

THE VOICE

Vol 28 Issue 41 2020-10-16

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

AU Grads Changing Communities

Helping to Make a Better World

AUSU Scholarships

Plenty of Choices for Undergraduates

Plus:

Council Connection

Confessions of an Ominvore

and much more!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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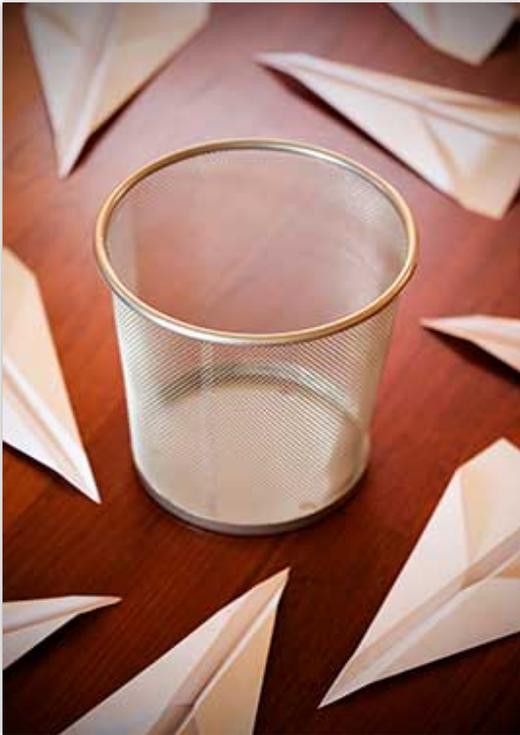
Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a [Facebook page](#)?

No kidding! We also do the [twitter](#) thing once in a while if you're into that.

Editorial

Filled to the Brim

Karl Low



Last week, we brought you an interview with graduand Anne Turner, but there was so much about her that we couldn't keep it contained to one article. So this week, along with fellow student Camille MacRae, writer Natalia Iwanek brings a look at what these graduates are doing now to help change society for the better.

Our feature article is interviewing a current undergraduate student, Almigdad Eldoma. If the name seems familiar it's because he was just recently elected by you to take a seat at AUSU Council in the by-election. Now we can find out much more about him and his experiences.

Also this week, with the fall awards season upon us, Barb Lehtiniemi explains for us in one quick article what each of the awards are, and, more importantly, how you can start the application process to see if you can get one.

And as if that isn't enough, we've got the Council Connection for the September 19th meeting, a look at how one student went vegan and some hints and tricks you might use to go that path yourself, an exploration of whether writing is really needed for learning, as prompted

by a recent article in *The Atlantic*, advice on improving your essays, keeping your skin healthy while wearing your mask, what to do with thanksgiving leftovers, outside scholarships, events, and so much more.

The news, of course, is mostly concerned with the Presidential race. The last elections' upset at the polls, combined with Mr. Trump's steadfast refusal to assure a peaceful transition of power means that even if nothing happens, the speculation is enough to feed the 24 hour news networks full time. And with a debate being turned into competing town halls, there's no lack of compare and contrast opportunities that will be taken advantage of for the next couple of weeks.

What has my attention, however, is the looming dispute between AU and the faculty, as nicely backgrounded in Corey Wren's [recent article](#). Recent developments have seen MRU unions joining the AUFA in some of their boycott actions, and as Alberta Premier Jason Kenney flails for ideas as to how to [create the next budget](#), I've seen a growing concern that things in education and health, the biggest two areas of government responsibility, are going to get much worse before there's any hint of them getting better.

If you haven't already, please click on the above link for creating the next budget. It's clear that the UCP desperately needs some educated advice, with the assumed leader having a dearth of education himself. I'm hopeful that, with enough concern voiced by students, the UCP might avert their path of looking at education as a cost to be cut, and instead look at it as an investment as profitable as oil and gas—given current prices, perhaps even more profitable. If education was being looked at under the proper lens of a necessary investment into the future profitability of this province, the need for this dispute between faculty and administration would quickly fade—although it might require an unpacking of the Board of Governors.

In the meantime, however, enjoy the read!

MINDS WE MEET



Who are your fellow students? It can feel like you are all alone in your studies, but across the nation, around the globe, students like you are also pursuing their AU education, and *The Voice Magazine* wants to bring their stories to you and vice versa. If you would like to be featured next, do not hesitate to get in touch!

Edmonton's Almgidad Eldoma is approximately 90 credits from his Bachelor of Commerce in Finance. He is also AUSU's newest Councillor for the 2020–2021 term, one of four elected during early September's By-Election.

Almgidad's educational journey first began in 2010 when he completed the Land Administration Certificate at SAIT in Calgary, shortly before joining the military. His service took him north to Edmonton for a position as a signaler, dealing with "IT, hardware, software ... [and] information transferring." He left the military in 2019 to further pursue his education.

The one thing that distinguishes Almgidad from most people was "being born in Saudi Arabia," despite having "no relation to" the country. He stated, "I kind of like being a moving body/person." "I have a lot of different cultural backgrounds. Sudanese, Saudi Arabian, and Canadian."

Almgidad, along with his siblings, were born in Saudi Arabia, so "right from the get-go my parents were travelling." The Eldoma's are originally from Khartoum, Sudan, where Almgidad's father was a chemical engineer before moving to Saudi Arabia. During the 1990s, the family travelled throughout the Middle East and Europe,

before settling in Calgary in 1996. He stated, "We settled there because we saw just such great people."

The pandemic has altered his life, as it has for many students. Almgidad stated, "I used to do a lot ... festivals, concerts, [and] bars." He also used to "hold fundraisers" for the military to assist "veterans [and] children who have lost parents during service," and to unite the community. The pandemic has kept him inside studying, but he still enjoys the outdoors.

He spoke of his love of hiking and biking, mentioning that he visited Banff frequently during his childhood. In addition to his schoolbooks, Almgidad is currently reading *This Side of Paradise* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, who he called "one of my favourite authors of fiction," although he usually

reads non-fiction, such as biographies. He credits Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* as the book that made him enjoy reading. The pandemic has also changed Almidad's life in one additional way. His upcoming wedding to his fiancée, who he met during his time in the military, has unfortunately been postponed.

Almidad's father has had the greatest influence on his desire to learn. He instilled in his son the idea that "education is key" and that "education will get you the farthest." His father credits education for taking "him out of the village [in Sudan] into the world." He frequently told Almidad, "Whatever you learn, no one can ever take away from you."

As to his experiences with online learning, Almidad does not consider it too challenging due to his independent learning style. He stated, "Growing up as a millennial ... I did have experience with online learning before in high school," stating that he "knew what was coming." He mentioned, "It was always instilled that online learning was the dominant force that was coming." In addition, he finds comfort in the knowledge that many students are now in similar positions as a result of the pandemic.

Almidad's most memorable AU course so far has been [ACCT 253](#): Introductory Financial Accounting, a subject that he found difficult when he first studied it approximately 10 years ago. Now, he considers it very helpful, with its many applications to everyday life.

Although Almidad has found communication with his course tutors good, he admits that he has only had one experience, since he is an "independent learner." He "like[s] how they contact you personally through your phone. ... I liked that personal touch because I thought it would just be virtual."

I asked what he might do if he were suddenly made the president of AU, and he stated that based on AU's online framework, he would get "students up to-date with their internet," in all possible ways, including fibre optics and upgrades, without being "taxing on the student." For the first project, he would speak to large corporations and make some sort of agreement for students to create a superior learning environment and bridge the gap currently being experienced. He mentioned that this plan would have secondary benefits for students' households and families, such as lower data costs. He stated, "Nowadays internet is a necessity; it shouldn't be a burden."

While not AU president just yet, Almidad is one of AUSU's newest Councillors. When asked about his motivations for running, he stated that there were many reasons. However, he mentioned that 2020 has been a particularly difficult year, "especially for me as a Black person and what we have seen and experienced." He continued, "I couldn't just sit back and let that be the story of my life and not for everybody else's in my position. I just wanted to be out there just to show like, 'Hey, I exist,' and I'm basically normal. I'm not on this side or that side." He mentioned that students exist from a variety of backgrounds, "There are regular people, regular students who are just like me, and I wanted to showcase that you guys are not alone."

