

**Research Writing**  
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**Lecture- 12**  
**Literature Review: Supporting your Claim**



Welcome back to the MOOC course on research writing my name is Aradhna Malik and I am helping you with this course. And in this session what we will talk? In the previous class, we talked about drafting. So, we talked about various things we discussed the stages of drafting, we we talked about how you can draft? How you can start writing an idea into in your own words and we were discussed number of stages we talked about a thesis, a working thesis. We talked about selecting a critical strands etcetera.

Now, in this class we will take that discussion forward and we will look at some more here.

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**Drafting guidelines** (Lunsford, 2001)

- “Keep all your information close at hand & arranged according to your plan.
- Draft with a computer if possible.
- Remember to save your text to your hard drive or a disk, labeling it draft or dating it for easy identification.
- Try to write in stretches of at least 30 minutes.” Momentum builds up and helps.
- Don’t let small questions that come up during writing bog you down.
- Plan for graphics or visual information that you might want to include later.
- “Remember that a first draft need not be perfect” Get everything on paper first and compress later.
- Stop writing at a logical place – where you know exactly what will come next. If you do, it will be easier for you to start writing when you return to the draft.”

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So, we talked about drafting guidelines. So, in this session we are going to talk about the; you know how you support your claim?

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## Steps for supporting your claim (Lunsford, 2001)

- “Understand what counts as an argument
- Formulate an argumentative thesis
- Shape your appeal to your audience
- Formulate good reasons to support your claim
- Establish your credibility
- Use logical appeals
- Recognize the use & misuse of fallacies
- Cite sources in an argument
- Organize an argument”

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So, various stages of supporting your claim and how you start drafting? And ah. So, various steps for supporting your claim are first, you need to understand what counts as an argument you need to find out what your argument is what are you trying to say? What are you trying to establish? Then you need to formulate an argumentative thesis. We talked about a working thesis you have to come up with a thesis that that has that can possibly have an equally important opposing point of view that can be argued upon that can have a balanced that that can have another side to it.

To put it in very simple words then you shape your appeal to the audience hm. And then you formulate good reasons to support your claim, then you formulate good reasons too support your claim you establish your credibility, you use logical appeals, you recognise the use and misuse of fallacies and you cite sources on an argument and then you organise the whole argument.

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## Checking whether an argument can be argued

(Lunsford, 2001)

- “It should attempt to convince readers of something, change their minds about something, or urge them either to do something or to explore a topic in order to make a wise decision
- It should address a problem for which no easily acceptable solution exists or ask a question to which no absolute answer exists
- It should present a position that readers might realistically have varying perspectives on”



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So, let us see what each of these points are the first step is checking whether an argument can actually can be argued. Again, all this is from the book by lunsford that I showed you in the previous class. The first part of this is that, whatever you write should attempt to convince readers of something. Change their mind about something or urge them either to do something or to explore a topic in order to make a wise decision. So, it should have an action-oriented aspects to it. It should it should be persuasive enough for them to change their minds about whatever they have believed in so far or it should you know convince them that they should do something about the topic or find out more about the topic in order to do something else. So, that is a; what an argumentative or an a good argument should have.

Another thing it should have is it should address a problem for which no easily acceptable solution exists or ask a question to which no absolute answer exists ok. I am sorry this word should be which; so, it should ask a question to which no absolute answer exists. It should present a position that readers might realistically have varying perspectives on ok. So, it should have a present it should give you an idea of something that readers might be might have divergent views on which will in turn if you are able to prove your or if you are able to convince the reader that despite the validity despite the strength of what he or she believes in what you are saying? May also have equal or higher value then this will be then then your argument will be more robust. So, it is very, very important.

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## Formulate an argumentative thesis (Lunsford, 2001)

- : “To develop a claim that can become the working thesis for an argument, you often need to direct this kind of statement toward some action; i.e. your claim needs to move from what is to what ought to be.”  
e.g. Researchers need to share the knowledge they have created with those who can use it, so training in research writing is essential for them.



