca Royer[9], Pascal N. Timshel[14,15], Raymond K. Walters[16,17], Emily A. Willoughby[1], Loïc Yengo[10], 23andMe Research Team[18], COGENT (Cognitive Genomics Consortium)[19], Social Science Genetic Association Consortium[18], Maris Alver[11], Yanchun Bao[20], David W. Clark[21], Felix R. Day[22], Nicholas A. Furlotte[23], Peter K. Joshi[21,24], Kathryn E. Kemper[10], Aaron Kleinman[23], Claudia Langenberg[22], Reedik Mägi[11], Joey W. Trampush[25,26], Shefali Setia Verma[27], Yang Wu[10], Max Lam[28,29], Jing Hua Zhao[22], Zhili Zheng[10,30], Jason D. Boardman[2,3,4], Harry Campbell[21], Jeremy Freese[31], Kathleen Mullan Harris[32,33], Caroline Hayward[34], Pamela Herd[20,35], Meena Kumari[20], Todd Lencz[36,37,38], Jian'an Luan[22], Anil K. Malhotra[36,37,38], Andres Metspalu[11,39], Lili Milani[11], Ken K. Ong[22], John R. B. Perry[22], David J. Porteous[40], Marylyn D. Ritchie[27], Melissa C. Smart[21], Blair H. Smith[41,42], Joyce Y. Tung[23], Nicholas J. Wareham[22], James F. Wilson[21,34], Jonathan P. Beauchamp[43], Dalton C. Conley[44], Tõnu Esko[11], Steven F. Lehrer[45,46,47], Patrik K. E. Magnusson[48], Sven Oskarsson[49], Tune H. Pers[14,15], Matthew R. Robinson[10,50], Kevin Thom[51], Chelsea Watson[9], Christopher F. Chabris[52], Michelle N. Meyer[53], David I. Laibson[7], Jian Yang[10,54], Magnus Johannesson[55], Philipp D. Koellinger[5,6,12], Patrick Turley[16,17,59], Peter M. Visscher[10,54,59*], Daniel J. Benjamin[9,47,56,59*] and David Cesarini[47,51,57,59]

Sample: Title Page / Abstract + Keywords

Transformational leadership in context: Face-to-face and virtual teams

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Virtual teams
e-leadership
Computer-mediated communication
Transformational leadership
Leadership

ABSTRACT

This experimental study examined transformational leadership in the context of traditional teams using face-to-face communication and virtual teams using computer-mediated communication. Thirty-nine leaders led both face-to-face and virtual teams. Repeated-measures analyses revealed similar mean levels of transformational leadership in both team types; however, leader rank order varied across team type. Post hoc analyses revealed that the most effective leaders where those who increased their transformational leadership in virtual teams. Furthermore, analyses at the team level revealed that the effect of transformational leadership on team performance was stronger in virtual than in face-to-face teams. Team-member ratings of transformational leadership were equally linked to project satisfaction in face-to-face and virtual teams. Considered as a whole, our results suggest that transformational leadership has a stronger effect in teams that use only computer-mediated communication, and that leaders who increase their transformational leadership behaviors in such teams achieve higher levels of team performance.

Is it worth to continue reading the report?

Classifications

JEL classification

D03; D81

PsycINFO Classification

2360

Introduction

Structure:

1. Motivation for the topic
2. Summary of the state of research
3. Research gaps + relevance
4. Introduction of the present study (research question, method, key findings)
5. Theoretical contributions

Questions to ask:

- What problem was studied? Why was this problem studied?
- How does this study go beyond past investigations of the problem?
- What questions are be expected to be answered?

Source: Jordan & Zanna (1999): How to Read a Journal Article in Social Psychology

5 6

Theory and hypothesis development

5 **Theory:** theoretical background(s) of the study

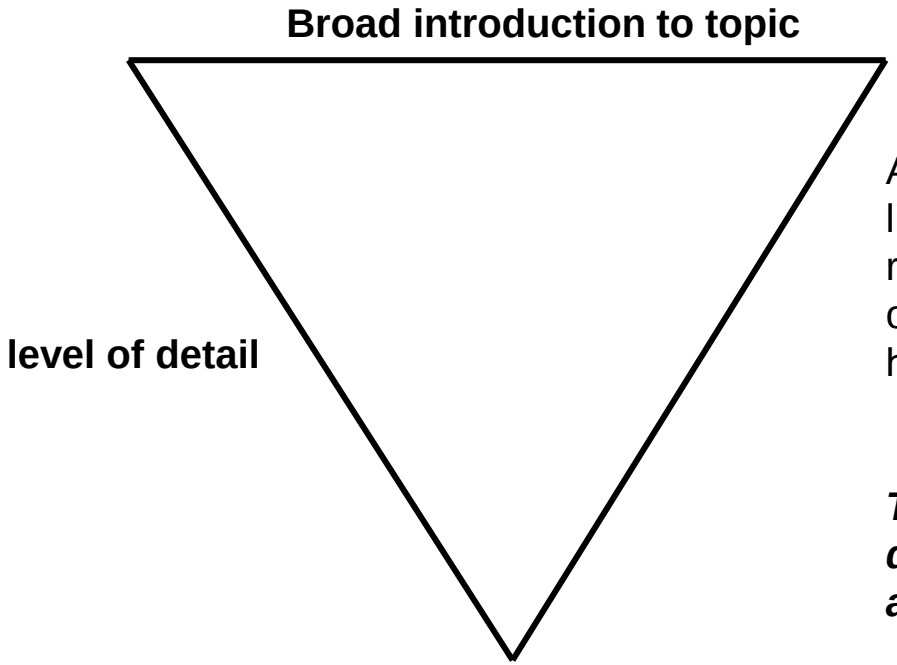
- **Questions to ask:**
  - Does the theory explain the phenomena?