When asked to choose whom he would like to have lunch with, Almidad mentioned Barack and Michelle Obama, which he called "the obvious ones," as well as Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson. However, he would also like to have lunch with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC), the U.S. Representative for New York's 14th congressional district, who "is fighting against the wolves," calling her "inspiring." He would love to meet with her and ask: "What is keeping you driven through all this mudslinging?"

Almigdad's proudest moment "was back in 2017," when he "was selected to be in an airborne parachute course out of thousands of applicants in the military." Those selected then had "to go through a grueling three weeks in Trenton, Ontario to get . . . [their] wings." He stated that it was a big accomplishment to conquer his "fear as a young private next to [equally intimidated] sergeants and captains who . . . [had] been in the service for almost a decade." He continued, "Anything is possible . . . as long as you just keep going and conquer your fears. Being airborne really instilled in me that everyone is scared, but you gotta push through."

His most valuable life lesson to-date? "Always see good in people." He stated that during his travels with his family, he realized that "not everyone is out to get me, not everyone is out to get us." He continued, "I come from a Muslim background, my mom wears hijab, we looked . . . different in '96 when we first moved out here. My mom always instilled in me to always see the good in people and those scary fears will slowly go away because you always see the light." He revealed, "That lesson really kept me going."

Despite his positive outlook, Almgidad does have one pet peeve. He dislikes those who take "credit for other people's work," including "when a superior takes credit ... or anyone takes credit for something that they didn't do." Best of luck in the future Almgidad!

Natalia Iwanek is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English at Athabasca University and is also a freelance editor and writer. She can be contacted at <https://www.nataliaiwanekediting.com>.



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Live Your Dream Award

Sponsored by: Soroptimist

Deadline: November 15, 2020

Potential payout: up to \$16,000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be women who have been accepted to an undergrad degree or vocational/skills training program, are the primary financial support for themselves and their dependents, and have financial need. See [full eligibility requirements](#).

What's required: A completed online application form, including contact, school, and financial information, contact info for references, and a personal statement.

Tips: Read the [tips for applying](#) for helpful information on completing you application.

Where to get info: www.soroptimist.org/our-work/live-your-dream-awards/index.html



AUSU Scholarships

Barbara Lehtiniemi

AU Undergrad Students Have Plenty of Scholarship Choice this Fall



awards is a mere 2.00.

Who couldn't use an extra \$1000 for their studies?

Sixteen AU students can look forward to a \$1000 scholarship boost from AUSU this fall. AUSU has two award cycles each year. The fall awards cycle opened for applications October 1, with a deadline of November 1.

Last week's [article](#) summarized the AUSU Bursaries and the New Student Bursaries for the fall awards cycle, as well as the year-round bursaries. This week, we review the scholarships for the fall cycle.

Unlike AUSU's bursaries, which are based on financial need, scholarships are awarded on the basis of merit. You don't need to have a stratospheric GPA for most of these awards; the minimum GPA threshold for most of these

#IgotoAU Award. Four AU students (two in each award cycle) will walk away with \$1000 each for compiling a 2-minute video about their AU experience. No minimum credits required, so any student enrolled in an AU undergrad course qualifies. Post your video on Youtube and provide a link in your application.

Balanced Student Award. AUSU will reward eight students annually (four in each award cycle) with \$1000, for demonstrating how well they juggle education with...everything else. Applicants must have completed at least 12 AU credits and have a minimum GPA of 2.00 over the most recent 12 credits. Two reference letters and a short essay are required, along with a current AU transcript.

Returning Student Award. With this award, AUSU recognizes eight students annually (four in each award cycle) who resumed their education after a break of at least two years. Each award recipient gets a cool \$1000. Applicants must have completed at least 12 AU credits and have a minimum GPA of 2.00 over the most recent 12 credits. A short essay is required, along with details on prior education and a current AU transcript.

Student Volunteer Award. Calling all volunteers! AUSU will dish out \$1000 each to six students annually (three in each award cycle) for demonstrating their community involvement. Applicants must have completed at least 12 AU credits and have a minimum GPA of 2.00 over the most recent 12 credits. An outline of community service activities is required, along with at least one letter of reference and a current AU transcript.

Academic Achievement Scholarship. AUSU will hand out \$1000 to each of six AU students each fiscal year (three in each award cycle) who have the highest GPA among the applicants. A minimum GPA of 3.70 is required to apply, and at least 30 AU credits completed. The awards go to the applicants with the highest GPA of the most recent 30 credits. All you need with your online application is a current AU transcript, which you can download through your student portal.

Applications for these AUSU scholarships are only accepted during the spring and fall award cycles, using the online [application form](#). Applications are now open for the fall cycle, and the deadline for applications is November 1.

Don't wait until the last minute, though, because some award applications require supplementary documents such as letters of reference. Go to www.ausu.org/services/scholarships-awards for complete eligibility and application requirements.

Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU graduate (BGS 2018.) She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario.



AU Graduates Creating Community Change

Natalia Iwanek

Throughout this pandemic, increasing reports of systemic inequality, violence, and disregard for those most vulnerable in our communities have become the focal point in mainstream media. In many ways, these reports underscore the reality that the pandemic has proven to be the breaking point in a historical record filled with inequitable treatment, racism, prejudice, xenophobia, and ableism.

In spite of this, activism, organizing, [care-mongering](#), and community building efforts continue on a grassroots level. This pandemic has highlighted the importance of community care, with many individuals dedicating themselves to creating a more equitable space for all, often starting with acts of kindness. At AU in particular, two students have been creating positive change in their respective communities, including recent MAIS graduates Camille MacRae and Anne Turner.



Camille MacRae

Camille MacRae recently graduated from the [MAIS: Equity Studies](#) program this August after completing the [Bachelor of Professional Arts in Governance, Law, and Management in 2019](#). Since graduating, she has been working for the federal government and volunteering “on a provincial level in a political organization.”

A mother of two, Camille began her educational journey shortly after leaving an abusive relationship. She stated, “Having access to flexible education was huge for me because we were starting off brand new with me as a single parent. No one really expects to be in that phase of life.” She continued, “The education itself was transformative, it was healing, it was empowering, [and] it gave me something to focus on sometimes when other issues related to my personal life were scary and overwhelming.” Camille emphasized, “I think it is very important to destigmatize anyone’s

shame or fear of speaking out.”

In addition to her career and volunteer work, Camille is currently traversing COVID-19 by homeschooling her children, adding “to the list of all the hats that women and a lot of individuals

who are caregivers . . . are wearing.” She is also “trying to stay true” to what she focused on during her thesis, namely “the power of fear that leads to oppression and isolation.”

Specifically, Camille’s thesis, “Confronting Oppression Through an Interdisciplinary Understanding of Individual and Collective Fear,” states that “No one is free from the causes and effects of fear, oppression and privilege,” and adopts “an interdisciplinary approach to these global issues,” in order “to achieve a holistic understanding of fear and its complex causes and effects; we can effectively address oppression through this holistic understanding.”

Camille stated, “When COVID hit, I wanted to make sure that I was doing . . . what I could for the community.” She explained, “I never really got into politics before but after my experience with . . . leaving an abusive marriage, it really opened my eyes to the gaps in outreach, the gaps in access to services.” She continued, “I know that no one government, politics aside, non-partisan wise . . . is going to want to be failing their citizens. But without a lens of lived experience and intentional access to individuals with lived experiences, there is no way you are going to have a comprehensive and aware set of public policy and services.”

Camille saw value in her local NDP MLA Thomas Dang’s work and decided to volunteer in community outreach. “I knew that if I was volunteering with him, I would be having direct access to everyone who lives around me.” In mid-March, Camille began calling constituents to see how they were faring, finding “that there were a lot of different experiences.” Often many individuals were angry at the situation and confused about next steps, especially “access to the provincial emergency resource that would float them to CERB.” She stated, “A lot of people simply needed to feel heard . . . At least they know that someone [within the community] cares.”

She felt prepared for this role by her Bachelor degree, which “really gave . . . a lens to academically pick apart the way that a municipality, or a province, or the country is run.” She continued, “It gave me the empowerment to decide that I was ok with aligning with a political party.” In addition, the Equity Studies program also allowed her to become increasingly community focused, by using her experiences and confronting her privilege.

