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Reseña de "Scientific Writing: A Guide" de Robert J. Sternberg
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This article aims to summarize the last edition of an important recourse for scientific writing: *The fourth edition Psychologist's Companion* (Sternberg, 2003). It represents a literary masterpiece that must be read repeated times for students and researchers of any science’s subdivision, especially for those of Psychology and related areas. The author, Robert Sternberg, provides detailed and attractive information about technical and scientific knowledge to readers interested in writing a paper.

This book was first published in 1977, titled as *Writing the Psychology Paper* (Sternberg, 1977). The second and third editions were published, respectively, in 1988 and 1993. The fourth edition includes 16 chapters, two more than does third edition. The majority of these chapters refers to rules to be followed by Psychology researchers who want to see their papers published on renowned journals. Countless hints are written based on author’s experience as editor and reader.

Sternberg writes with a special style: fluent, easy, clear and accurate. With humor, he facilitates readers’ learning process. The quality of his discourse is illustrated when the introduction section is briefly analyzed: this part is a model of paragraphs’ distribution that provides information to be discussed from first chapter to sixteenth one. Moreover, each chapter is by its own an example of scientific writing criteria, such as formal rule of orthography and punctuation, ideas organization, methodological issues, references writing, among others.

In the second chapter, steps to write a library research paper are presented. The first task to conduct a literature review through a domain. This procedure reduces students’ suffering. In this chapter, a discussion is conducted on some research paper’s subdivisions, especially for those of Psychology and related areas. The author, Robert Sternberg, provides detailed and attractive information about technical and scientific knowledge to readers interested in writing a paper.

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In the first chapter, eight frequent misconceptions are discussed and respective solutions are presented. Sternberg comments on main students’ interest: they want to discover new data, but they do not make efforts to communicate their discoveries to scientific community. Unfortunately, some of this data may not be published in papers, but the author’s idea can also be stolen. So, researchers have to consider good and not so good aspects related to using Internet data. The absence of an unique and absolutely certain guide to executing an experimental study, analyzing and reporting its data. The absence of an unique and absolutely certain guide to executing an experimental study, analyzing and reporting its data. The absence of an unique and absolutely certain guide to executing an experimental study, analyzing and reporting its data. The absence of an unique and absolutely certain guide to executing an experimental study, analyzing and reporting its data. The absence of an unique and absolutely certain guide to executing an experimental study, analyzing and reporting its data. The absence of an unique and absolutely certain guide to executing an experimental study, analyzing and reporting its data. The absence of an unique and absolutely certain guide to executing an experimental study, analyzing and reporting its data. The absence of an unique and absolutely certain guide to executing an experimental study, analyzing and reporting its data.

Independently of paper type, there are some general rules designed to help researchers to write a Psychology paper. In fourth chapter, Sternberg refers to rules designed to help researchers to write a Psychology paper. Among a number of rules, one: “Write for your reader”, seems to be one of the most important hints. Therefore, from before, it is very important for everybody interested in this academic world to follow the rules presented in this chapter.

Furthermore, as knowledge is being more and more spread through Internet, in chapter five, advantages and disadvantages of using this source are discussed. Sternberg quotes some specific types of useful online information such as journal articles, magazine and news, and general government databases. As well as in other chapters, Sternberg provides a critical analysis of information from different sources. To finish it, he deals with publishing research findings: they can be quickly disseminated, but the author’s idea can also be stolen.
Beyond Sternberg contribution to scientific writing from his own experience, he summarizes the American Psychological Association (APA) Guidelines for Psychology Papers in chapter seven. Rules of format, legibility, grammar, quantitative issues, references, author notes, footnotes, among others, are presented and illustrated. There are specific examples that facilitate reader’s comprehension and application. Although he emphasizes the importance of reading the original manual, the main rules recommended in this source are presented clearly and synthetically in this chapter.

The eighth chapter is a guide for data presentation in form of tables or figures. Sternberg helps authors to communicate their findings to scientific community, but most of all, he helps them to understand their own data. How could a researcher expose effectively his results to others without really understanding them first?

One of the most searched information is where researchers shall look for knowledge they need to start writing their Psychology paper. In chapter nine, there is an updated list of the most important and reliable sources: general and journal references. Sternberg emphasizes the role of this paper section: other people will probably search for articles authors have used to write their papers.

After dealing with formal and organizational aspects that are essential for the whole process of scientific research, in the tenth chapter, Sternberg discusses the main criteria in evaluating relevance to scientific knowledge by psychology papers. All researchers are obligated to read this section if they want to have their papers accepted by journal editors. Reading the eight standards presented process of publicizing an article can be effectively improved. This book author’s sincerity is amazing: he writes, for example, that it is necessary to know editors area of research. In addition, in chapters 11 and 12, Sternberg enumerates, respectively, important hints for submitting a psychology paper to a journal, from deciding upon a journal to editorial decision’s aftermath, and 29 suggestions of what authors should write, how they should do it and what to do with what they write. So, reading these last three chapters will make winning acceptances from psychology journals more possible.

References

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