



Writing for Change

RAISING AWARENESS OF DIFFERENCE, POWER, AND DISCRIMINATION

4.6 Analyzing Assumptions in Academic Writing

Objectives

Discover the assumptions about audience and subjects incorporated into professional or technical writing.

Analyze the definition of the “norm.”

Determine how the definition of the “norm” does and does not apply to the targeted audience and subjects.

Materials needed

Article(s) from a professional or technical journal in your field

Copies of the handout

Time needed

Thirty to sixty minutes

Instructor directions

Provide your students with a sample article from a professional or technical journal.

Ask them to analyze the article for assumptions about audience and the experimental participants or subjects of study in the article.

Have them discuss the concept of the “norm” as presented in the article and how it affects them.



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4.6 Analyzing Assumptions in Academic Writing Handout

Directions

Analyze a sample article from a professional or technical journal provided by your instructor.

Answer the following questions:

What is the assumed “norm” for this publication?

How is the article gendered?

What assumptions are made about the gender of the readers? About the gender of the subjects or participants?

What assumptions are made about the class/socioeconomic status of the readers? About the class/socioeconomic status of the subjects or participants?

What assumptions are made about the race or ethnicity of the readers? About the race or ethnicity of the subjects or participants?

Who is missing from the subject pool?

From the audience?

What kinds of language are used to describe the subjects or participants?

To describe or refer to the readers?

What other assumptions are made about the characteristics of the readers?

Are they valid? Why or why not?