When asked what she hopes to accomplish through her community work, Camille stated, “It may seem minimal, but creating healing and restructuring the connection and the ability and the potential for connection within the community. No matter where your political views align, no matter where you are socio-economically, at the end of the day, I think that COVID has been a massive wakeup call to many people that existence can change within a second.” She mentioned the importance of speaking about the effects of mental health and the importance of connection during this time, something that she noticed while making phone calls for her MLA. “There’s fear with connection. We see this a lot with the social justice issues that have come up lately, that have, not even come up, but boiled to the surface and demanded their attention. Rightly so.” However, “what you see is all these fractured relationships between society with so many different lenses.” She continued, “Ultimately, my goal is to be on the right side of the rebuilding of connection and community.”

As a final note, Camille encourages students to get involved. “If you feel a call to anything, no matter what it is, a big step outside of your comfort zone, a little push to engage with someone, whatever it is, just don’t be afraid to go for it. Even if it’s deciding to further your education, even if it’s applying for that job, just don’t limit yourself, and don’t stand in your own way because how else is the world going to access what you have to offer.”

From her simple start as a volunteer, Camille has recently moved on to accept a position as the Executive Director of Outreach for the Alberta NDP Gender and Sexual Diversity caucus. She

stated that without healing from her relationship and “coming to understand my own self” and recognizing that “I’m queer or gay . . . I would have never had the opportunity to take an active community role in that, if I hadn’t have started with our local constituency association.”

By trusting herself, “following my gut and answering that push,” she found, “Now here I am. Honestly, the woman that I was back in 2014, when I tried desperately to get away from something so bad and so dangerous, I almost hold her externally, but I still have so much love for her because who I am now I think I’d intimidate . . . who I was then.”

Camille’s final advice to students: “Just go for it. Trust that you’re going to be ok. It might be a little scary . . . The world is waiting for you to offer what you have to offer. And if you don’t do it, we’re missing out on it!”

Anne Turner

Anne Turner also recently graduated from the MAIS program, and has also just self-published her thesis research, titled “The Effects of Normalizing Post Secondary Institutional Practices and Social Relations on Students with Disabilities who have Multiple Disabilities and Complex Identities,” along with some of her writing and art. Her book titled, *Don’t Say that You Can’t Do This!* is now available.

Anne began the MAIS: Cultural Studies program in 2013 and graduated in 2019, where she focused on the areas of disability, as well as mental health, art, and transgender studies.

Pre-pandemic, Anne had been busy exhibiting her art and doing presentations “on the appreciation of art therapy,” which she “was involved with for quite a few years.”

In her book, she discussed “the effects of normalizing post-secondary institutional practices in social relations on students who have multiple disabilities and complex identities.” She included a great deal about “students who are entering college and university you have disabilities . . . and some don’t realize . . . that they can get accommodations.” While working on her Bachelor’s degree, Anne was struck at the amount of students who were unaware of Accessibility Services and options to obtain a tutor strategist “trained to work with people with disabilities.” Although Anne’s experiences were positive, she mentioned one incident when one of her AU course tutors, questioned her need for an external tutor. In the end, AU’s Accessibility Services advocated on her behalf.

In particular, Anne’s thesis focused on Michel Foucault’s ideas of power and knowledge, stating “the more knowledge a person has, the better they’re able to speak up for themselves.” She continued, “Know all you can, learn all you can, so that you can express to another person what you need and what works best for you.” She also focused on the problem of academics being experts in their subject matter, but “who don’t know how to teach persons with disabilities.” Finally, Anne also wrote about mental health issues, a subject she is personally familiar with, and focused on the “ways mental health issues can affect a student’s life.” Although her advisor, Dr. Gloria Filax, was set to retire, she stayed with Anne throughout the process, believing that she had something of importance to share. Anne dedicated her book to her tutor, stating, “she stayed with me throughout the whole time.”



Along with the thesis and original artwork, Anne shared some of her earlier memories in her book as well, including moving a great deal with her family, a result of her father in the Armed Forces. She described the process as difficult for someone with a learning disabilities and mental health issues, a fact compounded by 1950's era attitudes.

She hopes that this book will manage to reach “other programs that teach those who are going into the mental health field and the disability field.” She also urged students to “learn everything you can about the disability if you have one . . . If you have triggers . . . bring them up with your professor. Don't dismiss it; keep pushing to get what you're entitled to.” She also urged students to apply for scholarships and awards, because “there's so many that never get used.”

In addition to her book, Anne does community advocacy work for the disability community, including mental health, directing individuals to various available community services, and has sat on a few boards. She is also currently thinking about a next book, which may focus primarily on art.

As a final note, Anne advised, “Don't let someone tell you that you can't do this, you can do anything that you set out to and want to do. You just need a little extra help along the way to get to it.”

Best of Luck Camille and Anne!

Are You Creating Positive Change in COVID-19 Times? Share Your Story!

If you are an AU student or grad creating positive change in your community in a way that is directly (or indirectly) related to your studies— or you are a current AU student or grad/alumni —reach out and share your story in an upcoming article or a feature in our Minds We Meet or AU Graduands—Interviews from the Other Side columns.

Natalia Iwanek is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English at Athabasca University and is also a freelance editor and writer. She can be contacted at <https://www.nataliaiwanekediting.com>.

Fly on the Wall **Why Can't We Avoid the Labour of Reading & Writing**

Jason Sullivan



Learning Style: **Motivated or Lazy?**

In Latin the word *vulgaris* refers to something common, but we're not at AU because we're average, right? We're here to transcend our ordinary lives by bettering ourselves through education. With that in mind we can all recall absorbing common ideologies about personal learning styles. It's a song as old as rhyme: each of us possesses an ideal mode of acquiring knowledge that jives with our inner rhythms like a favourite cell phone app or a catchy musical genre. It's no coincidence that any typology of learning styles naturally blurs boundaries between taste and tendency.

Visual, spatial, and literary are three typical learning styles we've likely all heard of. To place ourselves on that spectrum we might, when choosing our courses at AU, first note our successes and failures of the past. If math was never our forte, or in my case if the spatial directions of origami have struck fear in my heart since the first grade, then some forms of learning (however we choose to categorize them) don't bode well for our flourishing as much as do others. It takes a certain type of honesty with oneself to admit our shortcomings while outlining areas where we can legitimately improve our skills.

Yet there's no getting around the need to buckle in and do the course readings and write our course assignments; there's no shortcut to attention span and motivation. And when it comes to our essential drive to succeed, there really may only be two styles: motivated and lazy. Like the skill of attention span more generally, it takes work to, well, accomplish our coursework.

Sylvester Stallone Meets The Offspring

Think about how it feels to face a monolith of reading; there's no Stallone solution to this *Cliffhanger*, so the only way forward is to get started. If we hope to get where we're going, eg to translate eighty pages of reading into a smooth explanation for an essay, we have to first read the material. And we have to really want it. Tests of our reading and comprehension skills mean just what they say; we first must read if we are then to comprehend. In back of that is the reality that some knowledge just can't be explained outside of a willingness to learn. As the 90s band *the Offspring* sang:

"I can draw a little picture
Or even use my hands
I try to explain but you just don't understand"

Ostensibly, the song is about the scourge of drug abuse, but for us it applies best to the twin academic afflictions of indolence and procrastination.

Understanding, then, is clearly about more than adopting a proper mode of presentation; we have to be willing participants and interpreters in the action at hand.

Steven Strogatz claims that to understand something we have to see its dynamism, and, in some cases, this can be visual. "I can see patterns much more readily in colored dots running, moving on the screen, than I can in looking at 500 simultaneous time series. I don't *see* stuff very well like that. Because it's not what it really looks like...What I'm studying is something dynamic. So the representation should be dynamic". Fair enough; there's a visual learner for you.

At AU, however, we aren't likely to pass any courses without reading the words in our textbooks. Words may seem a blur akin to a cloud of crows or blackflies but if we don't zoom in and read each of them we aren't going to absorb their meaning. We have to know ourselves and our abilities while also, perhaps, being aware of what the nature of learning at any age entails.

Writing and Meaning, As Natural As Blazing a Trail

Naturally, reading and writing stem from our most basic human instincts. Jacques Derrida stated that human interactions with nature embody a form of writing, a method of inscribing meaning onto our planetary landscape. "The *silva* (forest) is savage, the *via rupta* (path cut through) is written...it is difficult to imagine that access to the possibility of road-maps is not at the same time access to writing." (Derrida, cvii). To find our best fit at AU we have to research syllabi by reading them, and this process of discovery trails all the way back to our earliest childhood. The emergence of our conscious self, along with knowledge of the names of adult caregivers such as Mama and Dada, is like cutting a machete path of consciousness through the undergrowth of raw

sensory data. To this day we *read* a social situation based upon a series of rules we've acquired; these function more like a text than an image in terms of their prescriptive clarity.

