

NON-EVALUATIVE SESSION REPORTS

TERMINOLOGY

REPORTS:	Can be verified or disproved Are based on what we see, hear, or feel Adhere to rules Are verifiable Exclude inferences and judgments
INFERENCES:	Are statements about the unknown made on the basis of the known Are to be avoided in report writing so that we do not guess what others are thinking
JUDGMENTS:	Expressions of the writer's approval or disapproval Evaluate Use "loaded" words

TIPS FOR WRITING NON-EVALUATIVE SESSION REPORTS

BE DESCRIPTIVE AND AVOID JUDGMENTS

- ✓ Focus reporting on behavior rather than the person.
 - Refer to what a person does or says.
 - Use adverbs, which describe actions, rather than adjectives, which describe qualities.

Example: "Rebecca asked for the session to focus on APA internal documentation and references page. She said she did not want to discuss grammar and/or mechanics at this point in her draft."
- ✓ Focus reporting on observations rather than inferences.
 - Observations refer to what can be seen or heard in behavior.
 - Inferences refer to interpretations and conclusions about behavior.

Example: "Julio made changes to his draft by drawing circles around commas that he would later delete and by inserting words he would later add to his text."
- ✓ Focus reporting on description rather than judgment.
 - Description refers to neutral reporting.
 - Judgments refer to evaluation in terms of good/bad, right/wrong, etc.

Example: "Claudia's draft included a couple run-ons and fragments which she chose to change by combining fragments with other sentences and creating two sentences out of run-ons."

AVOID SLANTING

- ✓ Judgments can be implied even without being blatantly stated
 - ✓ Be impartial
- Example: Instead of writing that "Brody refused to talk about his citation format," write that "Brody chose not to discuss citation format during this session."*

AVOID BIAS

- ✓ Be neither an opponent or an advocate of what is seen, heard, or felt
Example: Instead of writing that “Brenda’s thesis is beautifully worded and just needed some help with commas,” write that “Brenda’s thesis followed the guidelines according to the BGSU Thesis/Dissertation handbook. The session was focused on grammar and mechanics only.”

USE “I” STATEMENTS

- ✓ Focus comments on the effects that elements such as organization, development, audience, and word choice have on the reader.
Example: Instead of writing that “the thesis statement was out of place,” write that “as a reader, I noticed that the thesis statement did not appear until the end of the second paragraph.”
Example: Instead of writing that “the introduction was confusing,” write that “as a reader, I was confused by the introduction.”

Handout is based on information gathered from:

Hayakawa, S.I. (1978). Chapter 3: Reports, inferences, judgments. *Language in Thought and Action* (4th Edition). New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 32-47.

Compiled by Emily Klosterman/BGSU Writers Lab, 2004.