6 **Hypothesis development:** Derive testable assumptions from theory

- **Questions to ask:**
  - Which relationships does the theory predict?
  - Are the assumptions for the present study grounded in the theory and/or well argued for?

Source: Jordan & Zanna (1999): How to Read a Journal Article in Social Psychology

Structure of introduction, theory, and hypothesis section
!!! Use the inverted pyramid !!!



At the end of your literature review the reader must have only one thought in their heads…….

That this research question must be answered!

http://www.deakin.edu.au/library/findout/research/litrev.php

Method

Methods: Participants, procedure, research design, measures

- **Questions to ask:**
  - Bias in sampling, bias in the procedure?
  - Method suited to test hypothesis?
  - How were the hypotheses translated into testable questions?
  - How were the variables of interest manipulated and/or measured?
  - Did the measures used adequately reflect the variables of interest?

Source: Jordan & Zanna (1999): How to Read a Journal Article in Social Psychology

Results

Results: Descriptive statistics and correlations, hypotheses testing (inferential statistics)

- **Questions to ask:**
  - Are results described comprehensibly and in detail (e.g., including effect sizes, confidence intervals etc.)?
  - Is evidence provided that any independent variable manipulations were effective?
  - Is there a test of the assumptions of the statistical methods used?
  - Are there alternative explanations (e.g., patterns in data) for the results that are not mentioned by the authors?
  - Are there problems with the data that are not mentioned by the authors?
  - Do you understand the figures and tables? What units are used? Do the results make sense?
  - What are the main results (analyses, tables and graphs)?
  - Were the researchers' hypotheses supported by the observations made?

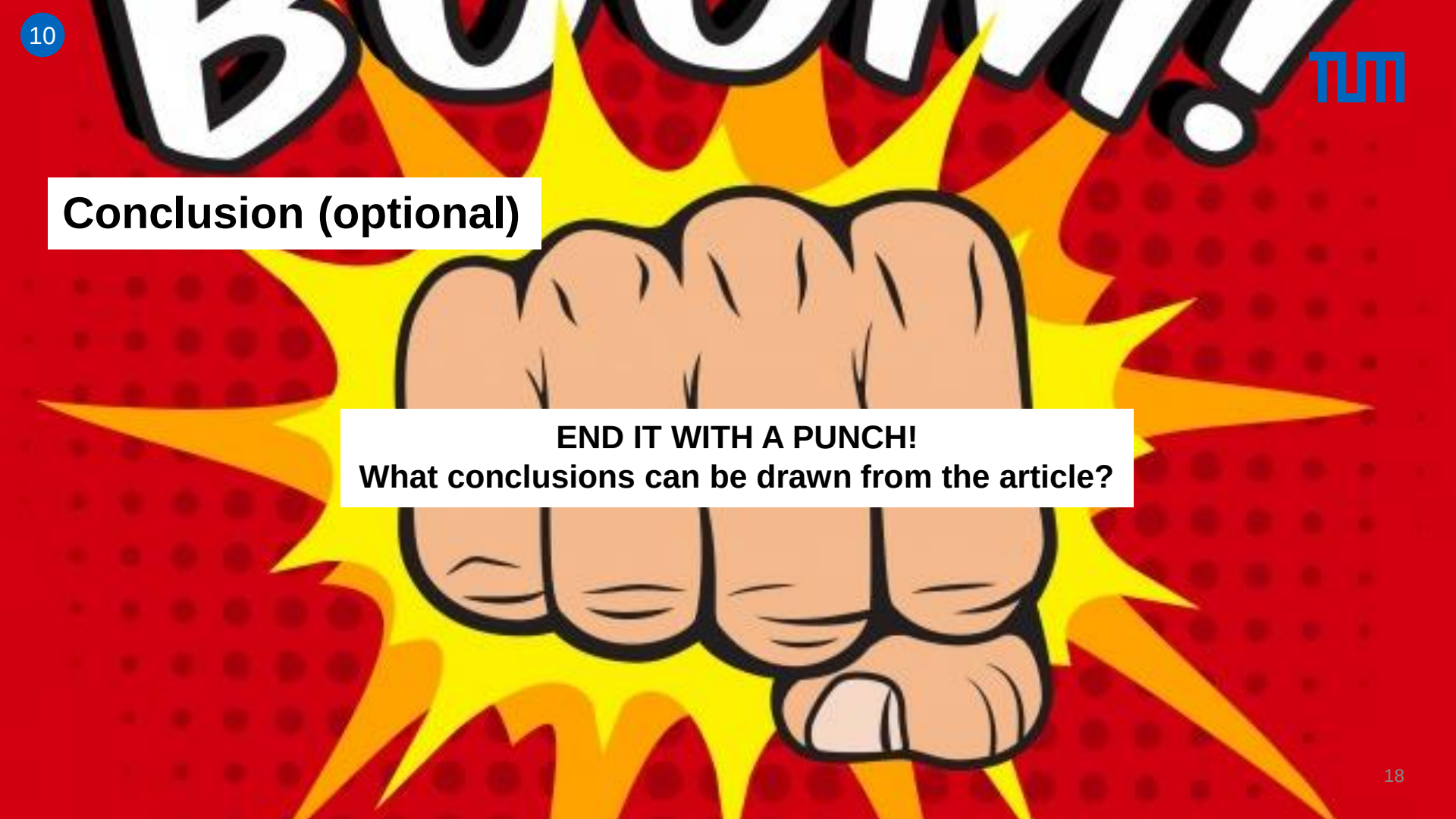
Source: Jordan & Zanna (1999): How to Read a Journal Article in Social Psychology