In particular, knowing someone's role in a given situation requires the deployment of proper names. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak suggests that human interactions would founder without names and identities as a permanent inscription on our consciousness of ourselves and others; "the most interesting reason given for the impossibility of a community without writing is that the bestowing of the proper name, something no society can avoid, is itself inhabited by the structure of writing" (Spivak, cvii). To know our Dad and Mom, or any other person including ourselves, is to know them *as* their proper name identifies them in a given circumstance (so for youngsters this implies a familial role hierarchy). Proper names are written into us and thus must be read mentally. As students, we have to decide who we are being at AU and that means donning our most studious student identities. This leads us to contend with the basic need to study and read if success is to be achieved. After all, learning without focus is pretty much impossible.

Where Style Meets Substance: Reading and Remembering as Unavoidable Admission Costs

A failure of learning styles as an ideology is that it provides a cognitive loophole for those who would prefer not to take the time to read and study, and re-read and re-study, difficult textbook material. Consider the following report by James Somers from the reputable *Atlantic* magazine: it's splashy headline claims that the scientific paper is obsolete thanks to computer models. The author states that science has become too complex for our simple minds and, without mentioning the myriad of cell phone distractions that provide convenient pretexts for newt-sized attention spans to wander astray, concludes that: "the more sophisticated science becomes, the harder it is to communicate results". Maybe we just have lost our will to overcome distractions.

Somers notes that scientific journal articles utterly "depend on chains of computer programs that generate data, and clean up data, and plot data, and run statistical models on data. These programs tend to be both so sloppily written and so central to the results that it's contributed to a replication crisis, or put another way, a failure of the paper to perform its most basic task: to report what you've actually discovered clearly enough that someone else can discover it for themselves."

He nevertheless concludes that better computer programs with visual aids are the solution and yet, ironically or paradoxically depending on how you look at it, not without first noting that computer programs have thus far been problematic.

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

Bannock and a Movie October Edition: Jordan River Anderson - The Messenger

Oct 1 to Oct 31

Online

Hosted by AU Nukskahtowin

news.athabascau.ca/events/bannock-and-a-movie-first-nation-stories-2

Access through above link

The Grad Lounge Kickoff for the 2020 GSRC!

Fri, Oct 16, 6:00 to 7:00 pm MDT

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

fgs.athabascau.ca/news/events/index.php

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

2020 Graduate Student Research Conference

Oct 16 to 17

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies and AUGSA

news.athabascau.ca/events/2020-graduate-student-research-conference

Register through above link

Talk to a Librarian Drop-in Session

Tues, Oct 20, 9:00 to 9:30 am MDT

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Library

library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted

Can the problem be the solution? Perhaps the solution was there in the journal articles in the first place; in science as in the broader world of education, reading remains fundamental. And as anyone who reads scientific news online at sites such as *Science Daily* knows, there are plenty of summary depictions of breakthroughs and disappointments that don't resort to images and visuals. A few hundred words suffice. Somers nevertheless describes how a programmer's "redesign interleaved the explanatory text with little interactive diagrams that illustrated each step". This may appeal to those who identify as visual learners, but we can't expect our degrees to be delivered without us engaging in the hard, time-swallowing slog of reading and comprehending masses of words.

That's not all, folks. If you're like me and you've waded through your share of scientific journal articles you know that the abstract at the very beginning nicely summarizes what is going on in terms of research findings. Yet again Somers' article fails to mention the abstract as words that work. Instead, he suggests that, just as comic books are now known as graphic novels, a new form of kinder, simpler, science may rise to hegemony by, not to mince words, pretty pictures. In fact, scientific journal articles already have those and they're known as graphs. Yet, Somers seems to assume that these graphic depictions of data are too complex or too boring for readers who don't wish to actually read the material.

The Mantra of Learning as Iteration: Read, Comprehend, and Repeat

Communication, verbal or written, is about words. And in our culture that requires the magical elixir that the Phoenicians invented and spread like an infectious smile all over the Ancient Mediterranean: movable script by means of an alphabet. There's a reason we start our process of literacy by repeating our ABC's. When we consider the place that language has at the core of our being as we emerge into toddler-hood, the symbolic stew of letters and words appears as both more intimate and more enjoyable. Language is the stuff of us! Imagine if we'd never learned to speak or read; we'd literally not be here now in any understandable way. Our consciousness would remain unthinkable and unknowable in its present form. So, instead of an upstream struggle, the reading and writing of our coursework can be seen as an emergence into a better version of our core literal (and literary!) self. And that's some knowledge worth writing home about.

References

Derrida, J. (1967). *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.

Spivak, G. (2016). 'Translator's Preface', Derrida, J (1967). *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.

Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.

More AU-thentic Events

BComm/CPA Info Session

Tues, Oct 20, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business and CPHR
news.athabascau.ca/events/bcomm-cpa-information-session-20201020

RSVP through above link

AUSU October Council Meeting

Wed, Oct 21, 6:30 to 8:00 pm MDT
Online, Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/october-2020-council-meeting/

No pre-registration required; email
governance@ausu.org for meeting package

Talk to a Librarian Drop-in Session

Thur, Oct 22, 3:00 to 3:30 pm MDT
Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Library
library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html

No pre-registration necessary; access through
above link

The Grad Lounge "Career Planning"

Fri, Oct 23, 1:00 to 2:00 pm MDT
Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies
fgs.athabascau.ca/news/events/index.php

No pre-registration necessary; access through
above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted



The Creative Spark

How to Make Your Tone Wow Your Readers

Marie Well



Writing an essay? Use formal tone. Writing a nonfiction book? Use conversational tone. Writing a blog post? Try a snappy tone. But how do you create these tones in the first place?

Here are seven tidbits for drafting the perfect tone, according to Jennifer Goforth Gregory (2018) in her book *Freelance Content Marketing Writer Find your perfect clients, Make tons of money and Build a business you love*.

Tidbit #1: Got a fun point of view in you?

“Point of view – I personally think that point of view is one of the biggest choices that determines tone. It’s almost impossible for an article written in third person to feel conversational or a first-person article to be formal. I try to encourage all of my clients to use at least second person because I find it makes a huge difference in the readability as well as the connection to the audience”

(Gregory, 2018, 56%).

You always want to write your academic essays in third person (“he,” “she,” “they,” “them”) unless asked to write a reflective essay. Reflective essays depend on first person (“I,” “we,” and “me”). But reflective essays are rare in academia.

In informal writing, I think using “you” is best. In formal writing, resort to “he, she, it, they, and them.” And remember, one point of view is better than two.

Tidbit #2: A great sentence length lasts forever.

“Sentence length – Longer sentences tend to give a more formal tone. If you are aiming for a more conversational or snappy tone, try shorter sentences when possible” (Gregory, 2018, 56%).

Try writing a nonfiction book using mostly short sentences. Chop long sentences in two. By doing so, your book will grow livelier and easier to read.

But in academic writing, longer sentences seem more astute. Just do as my editor recommends and offer breathers: punctuation or periods. What do I mean exactly by breathers? Try reading a super long sentence with no punctuation out loud. You’ll end up gasping for air. So, break up the length with punctuation.

The best writing styles mix together long and short sentences. Saved by varied sentence lengths!

Tidbit #3: Write better through paragraph length.

“Paragraph length – The same is true with paragraphs. Shorter paragraphs tend to convey a less formal tone. I also find that varying paragraph lengths help to create a less formal tone overall” (Gregory, 2018, 56%).

One thing to avoid is a page-long paragraph. One professor said to have at least three paragraphs per page, at bare minimum two. But short paragraphs of two to three sentences don't cut it for academic papers. Super short paragraphs are best reserved for the Web or for books on copywriting.

Tisbit #4: Word choice inspires.

“Word choice – If you say, ‘Have a chat’ versus ‘Have a conversation,’ these convey two totally different tones. Look throughout the sample piece to find the type of words used and keep it consistent throughout your work” (Gregory, 2018, 56%).