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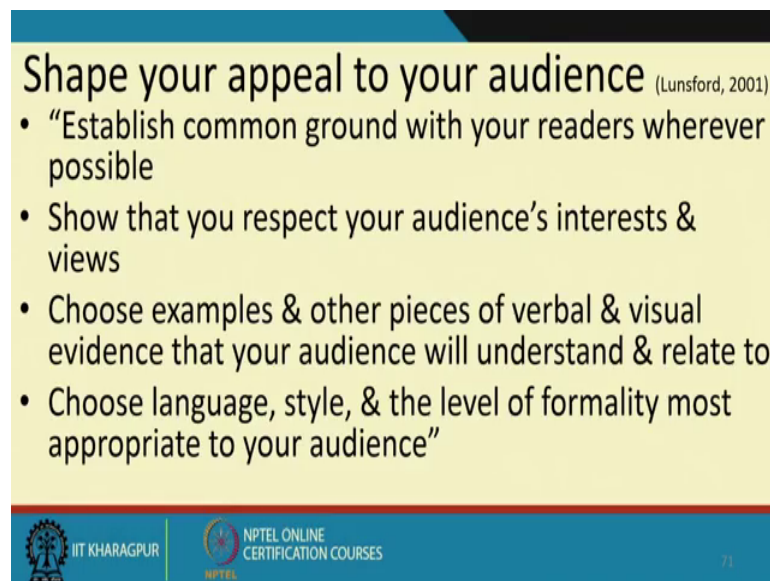
Then the next step is formulating an argumentative thesis. How do you formulate an argumentative thesis? To develop a claim that can become the working thesis for an argument. You often need to direct this kind of statement towards some action, that is your claim needs to move from what is to what ought to be. So, this is how things are and this is how something else should be taking the example that we discussed earlier. One example of an argumentative thesis is, researchers need to share the knowledge they have created with those who can use it. So, training in research is essential for them ah. So, that is a way of formulating an argumentative thesis. Researchers need to share the knowledge they have created with those who can use it.

So, training and research writing is essential for them. Now, you are asking the readers to do something different from what they are they have actually been doing and that is what a an argumentative thesis will do. An example of this I shared with you yesterday you know when I talked about the development of the research writing programme at iit Kharagpur, we have a compulsory subject called English for technical writing and I told you the story of how it came to be yesterday. You know some senior professors got together and realised that students are having difficulty sharing the knowledge they have created with others who can use it. And that in turn is affecting their credibility as researchers especially, when they compete with the best globally.

So, somebody found out what the problems were? Why it was necessary to have such a programme in place and the authorities were convinced? And some people in position of authority also did their bit by finding out more about what kinds of problems researchers

were facing. All that was put together and then they decided on the basis of the evidence they saw. That this programme needs to be instituted researchers have to be taught, how to write good research papers. So, the argument was that researchers need to share or research scholars need to share the knowledge they have created with those who can use it, which is why the training in research writing became essential for them and which is why this whole programme of this subject was put in place, all right.

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**Shape your appeal to your audience** (Lunsford, 2001)

- “Establish common ground with your readers wherever possible
- Show that you respect your audience’s interests & views
- Choose examples & other pieces of verbal & visual evidence that your audience will understand & relate to
- Choose language, style, & the level of formality most appropriate to your audience”

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You shape your appeal to your audience; how do you make the audience the people who are reading paper believe in what you say? How do you do that first you establish common ground with your readers wherever possible? And how do you do that? You refer to when we talk about literature review in the literature, review you refer to past literature. So, you refer to something that your readers may already have done in the past or read in the past ok, then you show that you respect your audience’s interests and views. So, you take the argument to something that you believe that the audience may already know or may be able to use. You choose examples and other pieces of verbal and visual evidence that your audience will understand and relates to you choose your language, style and the level of formality most appropriate to your audience.

So, it is very, very important to write in a manner that the readers will be reading it. Now, when you start writing for journals the one thing that you all must be very careful of is, what they expect you to write? Some journals want their abstracts written as paragraphs.