Discussion

Discussion: Summary of results, theoretical implications, limitations and future research, practical implications

- **Questions to ask:**
  - What new information does the study provide about the problem under investigation? Does the study help resolve the problem?
  - Are your own conclusions consistent with those of the authors?
  - Are the conclusions drawn justified or are they too general or narrow?
  - Are there other influences not mentioned by the authors that could have impacted the results?
  - Was the research goal mentioned in the introduction accomplished successfully?
  - Did the results contradict past research findings? If so, how do the researchers explain this discrepancy?
  - Which further research questions arise from this study?
  - What are the practical and theoretical implications of the study's findings?

Conclusion (optional)



END IT WITH A PUNCH!
What conclusions can be drawn from the article?

Sample: Acknowledgments

Acknowledgments

This paper benefited from the help of a number of people. Thanks to Sally Floyd, Dan Glover, Chris Hayes, Matt Mathis, Jeff Semke and Tim Shepard for discussions about the mechanisms investigated in this paper. Jim Griner provided help with the script used to analyze the simulation data. Will Ivancic, Paul Mallasch, Jeff Semke and the anonymous reviewers (both CCR and SIGCOMM 98) provided valuable feedback on the paper. My thanks to all.

Acknowledgment

We thank Larry J. Williams, Robert J. Vandenberg, George Banks, and two *Organizational Research Methods* reviewers for comments on previous drafts. A previous version of our manuscript was presented as part of the CARMA Advanced Reviewer Development series on September 21, 2018.

Acknowledgments

This work has been financially supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (grant PI 97/15-1). The research of Baillon was made possible by a Veni grant from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO 451-10-011).

12

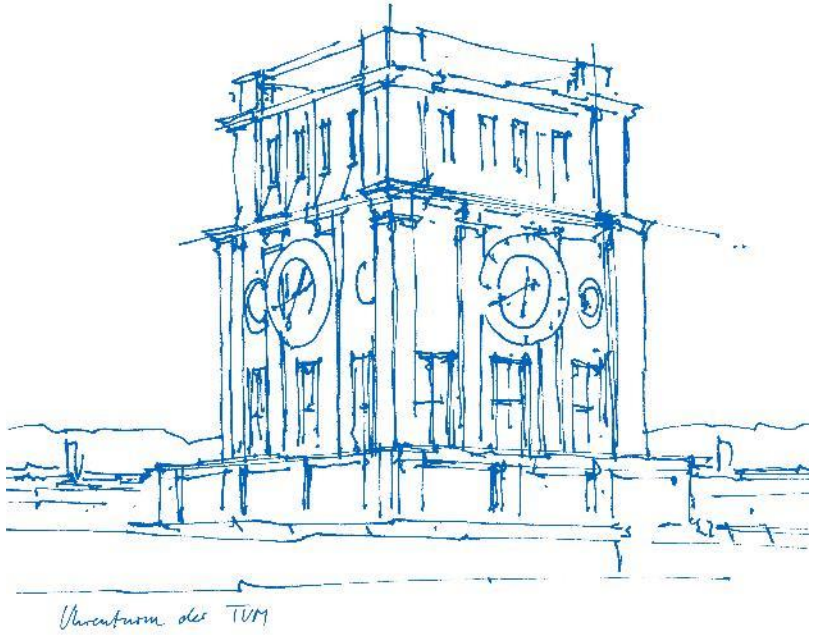
Appendix

Move everything to the Appendix, that is supplemental material and is not necessary to follow and understand the story to the paper.

Don’t forget the reference list (backwards search)

- **Questions to ask:**
  - Which ones do you already know?
  - Are there articles that could be helpful to answer your questions?

Academic writing



What were/are your challenges with academic writing?