Shorter words are punchy, often lively, and fun to read. Longer words make the writing more formal or academic.

One professor wrote her papers mixing short punchy words with long technical jargon. It made for a delightful combination, although I insisted that grad papers should be more pompous. Little did I know. But good word choice is better than cotton candy.

Tidbit #5: Show the marketing jargon the trash.

“Marketing jargon – I hate marketing jargon. My current pet peeve is the word innovate because if you are using the word innovate (which everyone else currently is using) then you are actually not being innovative. Nothing formalizes a piece of content and removes the connection between the reader and the brand as much as jargon” (Gregory, 2018, 56%).

Academic writing relies on jargon. But if you want a non-expert to understand your paper, then it's best to limit your jargon.

The worst writing arises in academic papers that use almost entirely multisyllabic words. Some of these multisyllabic words may not be used accurately, either. And these words mostly end up increasing confusion. As my editor once said, writing should yield clarity. Writing marketing jargon is like playing with fire.

Tidbit #6: Em/en dashes – when you just feel like them.

“Em/en dashes – So I might be addicted to em and en dashes. I think that they can make a deliverable much more conversational and easy to read. I use them to set off text, add examples, context and maybe even something funny” (Gregory, 2018, 56%).

I read a psychology book that was stuffed with em dashes. I admit, the em dashes seemed to lower the formality of the book, making the read friendlier.

I asked a professor about em dashes. She said it's best to use a wide variety of punctuation in your writing. But avoid writing a paper that zeros in on em dashes to the exclusion of all else.

Em/en dashes do leaps for your writing.

Tidbit #7: Sentence structure need not be a sentence.

“Sentence structure – My fifth grade English teacher would not be pleased with me. I LOVE beginning sentences with ‘But’ and ‘And’. I think it makes the deliverable much more conversational and easy to read. I also think that occasionally using a short question or sentence fragment can be very effective to conveying a specific tone” (Gregory, 2018, 56%).

Bestselling nonfiction books make good use of sentence fragments, I've noticed. The goal for nonfiction seems to centre around clarity. So, the authors aim to write in a conversational tone.

If you ever eavesdrop at Starbucks, try to listen to the structure of chit chats. What you discover may surprise you. Next to none of it is grammatically sound. Good sentence structure soothes the soul.

Those are seven tidbits for writing with tone. Do you prefer the formal, conversational, or punchy? Test each out to find where you most shine.

Reference

Gregory, Jennifer Goforth. (2018). *The Freelance Content Marketing Writer Find your perfect clients, Make tons of money and Build a business you love*. [Kindle Unlimited]. Retrieved from amazon.ca.



Homemade is Better Turkey Leftovers

Chef Corey

When I was in culinary school one of the lessons that stuck with me was to always use your leftovers in something different. I think it's probably fair to say that we all struggle with ways to use our leftovers, and I am no different. In my family, these holiday meals end up being these big feasts, and I'm sure some would agree that some of us eat too much during these holiday meals. But I'm not here to shame anyone; I'm here to help you figure out ways to use those leftovers in healthy and maybe fun ways! This article is going to be a plethora of recipes for you to use the turkey, stuffing, cranberries, potatoes, and that gravy.

First, mashed potatoes make great gnocchi. Not sure what gnocchi is? It's a potato pasta, and it super easy to make!

Mashed Potato Gnocchi

Ingredients

Leftover mashed potatoes
1 egg
1-2 cups all-purpose flour
1 large pot of boiling salted water

Directions

- 1) Warm up your potatoes slightly in the microwave or oven.
- 2) Mix the mashed potatoes with the egg, mix to combine.
- 3) Add just enough flour until it forms a dough. Your dough shouldn't be sticky, so keep adding flour a little bit at a time until it comes together.
- 4) Split the dough up into relatively equal pieces.
- 5) Roll each piece out into a long string, about ¼ inch wide.
- 6) Cut the dough into 1-inch pieces and put them into the boiling water.
- 7) Cook them for about 1 minute then move them to a strainer.
- 8) Add some butter and parmesan cheese.

Another recipe I like to use involves my turkey carcass. Nothing beats warm soup on a cold autumn day! I'm writing this article on Thanksgiving and the forecast for this coming week says there is a chance of the four-letter word that's cold, but it is feeling like a decent fall.

Turkey Vegetable Soup

Ingredients

2L Turkey stock (if your stock made more that's okay, you can freeze it)
 2 cups diced thanksgiving turkey
 2 whole carrots – diced
 2 celery ribs – diced
 1 medium onion – diced
 ½ cup white wine
 2 bay leaves
 2 tsp parsley
 1 tsp thyme
 Kosher salt – to taste
 Black pepper – to taste
 ¼ cup butter

Directions:

- 1) Grab a soup pot and put in the butter and onion, turn the heat to medium high.
- 2) Once the onion starts to heat up and turn more translucent add the carrots and celery.
- 3) Stir until the veggies start to soften.
- 4) Add a pinch of kosher salt, and a ¼ tsp of black pepper.
- 5) Add the white wine and let it cook until it reduces by about ½ to ¾.
- 6) Add in the turkey and stir.
- 7) Add the stock, and herbs and bring to a boil.
- 8) Reduce the heat to low and let it simmer for about an hour.
- 9) Taste it and add more salt as needed. If you brined your turkey you will notice you don't need much more salt, but you would need pepper.

My last recipe is a classic solution for lunches! I think most people do this with their leftover bird.



Turkey Sandwiches

Ingredients

2-3 pieces of turkey
 2 slices of bread or a bun
 1 tsp mayo
 1 tsp butter
 1 TBSP stuffing
 1 tsp cranberry sauce

Directions

- 1) Butter one slice of bread and put mayo on the top piece.
- 2) Place your turkey on it, then stuffing, the cranberry sauce.
- 3) Add some lettuce if you'd like, then put the sandwich together.
- 4) Enjoy!



Roasted Turkey Stock

Ingredients

1 turkey carcass
2 carrots – roughly chopped
2 ribs celery – roughly chopped
1 medium onion – roughly chopped
5 cloves of whole garlic
3 bay leaves
1 tsp dried thyme
2 tsp dried parsley
5-6 peppercorns

Directions

- 1) Put your carcass into a pot large enough to hold it with extra room
- 2) Pour in enough water to cover the carcass
- 3) Put the pot onto the stove top, and bring the water to a boil
- 4) Meanwhile, wash, but do not peel, the carrots. Then chop them into 1 – 2-inch-long pieces. Repeat with the celery.
- 5) Cut your onion in half, then quarter each half.
- 6) Once your water starts to boil turn it down to a simmer and add the veg and the rest of the ingredients.
- 7) Let it cook about 8 hours. If you're cooking it overnight, make sure you check on the water level just before bed and do not let it boil. It should be a gently simmer and should not lose much water. Add more water if your pot is looking lower than 2/3s.
- 8) After 8 hours or so, strain it into another container and put aside for the next recipe.

Chef Corey is a student in business management who first graduated from NAIT's Culinary Arts Program in 2007

Council Connection

September 19, 2020 Council Meeting

Karl Low



On Wednesday, September 16th, 2020, AUSU Council and the candidates elected at the by-election gathered for the September Council meeting. Missing from the meeting with regrets were councillors Devon Romanick and Ior Kathryn Hadden.

Each meeting, AUSU starts with an acknowledgement to the Indigenous Peoples of Canada that it is their traditional lands that AUSU conducts its business on, but this meeting the acknowledgement was read by Councillor Katy Lowe rather than the President, with indications that AUSU Council will be encouraging different Councillors to volunteer to read the acknowledgement each meeting, in part, I feel, to keep it from becoming merely a rote piece of ritual

that starts the meeting, and in part to give each Councillor an opportunity to consider what the acknowledgement means.

The first order of business, beyond the standard approval of the agenda and minutes, and the review of the action plan items (of which there were none), was to administer the Council Oath of Office to the new councillors. In some ways a team-building exercise, this ritual is fairly consistently a mass of noise over the teleconference, though with only four new councillors coming from this by-election, a far cry from when the entire council is reading it. Still, it makes for a fun opening to a meeting, and an icebreaker of sorts when new councillors arrive.