Others want them written in terms of you know what your research question? What your research objective was? What were the methods? How did you conduct your research? What kind of a paper? Is it a concept paper? Is it a literature review? Is it an experimental paper? Is it a databased paper?. So, all that will be asked of you.

Now, the readers of that particular journals are used to reading things in a certain way. So, you choose the method the format the language the style appropriate to your audience which means appropriate to the the needs of that particular journal or appropriate to the needs of the people who might be reading it. You can not take an article that you would write for a magazine and I mean it will not be accepted by a journal. Why because in a journal? They are looking for more in-depth information, typically they are looking the readers are looking for, information that they can replicate within their own context or in similar situations information that they can use to build on more you know to build more knowledge on. So, that is what they are looking for. So, their needs from what you present are very different.

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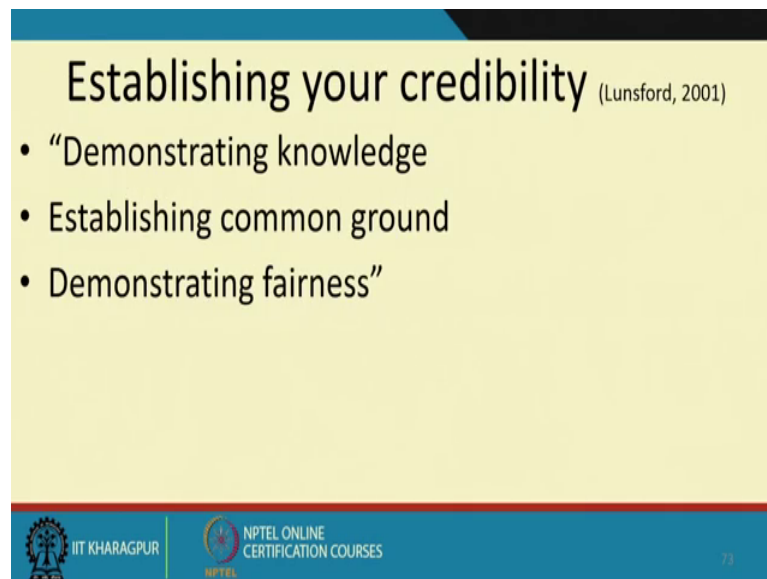
**Formulate good reasons to support your claim**  
(Lunsford, 2001)

- “Reasons that establish credibility
- Reasons that appeal to logic
- Reasons that appeal to emotion”

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Then, you formulate good reasons to support your claim. You you give them reasons that establish credibility, you give them reasons that appeal to logic and reasons that appeal to emotion.

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**Establishing your credibility** (Lunsford, 2001)

- “Demonstrating knowledge
- Establishing common ground
- Demonstrating fairness”

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How do you do this? Establishing your credibility, you demonstrate knowledge tell the readers convince the readers that you have read what you have read. I think I told gave this example earlier also I was having a discussion with one of my research scholars and she said that mam is it absolutely necessary that literature has to be referred to whenever we are presenting something even if I am writing a proposal?

And my answer was yes, how can you justify that a gap exists in the literature till you refer to literature that talks about similar things, but does not talk about something that it should have talked about or specifically mentions that there was no way that the the the particular researcher or the researcher was unable to identify or work in or do something that they had started out doing. And that portion would be covered in limitations. So, various ways of finding gaps in literature ok, but this is not about research methods it is about writing. So, so going into that will again take up more time any way.

So, it is absolutely essential that you demonstrate your knowledge of whatever has been done in the past. Then you establish common ground you refer to what you think that your readers may have known, then you demonstrate fairness and will deal with each of these things independently ok.

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## Demonstrating knowledge (Lunsford, 2001)

- “Can you provide information about your topic from sources other than your own knowledge?”
- What are the sources of your information?
- How reliable are your sources?
- Do any sources contradict one another?
- If so, can you account for or resolve the contradictions?
- If you have personal experience relating to the issue, would telling about this experience help support your claim?”