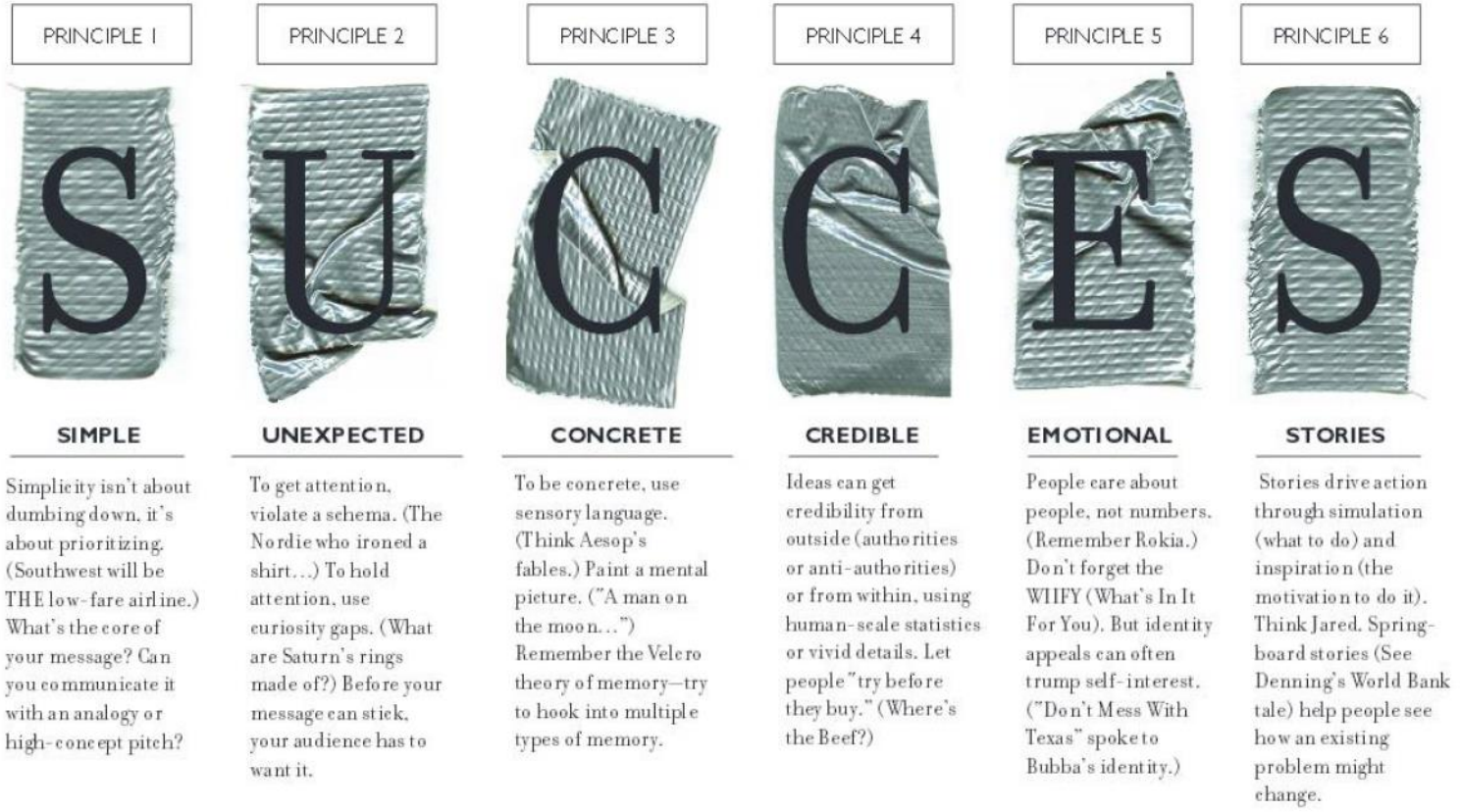
What is different about academic writing?

Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die

MADE to STICK

Chip Heath & Dan Heath

The importance of storytelling



Being Scheherazade…

Or the two things you need to...

… not get killed by your audience.

Storytelling

Writing Process

Pollock, Timothy G., and Joyce E. Bono. "Being Scheherazade: The importance of storytelling in academic writing." (2013): 629-634.
Image: Public Domain License

Storytelling

Motion & Pacing

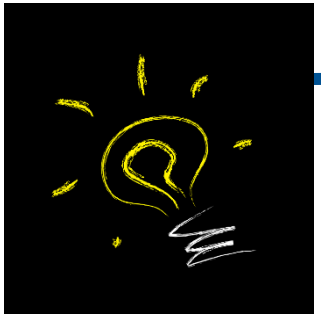
Facts & Commentary.

Right balance!

Audience

Human Face

- Anectodes
- Examples



Engaging and informative Title

Interesting Things: Information on Storytelling

Pollock, Timothy G., and Joyce E. Bono. "Being Scheherazade: The importance of storytelling in academic writing." (2013): 629-634.

Writing Process

1 Write a first draft!

Small Assignments vs Entire Chapter

Regular writing vs Binge writing

Write vs Critique

Shitty first drafts. All good writers write them. This is how they end up with good second drafts and terrific third drafts.
Lamott 1994: 21

2 Get Feedback!

Your Feedbackteam:

- **1 Motivator**
- **1 Experience in Publishing high**
- **1 Experience in your topic**

Pollock, Timothy G., and Joyce E. Bono. "Being Scheherazade: The importance of storytelling in academic writing." (2013): 629-634.
Lamott, A. 1994. Bird by bird: Some instructions on writing and life. New York: Anchor.