Moving on to policy, AUSU Council first examined revisions to the Scholarships, Awards, and Bursaries program. The largest changes to the policy included increasing the number of Academic Achievement awards and Student Volunteer Awards (formerly the Student Service Awards) from five to six each, and increasing the number of computer bursaries from 14 to 16 while reducing the maximum amount of each one from \$800 to \$750. The amount available for emergency bursaries was lowered from \$700 to \$500 for any individual student, based on the historical data of how the award has been used, although the total value of the Emergency Bursaries was maintained, thus allowing awards of a slightly lesser amount to be given to more students.

The second policy looked at was a new position policy relating to the AU Student Financial Aid office, noting that AUSU will “advocate to Athabasca University to improve the experience of funded students [and]... communications between the Office of Student Financial Aid and funded AU Students” A brief explanation of why the position policy was needed was provided for the new Councillors, noting that even though AUSU has been doing this in general, it hadn’t been formalized as something that they should routinely be advocating for.

New councillor Almigad Eldoma suggested that the Alberta Government Student Aid office should be added to this policy. Vice-President Finance & Administration, Monique Durette, noted “We do have a position policy to create to advocate for full and part time [Alberta] student aid. This one is specific to AU, but because it’s a different relationship, because we don’t have control of how AU and [Alberta] student aid communicate, we can advocate to the government and to AU, but have no control of the other side of the triangle, so that’s why we have this plan to create two separate position policies.”

The new position policy passed unanimously.

Following this was a discussion on AUSU Position Policy manual, which also includes the individual position policies. There was a note appended to this motion indicating that policy 9.26 (the previously discussed position policy) was currently included in this manual but would be removed if Council did not approve the policy.

During the ensuing discussion, a couple of significant (albeit easily dealt with) errors in the middle of the almost thirty-page document presented to Council, including one section still noting “citation needed” and another sentence simply ending before reaching a conclusion, were noted and quickly fixed. Personally, I was pleased to see that, as it means that these Councillors appear to be taking the job seriously and doing the detail work that’s needed.

This motion also noted that AUSU would be placing the full position policy manual back on its website and removing the position policy handbook. This is a reversal from the previous council, which moved to take the full manual off the website and put up the handbook. The difference between the two is that the full policy manual contains all the background information of the position policies, including AUSU’s research that helped them determine their stance and hence

what AUSU would resolve to undertake, while the handbook merely contained the resolutions of each policy.

Surprisingly, I found myself wondering if this was the best move, and I say surprisingly because I spoke out myself at the meeting where Council first spoke about removing the position policies from the website, strongly urging them not to do so. At that meeting, the intent was to simply remove the policies entirely, and direct students to contact the office if they were curious about AU's position policies. It was noted that there were advantages to being able to keep the research and reasoning private, especially for a political organization, as AUSU has to be once in a while. In the end it was then President Brandon Simmons who suggested the compromise solution of splitting up the resolutions from the reasoning and leaving the resolutions available for students and interested parties to see, while requiring those interested in the research and reasoning behind them to ask the office.

I've come to appreciate this solution, so while I don't mind AUSU Council wanting to be more transparent, this is one instance where I wonder if it was really needed.

The motion was accepted unanimously, and council moved on to the strategic plan.

This meeting had the required second reading of the new strategic plan, and it was noted that Councillor Darcie Fleming had brought forward a few comments between readings which resulted in some changes being made between them, specifically within the vision statements. Changes such as noting that students are the forefront of their decision making, and that AUSU supports students' "exceptional online learning journey" and seeking to enhance the "AU student experience" as opposed to the "online learning experience for students". A small change that can encompass a lot of ground.

The strategic plan was approved unanimously, becoming the official policy of AUSU.

The next section of the meeting was about appointments. Councillor Karen Fletcher joined the Finance Committee, the Membership Engagement and Communications Committee had two new councillors, Amber McDuffe and Natalia Iwanek apply for the one open seat. Both gave a brief statement about how why they sought to serve on this committee and an email vote was held, with the majority vote going to Councillor Iwanek.

Also, nine students-at-large were appointed to the Student Advisory Committee before we moved to the reports for August.

In the President's report, Natasha Donahue noted that AU is once again moving forward with new course and program proposals to the Alberta government, and is looking at any proposals coming in with an eye toward sustainability, meaning something that has significant market demand. She also noted that she's sitting on a new committee, one that is looking at the philosophy and pedagogy behind current modes of learning assessment, asking questions about whether the current means of learning assessment are the best, and AUSU will have a role to play in informing the committee, so will be organizing a focus group to gain student input.

In the Vice President External and Student Affairs' Report, Stacey Hutchings noted that there's a new group that is gaining some recognition, the Calgary Students Alliance. These students are concerned with initiatives happening at a local level, and AUSU has close to 11,000 students in the Calgary region. She noted that this might be something Council needs to direct some attention to in the future to ensure that AU students are not lost when these groups advocate.

Monique Durette, the Vice-President of Finance and Administration noted in her report that the students unions (AUSU and AUGSA) got together to get a graduation gift for this year's graduands,

being the first graduands who would have no opportunity to physically walk the stage because of COVID-19 and the reimagined convocation. An image was commissioned from a photographer in Banff of the northern lights, and a limited edition print sent to each of the 2,398 students who graduated this year with a congratulatory message from AUSU and AUGSA. Also included was a letter with information about the artist, the image, and the number showing it was a limited edition run. This was able to be completed on time and within the AUSU budget for convocation activities.



She continued in the finance committee report, noting that expenses were down because some of the initiatives AUSU usually undertakes are not available during COVID-19, and enrolment at the university is up, meaning that AUSU is seeing a significant amount of extra money being available to them, and decisions would need to be made before the end of the month as to what might be done with the surplus.

Several of the committees did not meet in August, but the peer course review system was launched and had gained 705 new reviews in just five weeks, where the previous system had 825 reviews completed in the five years it was available. It was also announced that V-mock, a new resource to help AUSU members with resume creation, would soon be available (and now is.)

The meeting ended at 8:27pm, with the next Council meeting happening next Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at 6:30pm. If you're interested in attending (and it should be an interesting meeting with an extra \$100,000 being moved into AUSU awards in the interim) then AU students are encouraged to attend council meetings via teleconference. Details can be found on the [AUSU website](#).

Karl graduated from AU with his BA (English) (with great distinction, he likes to add) and now works as the managing editor of The Voice Magazine.

Confessions of a Former Omnivore

Emily Viggiani



Even as a vegetarian, I did not see myself going vegan. I'm Italian-Canadian, culturally. I was used to the charcuterie boards for most of my life, and I thought it wasn't Italian to stop eating cheese. And I am obsessed with carne asada tacos.

Also, I've inherited Thalassemia, a hereditary type of anemia. I struggle with food-related anxiety. I have a hard time deciding what to eat at every meal and am tempted to just skip the meal. The anti-vegans use people like me as an example of people who can't go vegan and still be healthy.

But I know the risks of going vegan and which supplements I need to take. I am also fortunate enough to have a dietician guiding me in weekly Zoom meetings. I mainly became vegan for the ethical reasons. However, it has been a fascinating experiment, at the same time.

As a stepping-stone to being vegan, it's good to start out as a vegetarian, but I wouldn't advocate being lacto-ovo-vegetarian if you want to make an ethical choice. Dairy cows are often forced to be impregnated for 6 years straight until their bodies give out, and then off to become beef afterward, anyways. As for eggs, male chicks routinely get killed because they don't lay eggs.

So, I think veganism should be the end goal. You can eat all your favourite foods, still. There are so many substitutes for cheese and eggs. There are dairy-free cheeses! Cheese can be made of nuts—cashews are the most popular to make a cheese. And for my tacos, a company called Gardein makes excellent fake beef.

Also, people from all demographics can be vegan, even Italians.

Nutrients can be a problem. You can help by taking iron and B12. I am diagnosed with Thalassemia, as I mentioned earlier, but I feel less anemic as a vegan since I started eating beans and lentils. Of course, the first few days of being vegan, I felt groggy. Not ideal to start when you have an exam that week.

The standard North American diet typically has too much protein in it, and not enough fibre. You cannot get fibre from any animal products, but you can get protein and iron from plants. You cannot get B12 from plants, though, so I would recommend that you invest in a bottle of these vitamins. Omega 3s will keep you from getting groggy, as well. You can get vegan Omega 3s from algae.

Some argue that vegans need supplements, so their lifestyle is not healthy, but that is not necessarily fair. Over half of all omnivores take supplements, even if it is just a Vitamin C tablet.

