

Learning Skills, Room 120

Assignments

1. Gather resources and plan to use them all

- Course outline/learning outcomes
- Assignment instructions
- Class notes
- Study notes
- Texts
- Handouts
- Research notes, if any
- A folder and highlighters

2. Be strategic

- Carefully go over assignment instructions
 - what is the purpose of the assignment? Paraphrase for understanding
 - how does it relate to your course/class work/readings?
 - are there multiple parts?
 - what are the cue words?
 - are there options for how you do the assignment?
- Create a mind map or outline of the assignment requirements
- Colour code the various parts of the assignment

3. Explore the problem, not the topic

- Think of the topic as a vehicle for learning about the problem
 - for example: a descriptive essay assignment is about learning how to write a descriptive essay, not about the topic you choose. The topic is less important than the process and the product.
- Always approach the problem in terms of the whole course
 - how does the assignment fit into the course: assessment of your understanding of a concept or topic? Integration of theory and practice? Final project?
- Generate ideas
 - brainstorm
 - ask yourself questions
 - refer back to assignment instructions

4. Make a plan

- How will you achieve your purpose?
- Do you have to do research? Peer reviewed?
- How will you integrate research with theory?
- What type of approach will you use? (analysis, reflection, summary, interpretation, evaluation, comparison/contrast, etc)
- Make a realistic time management plan that includes time to research, draft, rest, and edit

5. Do research

- Use appropriate sources (peer reviewed articles, databases, academic books)
- Print articles that you will actually use. Staple.
- Do colour coded highlighting according to concepts/main ideas
- Make notes from each source, colour coding
- Note all bibliographical info and web info

6. First draft

- Make a concept map or an outline; focus on structure and flow of ideas
- Write a thoughtful title
- Write intro: context, thesis, main ideas
- Write first draft, referring to map/outline—don't worry about grammar
- Note where citations might go
- Write a strong conclusion

7. Let it sit

- Think about it/mull it over
- Go back to assignment instructions and purpose
- Jot down ideas to incorporate

8. Second draft

- Incorporate changes/ideas
- Incorporate citations
- Check for flow

9. References/Works Cited

- Use latest edition of appropriate style guide
- Check in-text citations for accuracy
- Each in-text citation must have an entry on the works cited page
- Pay attention to the details of spacing, capitals, and punctuation
- Make a title page

10. Edit

- Review assignment instructions and learning outcomes
- Look for structure
- Look for transition between ideas and sections
- Look for originality and purposefulness
- Check grammar, sentence structure, and punctuation
- Check tone/voice

11. Check against assignment instructions

- Have you met the purpose?
- Have you done all the parts?
- Have you incorporated theory and classroom learning?