TABLE 1
Recommended Books on Writing

Book	What It's About
Clark, R. P. 2006. *Writing tools: 50 essential strategies for every writer*. New York: Little, Brown.	Covers all the elements of writing from grammar to flow to productivity. Organized around 50 "tools" with a "workshop" for practice at the end of each tool.
Flaherty, F. 2009. *The elements of story*. New York: HarperCollins.	Covers all the elements of writing effective nonfiction, including topics not often covered elsewhere. Written from a journalist's perspective.
Hale, C. 1999. *Sin and syntax: How to craft wickedly effective prose*. New York: Three Rivers.	A book on grammar that is funny and focuses on effective writing more than following the "rules of the road."
Huff, A. S. 1999. *Writing for scholarly publication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.	Excellent coverage of developing and crafting academic articles in the social sciences.
King, Stephen. 1999. *On writing: A memoir of the craft*. New York: Pocket Books.	Memoir on the life events that shaped him as a writer, discussion of key elements of the craft, and recommendations on how to launch a writing career. Very funny and informative.
Lamott, A. 1994. *Bird by bird: Some instructions on writing and life*. New York: Anchor.	Memoir and reflection on writing and the writing process. Funny and very accessible.
Silva, P. 2007. *How to write a lot*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.	This is a no-nonsense book on how to be a more productive academic writer. It challenges the validity of our most common excuses for not being more productive.
Strunk, W., & White, E. B. 2000. *The elements of style* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.	Classic treatise on grammar usage and how to construct more effective prose. Should be on every writer's bookshelf as a reference.
Sword, H. 2012. *Stylish academic writing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.	Systematic look at the practices employed by good academic writers across a variety of disciplines. Her goal is to make academic writing more interesting and accessible.
Truss, L. 2003. *Eats, shoots & leaves*. London: Profile Books.	This is a grammar book that made the *New York Times* bestseller list. Need we say more?
Williams, J. M., & Colomb, G. G. 2010. *Style: Lessons in clarity and grace* (10th ed.). New York: Pearson Education.	A classic used in many writing courses, with helpful exercises to improve your writing.
Zinsser, W. 2006. *On writing well: The classic guide to writing nonfiction*. New York: HarperCollins.	Discusses the key elements of effective writing and how to write different types of nonfiction. The first five chapters read like a novel while giving you technical advice.

Learn from the Best & Read their books.

Pollock, Timothy G., and Joyce E. Bono. "Being Scheherazade: The importance of storytelling in academic writing." (2013): 629-634.

Effective communication of findings is an essential part of a paper's success

Source: Reinartz, W. J. (2016). Crafting a JMR Manuscript. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *53*(1), 139–141. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.15.0343

Choose a strong title for your paper

A 50-Year Review of Psychological Reactance Theory: Do Not Read This Article.

Stress and Birth Weight: Evidence from Terrorist Attacks

PROSPECT THEORY: AN ANALYSIS OF DECISION UNDER RISK

Referendum voting in road **pricing** reform: A **review** of the evidence.

“I THINK I CAN, I THINK I CAN”:
OVERCONFIDENCE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOR

Born to be Unemployed:

Unemployment and Wages Over the Business Cycle*

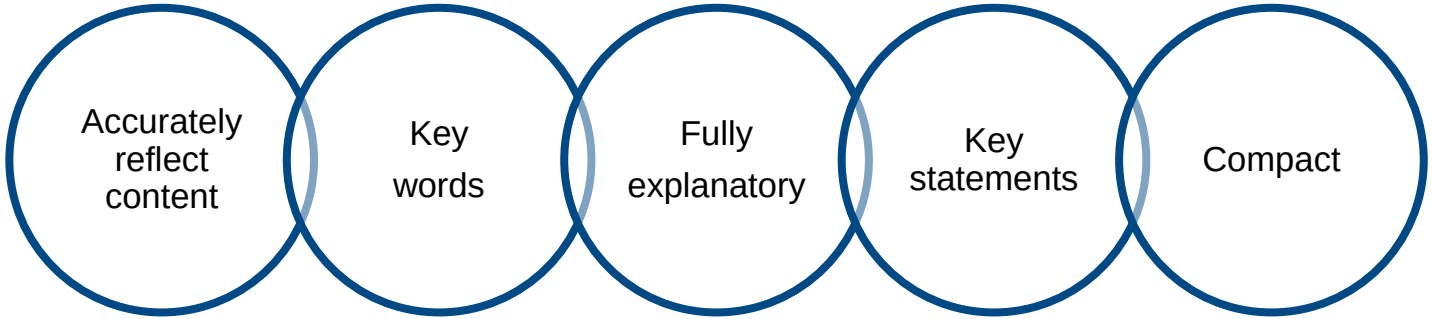
De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum

Write a strong abstract, but don’t oversell!