But what if being vegan is not possible? I would recommend a transition of some sort to more plant-based foods. Make swaps gradually. Dairy-free milks of your choice (such as oat or almond) are a good start.

I would also recommend a Mediterranean lifestyle as your guide, if you don't really feel you can be vegan. The Mediterranean lifestyle encourages eating socially, though that might be difficult in these times for people who aren't fortunate enough to live with anyone else. If you can help it, no phones or TV at the dinner table. They also recommend being somewhat active, and the vast majority of their food intake comes from plants. Then they have fish and seafood, then cheese and yoghurt, then poultry and eggs. Meats and sweets are the least common in this lifestyle. Wine is also a big deal in the Mediterranean, but usually not more than 175 ml of wine per day.

Bottom Line Since Going Vegan?

The Good: I have noticed that I have a floating sensation, like I don't merely tread on the ground—I feel like I float. I feel lighter. I don't miss meat, cheese, or eggs (but maybe chocolate). I have clearer skin. I am making new vegan friends. I am learning new recipes. I feel closer to my pets and every animal I see.

The Bad: I have been sobbing ever since I went vegan over all of the animals I cannot save, and everything I ate before I went vegan, not just in this lifetime, but in all of my lifetimes.

The Ugly: I stayed awake all night the first night with one of the worst stomach aches of this lifetime.

Aspiring to be a journalist, Emily Viggiani decided to start with The Voice Magazine. It makes perfect sense given Emily's passion for the arts, she will be promoting artists within Athabasca University.

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

Following What's Hot around AU's Social Media Sites.

AthaU Facebook Group

Several posts reveal confusion surrounding the two-step process for booking exams: booking an invigilator (of which ProctorU is one,) and requesting the exam from AU. Channy reports a motivation dive during the final course; other students report similar experiences when the end is in sight.

Other posts include transcripts, course registration deadlines, financial aid, avoiding wordy essays, and courses ANTH 277, EDUC 301, GEOG 200, and WGST 422.

reddit

An interesting question posted about whether AU passes or fails a set percentage of students per course; the answer is no, but the conversation led to a link to AU's course completion stats.

Twitter

@austudentsunion tweets: "AUSU is offering a Resume Review services for #AthabascaU undergrads! We partnered with VMock Inc. to give our member free access to their web-based SMART resume review platform! SIGN UP TODAY AT <https://vmock.com/ausu> #OneAU #Igo2AU."

@aulibarchives tweets: "Media Literacy Week is approaching! Register for some of these events, including one by @AULibrary! Learn more and take part in the conversation: <https://mediasmarts.ca/mlw-events> #MediaLitWk @MediaSmarts."



Five Ways to Protect Your Skin While Wearing Your Mask

Xin Xu



For AU students who regularly leave the home for part-time work, groceries, or other commitments, masks are now an essential part of life outside the home. Sometimes continuous masking is required in public locations and must be worn for many hours at a time. For those who do this regularly, you're familiar with the skin irritation and discomfort that may accompany breathing in a closed environment. For myself, I know that the bacteria in my mouth from my saliva and digested food can create acne breakouts and red irritation around the covered surface. So how do we cope with this new reality and take care of our skin better during this time?

Prevent rashes

One of my least favorite discoveries is that, after many hours of wearing a surgical mask, darkened marks appear around the areas of tighter contact with my skin including the nose bridge and the lower chin areas. This frustration led me to dab some baby powder onto these compressed areas. Certain baby powder formulas have zinc oxide ingredients that soothe and protect the skin. Sometimes

placing a Band-Aid in areas of skin contact like behind the ears may be a good option.

Cleanse appropriately:

For many AU students who follow a regular skin care routine, continuous masking can add some further headaches to the equation. Since you may be cleansing with a routine that works in the pre-COVID era, it may not be effective when you're using masks for many hours of the day. Using a non-comedogenic product is recommended such that pores can remain unclogged and healthy.

Spot treatment your acne

For myself, acne has been an ongoing issue that never completely ended post-puberty. Depending on the level of hormones in my body, acne flare ups are quite common. With mandatory masking policies in public locations, I've found it hard to manage acne flare ups that happen hand-in-hand with skin irritation. In the beginning of the pandemic, my skin was so distressed that I could certainly have qualified for more aggressive Accutane treatment. However, I've found a good balance of using products with benzoyl peroxide and salicylic acid. These ingredients are found in most blackhead removal



and acne cleansing formulas. Preventing acne flare ups is also important by spot treatment solutions such as salicylic acid gels.



Moisturize effectively:

For those with dry-skin, thicker products that are generally used to beat the Canadian winter dryness may not be the best option. Specifically, products with petrolatum (Vaseline) and oily formulations are a recipe for disaster with masks. Opt for a water-soluble moisturizer that is light and non-scented. My favorite drug store brands include Neutrogena, Cetaphil (non-oily moisturizer), and Vichy (Normaderm series). Water-based moisturizers leave your skin feeling refreshed and light.

Keep make-up products to a minimum

This category is particularly applicable for women who often have multiple layers of product on at a time including primers and foundations. Unfortunately, having layered on make-up before sporting a surgical mask, I've come to learn of the skin discomfort, itchiness that can accompany having too much product on. One interesting fact I've learned from women in Asian countries who have been masking long before COVID-19 is to wear make-up products on exposed areas rather than masked areas. This has worked well for me and prevents many of the aftermaths of long hours of masking.



References

Mayo Clinic., 2020., *Skincare Tips during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Retrieved from: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/coronavirus-skin-care/art-20487664>

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The Study Dude

Ten Steps to an A-Grade Evaluative Essay

Marie Well



Writing You've just been assigned a project to evaluate a restaurant. An evaluation essay is like an opinion piece, so you should express your opinion, right? Not exactly. Opinion pieces are biased. Evaluation pieces, ideally, are not.

“Though an evaluation essay encourages injecting some opinion, it should not be opinionated! A good evaluation essay is aimed at discussing the quality of the product or service, remaining unbiased and reasoned”, says EssayShark in the book, *Essay Becomes Easy Part I Analysis * Persuasive * Classification * Evaluation Reflective * Narrative * Compare and Contrast Essays*.

Let's look at EssayShark's ten steps to writing an A-class evaluation paper:

Step 1: Brainstorm.

“Brainstorm subjects to write about. Choose a topic that is close to your experiences, interests, and values. It will help you to establish evaluation criteria and develop an opinion about the topic” (Essayshark, 2017)

Try brainstorming your ideas on whiteboards or cue cards or sticky notes. Plus, generate even more ideas by researching book indexes, Wikipedia, and Google. The more ideas you generate from the get-go, the more power you'll have when narrowing your focus.

But what topic should you evaluate?

If you get assigned a topic, you won't need to worry about choosing one, although you might need to narrow it down.

But if you've got freedom, then check out the following choices of topic:

- “Performances: play, concert, movie, fashion show, sporting event, advertising campaign
- Experiences: store, restaurant, club, event, vacation, studying program
- Products: website, album, book, technological device, clothing brand, luxury item
- Places: park, museum, zoo, unique building, concert venue, sports stadium” (ibid).

One of these topics may work well as your evaluation essay focus.

Step 2: “Establish criteria for evaluation”

In other words, consider what makes for an awesome movie, restaurant, music concert, etcetera. But try not to be opinionated in your evaluation.

For instance, you could evaluate a movie or restaurant by using these criteria:

- “Movie: plot, scenery, cast, directing, score, humor, actors’ professionalism, etc.
- Restaurant: atmosphere, service quality, food, price, value, and taste” (ibid).

Predetermine what makes for perfect service, price, and taste, and compare that with the reality.

Step 3: "Judge the subject"

"Judgment is the detection of places where the criterion is not met" (ibid)

To judge a burger restaurant, ask yourself, do the burgers taste delightful, or do they lead to tummy aches? You'll need to be careful in your evaluation. To be clear, a friend of mine craves fast-food burgers. Burgers go down like cake for her. But for me, fast-food burgers give me serious heartburn. They even can cause me fatigue and nausea. To avoid bias, my friend might want to mention this flipside.

Step 4: "Look for supporting evidence"

"Look for supporting evidence. Support your judgment with relevant facts, materials, and the results of your own investigation. It will back up your opinion and make your position stronger. For instance, if you indicate that the analyzed restaurant does not provide a high-quality service, you will need to find and use many representative examples to show how this judgment was formed" (ibid).