How do you demonstrate knowledge? When you talk about demonstrating knowledge you ask yourself can you provide information about your topic from sources other than your own knowledge? What are the sources of your information? How reliable are your sources? Do any sources contradict one another? If so, can you account for or resolve the contradictions? If you have personal experience relating to the issue would telling about this experience help support your claim? So, can you really do you know where are you getting this information from? Is the person believable or not? Do the sources and if the sources contradict one another that is even more essential? I was having another discussion with another one of my research scholars. And this scholar had put in a section in one of his papers that said contradictions in the literature and that was so worthwhile.

Now, when we were going to you know when we were in the process of reducing the word count of fitting, the word count into the the word count required by a general, my student asked me he said mam do you think we need to keep the section or can we take it out? Then I said this section must be there we can take out a lot of other things, but this section is well written and this section proves that you have looked at the contradictions in the literature. You have seen what opposes your point of view and you have still try to defend yourself despite having knowledge, despite proving that you know what is being said you know that goes against you or what has been? It is not being said, but it is about you know what has proven to go against your pattern of belief.

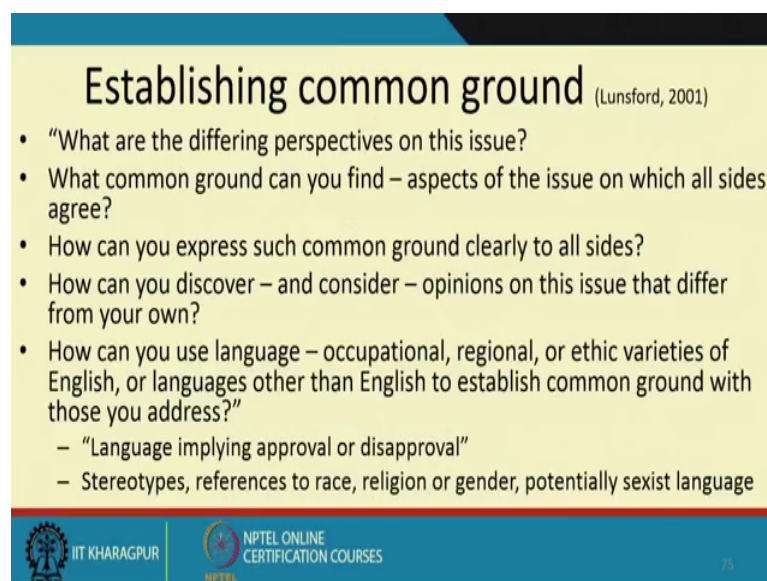


So, that is what we are talking about, if the sources contradict one another and you present the contradictions in literature and still defend your point of view, that makes whatever you are saying much more robust, much more strong, much more credible, much more believable, because a person who is reading your paper and who is trying to take a decision on whether your paper should be published or not. Sees this part and says yes, this person is not shooting arrows in thin air you know or shooting arrows blindly this person is actually gone through opposing views and still been able to defend his or her perspective. And say despite these opposing views whatever I am saying makes sense and here is why. So, that is very, very important ok.

If your sources contradict one another you present that. And you still view a story around why your perspective needs to be believed if? So, can you account for or resolve the contradiction? And this is exactly what my student had done. So, it is amazing you know how you can do this? Ok if you have personal experience relating to the issue would telling about this experience help support your claim. Many times, we have a tendency to say I believe in my opinion you know this is what should be done?

And it has been observed we use words like these. Now, when we use words like these you must think as to whether, you know your observation will really support your claim or not? And if it will is it really strong enough to support your claim? Ok. So, that is very, very critical as to what you include.

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**Establishing common ground** (Lunsford, 2001)

- "What are the differing perspectives on this issue?"
- What common ground can you find – aspects of the issue on which all sides agree?
- How can you express such common ground clearly to all sides?
- How can you discover – and consider – opinions on this issue that differ from your own?
- How can you use language – occupational, regional, or ethnic varieties of English, or languages other than English to establish common ground with those you address?"
  - "Language implying approval or disapproval"
  - Stereotypes, references to race, religion or gender, potentially sexist language

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Then how do you establish common ground you find out what are the differing perspectives on this issue. What common ground can you find? You talk about the aspects of the issue on which all sides agree. So, despite this opposing points of view various authors are saying the same thing one is saying I was able to do this, but not this the second person is saying yes, I believe this is true, but not something else, third person says yes, I believe it is as true, but not something else. So, one common point that different authors are saying you establish common ground for whatever literature you are referring to. And you say well despite the deferring view points on several other aspects of the issue these 2 3 4 researchers are agreeing on one aspect and that is this.