Writing it

The Shape of an Article – **The Title and Abstract**

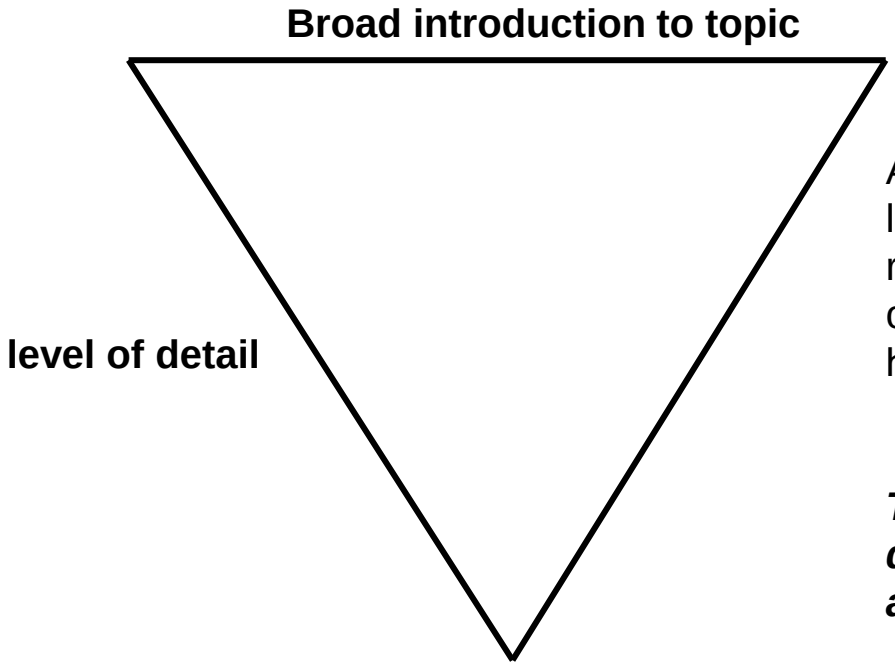
Quick overview of study & decision to read



- **Title:** 10-12 words
- **Abstract:** 120 words
- Compose the title and abstract after you have completed the article

Source: Bem, 2002

Structure of introduction, theory, and hypothesis section
!!! Use the inverted pyramid !!!



At the end of your literature review the reader must have only one thought in their heads…….

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http://www.deakin.edu.au/library/findout/research/litrev.php

The Shape of an Article

Hourglass:

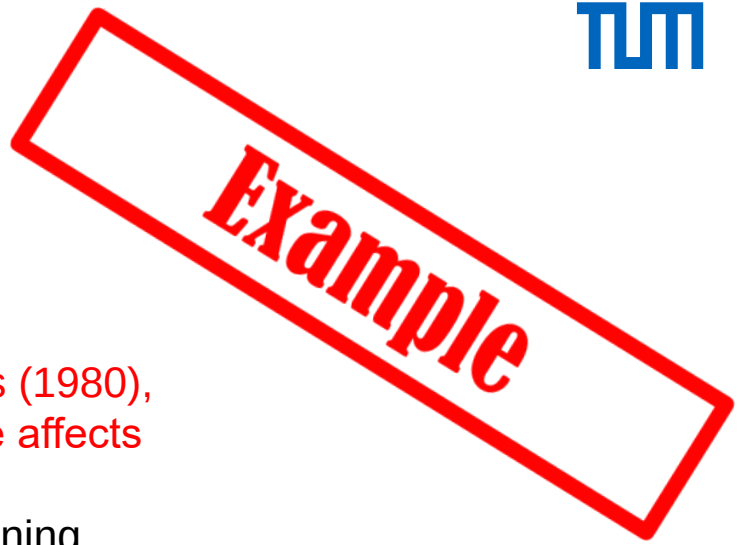
- broad general statements
- progressively narrow down to the specifics of your study
- broaden out again to more general considerations

Source: Bem, 2002; https://www.etsy.com/de/listing/603399583/sanduhr-symbol-svg-sand-uhr-sanduhr-zeit

The introduction begins broadly:	"Individuals differ radically from one another in the degree to which they are willing and able to express their emotions."
It becomes more specific:	"Indeed, the popular view is that such emotional expressiveness is a central difference between men and women.... But the research evidence is mixed..."
And more so:	"There is even some evidence that men may actually..."
Until you are ready to introduce your own study in conceptual terms:	"In this study, we recorded the emotional reactions of both men and women to filmed..."
The method and results sections are the most specific, the "neck" of the hourglass:	(Method) "One hundred male and 100 female undergraduates were shown one of two movies..." (Results) "Table 1 shows that men in the father-watching condition cried significantly more..."
The discussion section begins with the implications of your study:	"These results imply that sex differences in emotional expressiveness are moderated by two kinds of variables..."
It becomes broader:	"Not since Charles Darwin's first observations has psychology contributed as much new..."
And more so:	"If emotions can incarcerate us by hiding our complexity, at least their expression can liberate us by displaying our authenticity."

Source: Bem, 2002

Opening Statement



Wrong:
Several years ago, Ekman (1972), Izard (1977), Tomkins (1980), and Zajonc (1980) pointed to psychology's neglect of the affects and their expression.
[Okay for somewhere in the introduction, but not the opening statement.]