You could suggest the burgers are unhealthy. You could support this by saying they contain 50% trans fat, and trans fat, according to a health website, boosts the risk of heart disease. You could also say the mayonnaise topping contributes to poor health, too, citing a medical report. You could also cite health issues caused by high sodium intake.

But you don't just want stats. You could also sample your family's views on after effects, such as heartburn or increased energy.

But before you craft your evaluation essay, ask your prof how many citations he or she wants. It could be the case that your prof wants no citations, just your experiences. Or it could be the case your prof wants lots of citations. I'd suggest a balance, but it's best to always hedge.

Step 5: "Transform it all into an essay"

"Write down the most important ideas found in the result of your evaluation" (ibid)

When evaluating the restaurant, unearth as many arguments as you can find. That way, you can readily find clusters that make up themes. Try not to discard ideas; Ideas you may have deemed insignificant can end up serving a larger role.

Writing the evaluation essay tops up the fun.

Step 6: "Create an informative introduction"

"In an evaluation essay, the introduction paragraph should grab readers' attention and provide background to the topic. For instance, if you evaluate the restaurant, you may dedicate the introduction to its history, founders, customer satisfaction rates, and overall popularity of the place" (ibid).

You can often find this information on the company website. If not, you could always contact the owner, senior manager, or head office. Many companies are willing to lend a hand, especially if you let them read your completed evaluation essay. It's free marketing research for them.

The intro holds the insider view.

Step 7: "Come up with an effective thesis sentence"

Your thesis statement should pack the punch.

“A powerful thesis sentence should present the opinion and list several arguments to support it. Example: McDonald's has the reputation of a high-quality time-saving fast food restaurant: prices are respective to value, the atmosphere is fun and friendly, food is tasty and original, and the quality of the service is consistently high” (ibid).

But you don't have to be all gung-ho either. You could highlight the strengths plus the weaknesses. For instance, your thesis could say something like “Burger Boos has varied flavors, reasonable prices, personalized service, and a family-friendly ambiance, but loses ground when it comes to short- and long-term health impacts.”

Step 8: “Develop supporting arguments in the main body”

“Start each body paragraph with a topic sentence An example of the topic sentence: McDonald's does not offer the lowest price, but it provides a high value for its price spectrum” (ibid).

Once you write your topic sentence, support it with evidence.

Quotes, facts, statistics, comparisons, impressions, and so much more could help substantiate your arguments. Try to mix more than one type of supporting evidence within each body paragraph. This diversity of support will make your argument appear more credible. Argue your point-of-view with solid support.

Step 9: “Sum it all up in a conclusion”

“Restate your thesis statement once again and make your readers feel that they have visited the restaurant with you. Encourage them to agree with the results of your evaluation and briefly summarize the main ideas highlighted in the body paragraphs” (ibid).

Always remember your audience. I often get sidetracked, thinking my audience is me. But the more I speak to you, loving you as my dearest friend, the better my writing becomes.

Somehow, in evaluation papers, we need to persuade the range of people reading our writing: namely, our professors. Absurd as it may seem, it might help to hang by our desk-sides a picture of our professor, along with a short description. The picture and description comprise what is called a persona. Marketers use personas to better focus on customer needs. Similarly, personas help us focus on our professor's needs.

Conclude like you're saying goodbye to an intellectual and proper best friend.

Step 10: “Proofread and edit the paper”

“Focus on the tone, writing style, order of developing arguments, overall persuasiveness and reliability of the paper. Identify potential grammatical and spelling mistakes and correct them. Check your paper for plagiarism and omit any accusations of academic misconduct” (ibid).

A+ papers generally have no spelling errors and no grammatical issues. So, set aside a week or more to edit your completed draft. Let two to three days pass in between each edit. That way, you keep the information fresh.

That wraps up the ten steps to writing an evaluation essay. So, what do you think of fast-food burger restaurants? And how can you support you're A+ views?

References

EssayShark. (2017). *Essay Becomes Easy Part I Analysis * Persuasive * Classification * Evaluation Reflective * Narrative * Compare and Contrast Essays*. [Kindle Unlimited]. Retrieved from amazon.ca.



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

A Question of Sex

Dear Barb:

Hi, I am a woman in my late twenties, and I've been dating since I was 15. Some of my relationships have been long term, some have been only a few weeks. I've even had a few one-night stands. To be honest, I am tired of dating and meeting people, as it is so difficult during COVID. All the stress of the virus, plus the changes in lifestyle has caused me to see many things differently. When we get through this and I start actively dating again, I am considering a new perspective. Most of my relationships have involved sexual intimacy, but I want to change that and try to develop a relationship before becoming sexually active. Some of my friends say it is better to have sex right away, that way you can see if you are compatible with the person; others agree that it's best to develop a relationship before having sex. I'm confused, I need some direction. Looking forward to your perspective.

Thanks, Beth.

Hey Beth:

Thanks for your letter. COVID-19 is making everything in our lives difficult, but we have to be positive and believe we will all get through this together. When to have sex in a relationship is a personal decision. There is no right or wrong. It comes down to how you and your partner feel. What you decide will depend on what type of relationship you want to have. Is it a casual sexual relationship, or do you want a relationship that may turn into a long-term partnership, possibly ending in marriage and a

family? Today casual sexual relationships are more acceptable than in the past, but there are still some societal judgements, especially for women. So ultimately this is a deeply personal choice that you and your partner need to make. It's important that you feel comfortable enough with each other to be able to discuss what you want from a relationship, including sexually.

My advice would be to take your time and don't rush into a relationship, whether sexual or nonsexual. Get to know each other. Discuss whether you will be exclusive or continue to date other people. Even if you have had sex early in previous relationships it does not mean you cannot decide to wait in a new relationship. I believe COVID-19 has changed many people's thinking about what is truly important in life and that's okay. Change is growth and that is always a good thing.

Email your questions to voice@voicemagazine.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.



Poet Maeve
Donations

Wanda Waterman



I've decided to start storing all my spray in one place.

Why?!

So I can donate it to science.

Holy crap, Fumes, science doesn't have any use for THAT!

Oh...

In that case, spose you could come over and help me air out my cave?

The information on this page is provided by the AU Students' Union. The Voice does not create this content. Contact AUSU at services@ausu.org with any questions about this article.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Oct 15: [Nov degree requirements deadline](#)
- Oct 21: [AUSU Public Council Meeting \(Zoom\)](#)
- Oct 29: [AUSU Virtual Student Social](#)
- Oct 30: [Deadline to apply for course extension for Nov](#)
- Nov 1: [AUSU Awards & Bursaries Deadline](#)
- Nov 10: [Deadline to register in a course starting Nov 1](#)

We've DOUBLED our Awards & Bursaries!

AUSU is happy to announce that we have DOUBLED the amount of funds available for our Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 awards cycles, which means twice as many students will be recipients!

There is now **over \$54,000** available for AU undergrads spread out over 8 different award and bursary categories (*in addition to our year-round bursaries!*).

Applications open to all AU undergraduate students.

Academic Achievement Awards (6 available): For students who have achieved academic excellence.

AUSU Bursaries (8 available): For students in financial need and/or with exceptional circumstances.

Balanced Student Awards (8 available): For students who balance multiple commitments.

New Student Bursaries (8 available): For students in financial need with between *3 to 11 AU credits.

Returning Student Awards (8 available): For students who have returned to studies after a long break.

Student Volunteer Awards (6 available): For students who contribute to their community.

#Igo2AU Awards (4 available): Open to all undergraduate students to celebrate diversity at AU.

Apply online [here](#).



Have your Say about the Future of Post-Secondary Education

The Alberta Government is currently working on an Alberta 2030 report that will shape the future of post-secondary education. Since Athabasca University is an Alberta institution, changes made to the post-secondary system here impact all AU students, no matter where they study from.

In our latest AUSU podcast, Natasha Donahue and Vice-President External and Student Affairs Stacey Hutchings discuss their thoughts on the review, and what might be in store as a result of it.

They also recorded the podcast LIVE!!

Check out the video of the podcast [here](#)

OR

Listen to the podcast episode [here](#).

The AU Students' Union encourages all AU students to take the Alberta Student Consultation survey, whether you are from Alberta or out-of-province.

Take the survey [here](#).



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