Then how can we express such common ground clearly to all sides ok. So, you find out how you can again you cannot get in touch with the authors, but you are assuming that, readers will be keen on knowing what common ground has been established. So, how do you express this common ground? How can you discover? And consider opinions on this these issues. On this issue, that differ from your own again I talked told you about contradictions in literature. Now, when we start looking for literature we have a tendency to look for literature that agrees with whatever it is that we are trying to say. So, we do not really actively look for literature that is not really along the or that opposes what we are trying to say; however, it is very, very important that we say ok.

I believe in this, I started out with the belief that all researchers all research scholars should be taught research writing, but literature points out that it is not training in research writing. It is actually practice in research writing that helps. So, it is not training may be literature points out to that may be literature says that instead of putting students through a class on research writing, it might help them more if they were to write research papers and get individual feedback from different teachers. And collect all that feedback and then keep practicing writing papers 1 it will add to their resume and 2 it will help built their credibility because after 2, 3, 4, 8, 10 rejections their paper will get accepted.

I do not know what the literature says; however, there is a very high chance that the literature might say something like this. Now, if you discover something like this in the literature that talks about both of these and you still say that despite this, I firmly believe that training in research writing is very, very important for research scholars, because it at least gives them the initial push towards writing papers. A lot of people come for

research who have never ever seen a research paper. So, in addition to this class may be that will also help, but you know having this sort of class for a first 2 3 or 4 months of their academic carriers, might help them. Now, when you present both points of view and still defined your point of view and say this is not a total waste, it is doing some good to people. Your opinion will be become more valuable why because you have considered a an opinion that says no research scholars need not be taught research writing practice is more important ok.

So, you discover how you have discovered it. Then, how can you use language occupational regional or ethnic varieties of English or languages other than English to establish common ground with those you address. Language implying approval or disapproval, stereotypes references to race religion or gender potentially sexist language. Very, very important how do you how do you use language? My must my PhD thesis was on media screen exposure the impact of media screen exposure on the communicative competence of 4 to 6-year-old children. Now, I had to refer to children at times I had to refer to individual children, when I was doing my masters at that time this whole concept of he she or s oblique h e he and she combined was not very not really emphasised, on by the time I reached my PhD programme and being in the west people were lot more aware and this had become a critical issue.

So, throughout my dissertation I have referred to any child when I say the child does this and instead of saying he I say s oblique he she or he her or his. So, you know that is how you try to be as neutral in your language as possible. So, and again we avoid references to raise unless your writing a paper on a cultural anthropology, where highlighting the differences and the biases in the race become very important. So, that context demands it by all means, but it should be written with the with the soul purpose of educating people and not really enhancing or developing biases among your readers ok. So, that is very, very important.

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## Demonstrating fairness (Lunsford, 2001)

- “How can you show that you are taking into account all significant points of view?”
- How can you demonstrate that you understand & sympathize with points of view other than your own?
- What can you do to show that you have considered evidence carefully, including evidence that does not support your position?”



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Then, all language appl all right then demonstrating fairness. So, how do you demonstrate fairness? What are the different differing perspectives on this issue? So, yeah demonstrating fairness how can you show that you are taking into account all the significant points of view?

How can you demonstrate that you understand and sympathise with points of view? Other than your own I have told you considering opposing points of view pointing out contradictions and literature. Very, very important what can you do to show that you have considered the evidence carefully including evidence that does not support your position. So, you provide a well-balanced overview of the whole situation ok. So, that is how you demonstrate fairness and establish common ground and demonstrate knowledge and in turn establish your credibility. Now, we will take on this discussion further in the next class.

Thank you very much for listening.