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# MUSIC EDUCATOR WRITERS WORKSHOP

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John W. Scheib, PhD  
Ball State University  
jwscheib@bsu.edu

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## Before You Start Writing

- ✓ What is your purpose?
- ✓ Do your homework.
- ✓ Decide on the format you want to use.
- ✓ Have some idea about length.
- ✓ Set aside the time needed for the job.
- ✓ Have the proper reference tools at hand.

## Dealing With Writers Block

- Recognize that writing is not easy for most people.
- Indulge writing habits that are productive.
- Never be without a pencil and notebook (or other capture tool).
- Free-write.
- Turn off your inner critic.

## Quick Tips for a Successful Article

- Review the literature
- Target a specific journal
- Guidelines for contributors
- Hourglass
- Intro and conclusion paragraphs last
- Economical writing
- Thematic flow
- Cite to strengthen your argument

## Getting Started & Keeping Going

- ✓ Set realistic goals within a reasonable timetable.
- ✓ Find out what manual of style is required/suggested.
- ✓ Plan on paper, not in your head.
- ✓ Start small.
- ✓ Expect to write many drafts.
- ✓ Establish who your audience is, and keep that audience in mind.
- ✓ Use headings and subheadings.
- ✓ Get to the point quickly.
- ✓ Revise your sentences so they are as clear, precise, direct, and concise as possible.

## Writing the Clear Paragraph

from Stein, M.L. (1984). *How to Write Plain English*. Monarch Press.

1. The opening sentence – introduction to the paragraph (topic and/or transition)
2. Transition – bridges to carry the reader from one idea to another
3. Organization – one central theme per paragraph
4. Length – conciseness is key
5. Meaning – informative, factual, and amply illustrated

## Topics and Ideas

<http://www.menc.org/resources/view/a-research-agenda-for-music-education-thinking-ahead>

### Music Teaching and Learning

- ❖ Curriculum
- ❖ Learning and Development
- ❖ Assessment
- ❖ Teaching and Teacher Education

### New, Diverse, & Underserved Populations

- ❖ Diversity and Inclusion
- ❖ School and Community

### Supporting and Surrounding Issues

- ❖ History
- ❖ Research and Dissemination
- ❖ Advocacy

## Literature Review

To critically analyze a segment of a published body of knowledge through summary, classification, and comparison of prior research studies, reviews of literature, and theoretical articles.

### 1. Introduction

- a. Define or identify
- b. Point out overall trends
- c. Establish the point of view
- d. Explain the sequence & scope

### 2. Body

- a. Group
- b. Summarize
- c. Umbrella, signposts, and “so what” sentences.

### 3. Conclusion

- a. Summarize
- b. Evaluate
- c. Conclude

## -Reviewing and Proofing-

following adapted from Stein, M.L. (1984). *How to Write Plain English*. Monarch Press.

### Initial Drafts

- Does the composition follow a logical pattern? Is there a well-defined beginning, middle and end?
- Is the main idea clearly expressed?
- Does the composition build as it goes along? Does each paragraph carry on the idea of the one above it?
- Are claims and assertions supported by solid documentation?
- Are there inconsistencies? Do you say one thing on page 2 and contradict it on page 10?
- Are there loose ends? Is everything explained that should be explained?
- Are the spelling, grammar and punctuation correct?
- Is there “extra baggage” in the form of unnecessary words, sentences and paragraphs?
- What about vocabulary? Have you repeated the same word over and over? Can some \$10 words be changed to 50-cent ones?
- Is there an adequate bibliography and are the bibliographic references in the right place?

### Final Proof

- Rearrange the sequence if the organization is faulty.
- Straighten out awkward sentences.
- Substitute bright, scintillating phrases for flat ones.
- Check words for ease of understanding. Change obscure ones to plain ones, general ones to specific ones.
- Go over the punctuation, making sure the commas, periods, quotation marks, possessives, etc., are in the right place.
- Examine the paper for omitted words, paragraphs or references. It’s fairly common to accidentally skip a sentence or paragraph while writing.
- Tighten loose sentences and paragraphs. Sometimes it takes three or four drafts to accomplish this.
- Double check to be certain that sources are identified and statements authenticated.

### Resources

- ❖ Fitzpatrick, J., Secrist, J., & Wright, D.J. (1998). *Secrets for a Successful Dissertation*. Sage.
- ❖ Stein, M.L. (1984). *How to Write Plain English*. Monarch Press.
- ❖ Williams, J.M. (2003). *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*. Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

### Style Guides

- ❖ *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.
- ❖ *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*. 3rd ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2008.
- ❖ Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- ❖ *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 15th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.