Right:
Individuals differ radically from one another in the degree to which they are willing and able to express their emotions.

Source: Bem, 2002; https://ucsd.libguides.com/CAT124/samples

Opening Statement

- **Introduce the background & nature of the problem**
- **Four rules of thumb:**
  1. Write in English prose, not psychological jargon.
  2. Don’t plunge unprepared readers into the middle of your problem or theory. Take the time and space necessary to lead them up to the formal or theoretical statement of the problem step by step.
  3. Use examples to illustrate theoretical points or to introduce unfamiliar conceptual or technical terms. The more abstract the more important!
  4. Whenever possible, try to open with a statement about people (or animals), not psychologists or their research (This rule is almost always violated.)

Source: Bem, 2002

Literature Review

What previous research has been done on the problem?
What are the pertinent theories of the phenomenon?

- Discuss the literature but do **not include an exhaustive historical review**
- Avoid **nonessential** details
- One technique for describing even an entire study succinctly without sacrificing clarity is to describe **one variation of the procedure in chronological sequence**, letting it convey the overview of the study at the same time

Source: Bem, 2002

Citations

1. “MAO activity in some individuals with schizophrenia is actually higher than normal (Tse & Tung, 1949).”
2. “Tse and Tung (1949) report that MAO activity in some individuals with schizophrenia is actually higher than normal.”

- In general, you should use **form 1**, consigning your colleagues to parentheses

“ .... ”

Don’t just intermix the two formats randomly, paying no attention to the narrative structure (where is the focus?)!

- End the introduction with a brief overview of your own study

Source: Bem, 2002

Stylistic Suggestions for the Method section

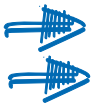
1. Lead the reader through the sequence as if he or she were a participant
2. Give your readers a feel for what it was like to be a participant
3. Label groups or treatments in operational rather than theoretical terms
   - Teacher/ student sample instead of treatment 1 and 2
4. Discuss participant dropout problems and other difficulties only if they might affect the validity or the interpretation of your results
5. Discuss any ethical issues they might raise
   - Anonymity? Respect? Dignity?
6. End the method section with a brief summary of the procedure and its overall purpose

Source: Bem, 2002

Setting the Stage for the results section

1. Present evidence that your study successfully set up the conditions for testing your hypotheses or answering your questions
   - **Reliabilities** of testing instruments, judges, and observers; return rates on mail surveys; and participant dropout problems

2. Method of data analysis
   - Describe **overall procedures** you used to convert your raw observations into analyzable data



Standard statistical analysis: **brief** description

Unconventional statistical analysis: **full explanation** or reference

Source: Bem, 2002

Presenting the Findings – Chronology

“Forest first and then the trees”

1. Reminder of the conceptual hypothesis or the question you are asking
2. Reminder of the operations performed and behaviors measured
3. Tell the answer immediately and in English
4. Speak in numbers
5. Elaborate or qualify the overall conclusion if necessary
6. End each section of the results with a summary of where things stand
7. Lead into the next section of the results with a smooth transition sentence

Source: Bem, 2002

Figures and Tables - Statistics

Figures and Tables

“Grasp your major findings either by reading the text or by looking at the figures and tables”

- Clearly and completely titled and labeled figures and tables

Statistics

“Statistical designs are all right in their place, but you—and your prose—are master; they are slave“

- Results section should give a feel for the behavior observed
- Do not prove something, but add richness to your findings, to share with readers the feel of the behavior

Source: Bem, 2002

Discussion Section - Bottom of the hourglass-shaped format

From specific matters about your study → more general concerns → broadest generalizations

What have you learned?
What inferences can be drawn from the findings?
What are the theoretical, practical, or even the political implications of the results?
What are your shortcoming?

“End with a bang, not a whimper!“

Source: Bem, 2002

“Genius might be the ability to say a profound thing in a simple way”

- Charles Bukowski -

Some Matters of Style

Omit needless words & metacomments on the writing

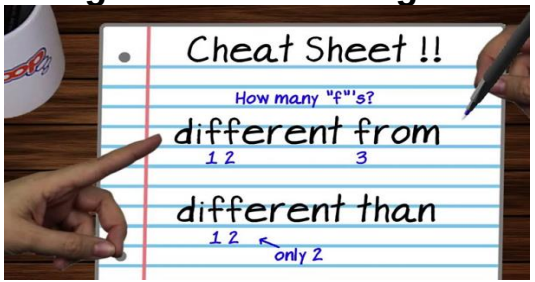
Voice and self-reference

Use repetition and parallel construction

Avoid language bias

Jargon – Specialized vocabulary of a discipline

Avoid common errors of grammar and usage



Source: Bem, 2002; https://www.invo.org.uk/makeitclear/; https://theenrichery.com/2017/08/16/active-voice-college-essay/; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apJ16wFixuQ; https://medium.com/block-science/jargon-party-e3616cd16a9; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmU9xe9GV6I

The best academic writing needs to follow this kind of structure for a paragraph

One idea per paragraph, one paragraph for an idea.

i. **The first sentence is your topic sentence –**
it should introduce the reader to the "point" of the paragraph. It's basically one logical step of your argument.

ii. **The next few sentences should be your body sentences –**
this is where you really flesh out your argument, set out your thinking, and elaborate and explain theoretical points.

iii. **Next come the token sentences –**
here you give examples, quote other authors, provide supporting evidence.

iv. **The last is the wrap sentence,**
where you wrap up your argument and start pointing towards the next paragraph.

