**Student Mentor Groups: October 20, 2016**

**Topic: Writing Chapters, Research Papers, Plagiarism**

**Check In:**

* Are there any questions or concerns?
* Is everyone ready for the core course exam?
* Any issues from the hurricane? The university has resources for students who were affected.
* Start thinking about set-up of second rotations. If you are thinking of/ know that you will be fast-tracking, talk to your mentor. You will both need to meet with Dr. Rowe and fill out forms.

Preparing to Write

* Find a good citation manager.
  + Zotero (free) 🡪 <https://www.zotero.org/>
  + EndNote Web is free through UF 🡪 <https://software.ufl.edu/student-agreements/>
  + Mendeley (Free) 🡪 <https://mendeley.com/>
  + Make sure that you can link the citation manager to Microsoft Word. This allows you to click the “Add-ins” button on word and add citations as you write and it automatically formats them for the journal style you want.
* Read.
  + Become familiar with the writing style, common scientific terms, formatting of the background and methods.
  + Read papers published by your lab and especially those heavily cited by those labs
  + Look through the references and find classic papers that are used as the foundation for the introduction. (store these in your citation manager!)
  + Reading is also one of the best warm-ups to get your mind prepared to write
  + Annotate and summarize the papers! This is extremely helpful when you go back to look at a paper. Most citation managers have an annotation feature. Writing at least 4-5 sentences (in your own words) summarizing the key points in the paper will not only help tremendously when you revisit the paper but is also a great reading comprehension and writing exercise
* Get a clear idea of the both the PURPOSE and target AUDIENCE for the body of writing.
  + Make a brief outline. What is the overall question being answered? What are the overall conclusions? What points need to be made to provide evidence for that conclusion? Do these points have a logical progression?
  + If you start writing without a clear topics/goals/points to make then you are likely to waste time writing off topic. (Personally, I would return to the “Read” step if I couldn’t articulate a clear outline)
  + For Manuscripts: Sometimes this happens later in the process, but it may be useful to know the journal format before beginning to write. This way, format can be followed while writing.
  + Know your length requirements
  + Read the “Instructions for Authors” on the journal website.

Writing

* Getting Started: Open a Word document and start writing something down!
  + The hardest part is getting started
  + Don’t get hung up on how things sound at first. Run-on sentences, beginning every sentence with “Therefore”, and changing tenses 12 times in the same paragraph are all things that can be fixed. However, your paper will not write itself. Getting words on the page is key
* Complete the easiest section first.
  + This section is different for each person, but generally, it is the “methods” section for most scientific writers. This section details exactly how each experiment was done (which is what you are doing in the lab).
  + The introduction section is also a good place to start because a thorough literature search would help with generating this section. However, make sure that you don’t provide too much extraneous information in this section, as this can confuse the reader and detract from the main points. It is easy to over-do intros so make sure each piece of background has purpose.
  + Stay focused, set goals with breaks. I’d advise against too much jumping around. Completing a section (even just a rough draft) is rewarding and when you flit from one thing to another in your writing you are more likely to forget things, make mistakes or end up with 6 incomplete sections that may not even be ready for a proper read through and edit.
* General Tips:
  + Decide on the author order early in the writing process.
  + Completely proofread your paper for grammar/spelling errors before submitting. These types of mistakes can annoy your reviewers and put them in a bad mood while deciding the fate of your paper.
  + Think of a couple of backup journals if submission to the first one to work out.
  + Listen to your mentor’s advice about sections to change/keep/delete. ☺
  + Stay positive and don’t give up on the writing process!

Plagiarism

* It is possible to plagiarize yourself; always reference old papers. A lot of times, old papers are referenced for the “methods” section.
* Cite everything that is referenced in another paper; this is why building references as you go is extremely useful
* You can view the UF Honor Code and the Plagiarism Reporting Guide for more information on the policies and procedures here at UF