"The paragraph is essentially a unit of thought, not of length; it must be homogeneous in subject matter and sequential in treatment." (Fowler)

Writing clear sentences

- **Write direct and short sentences**

  The average length of sentences in scientific writing is only about 12-17 words.
- **Include only one piece of information per sentence**

  Sentences should be constructed in short, factual bursts. Long and complicated sentences tend to confuse readers.
- **Avoid making multiple statements in one sentence**

  Convey only a single idea per sentence. Link sentences together within a paragraph to provide a clear story-line.
- **Keep related words together**

  Closely place the subject and verb to allow the reader to understand what the subject is doing.

Some more advice

- **Keep the idea simple** and focus: „One story, one paper“
- Arrange content **from broad to specific** (hourglass model)
- **Clarity is key.** Remove redundant words and phrases
- Define your paper in terms of a **series of short sentences or propositions**
- **Avoid acronyms**
- Be **consistent** in your **terminology**
- Make up as **few new labels** as possible
- **Tight is right**, long is wrong
- Use a **role model paper**
- …

Be concise!

due to the fact that → because / since / as
immediately apparent → apparent
in the case that → in case
and also → and
in order to determine → to determine
to try and determine → to determine
a large number of → many
in the event that → if
nearly unique → rare

Instead of	Consider
a large majority of	most
has the capacity to	can
whether or not	whether
are in agreement	agree
prior to	before
subsequent to	after
at this point in time	now
due to the fact that	because
in the event that	if
a new initiative	an initiative
nearly unique	unique/rare
plays a key role in	is essential to
both cultures were equally affected	the cultures wer

Writing strategy

- Start **early**
- **PLAN:** Make an overall plan. The power of to do plans.
- Consider how much **time you really need** on xyz.
- **Define small parts** and get them done
- **Think of each section as an essay in itself** – it should have a clear introduction and conclusion. It should be interesting.
- …

Planning it

Which Article Should You Write?

(1) The article you planned to write when you designed your study or
(2) The article that makes the most sense now that you have seen the results

Source: Bem, 2002

Planning it

Which Article Should You Write?

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1. Analyzing Data

- Examine data from every angle
- Analyze the sexes separately
- Make up new composite indices
- Explore the data

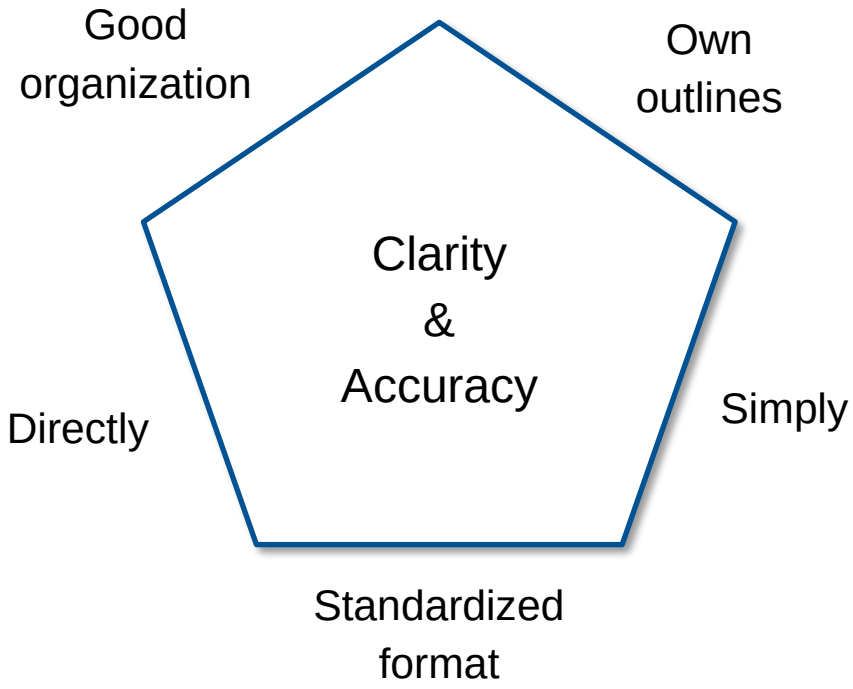
2. Reporting the Findings

- Don’t supress negative results → report disconfirming results
- Think of your data as a jewel → cut and polish it, to select the facets to highlight, and to craft the best setting for it

Source: Bem, 2002

Planning it

How should you write it?



Source: Bem, 2002

How to write a paper

- Don Geman's advice: A paper has four parts
  1. Title
  2. Abstract
  3. Introduction
  4. Rest of the paper

Spend equal time on all four of these!

https://www.cc.gatech.edu/~parikh/citizenofcvpr/static/slides/malik_write_good_paper.pdf

Good writing is good teaching!

Source: Bem, 2002