Integrating Evidence into Your Writing
Part 1: Maintaining Your Writer’s Voice

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Learning Outcomes

By the end of this presentation, you should be able to:

- Integrate evidence from your sources into your writing to support your claims and points.
- Integrate evidence while maintaining your own voice.
Overview of Presentation

1. Define integration.
2. Discuss the importance of the writer’s voice.
3. Identify problems with integration in student paragraphs.
4. Identify solutions to the problems.
Integrating Evidence into Your Writing

What do we mean by “integrating?”

- “To integrate” means to combine two or more things so that they become a whole.

What do we mean by “integrating evidence into our writing”?

- We mean incorporating evidence into our paper from sources to support our claims and points.

What do we mean by “sources?”

- Sources are the places where the evidence we find is published. Sources are usually academic journal articles or academic books, but they may also include other documents such as government publications.
Integrating Evidence While Maintaining Your Voice

- Your voice should be heard particularly strongly in the key parts of the paragraph, i.e., in the topic sentence and final sentence.
- Your voice should be heard in signal words (e.g., “first,” “second,” “one reason,” “a second reason,” “similarly,” “conversely,” “but,” and “however”).
- Generally, avoid beginning paragraphs with a quotation or paraphrase.
Problems with Integration in Student Papers

Problem #1: The paragraph begins with the evidence

Problem #2: The paragraph fails to attribute ideas to a source or contains misleading citations

Problem #3: The paragraph fails to make connections among studies with signal (or linking) words (See Part Two of this presentation for details.)

Problem #4: The paragraph fails to conclude with a wrap-up sentence that links evidence to the claim made in the topic sentence or to the paper’s overall claim or argument
What Do You Think of the Integration in This Paragraph?

Some educational programs have embedded indigenous language immersion into the curriculum: “Declining trends are being offset to a degree by the fact that Aboriginal languages are being learned as second languages. Three communities in Northern Saskatchewan – Onion Lake First Nation, the Lac La Ronge Indian Band and the Peter Ballantyne Cree First Nation -- have successfully developed and implemented their own immersion programs ... In the Northwest Territories, the Dene Kede curriculum includes the teaching of Dene to students” (Sisco et al., p. 2012, p. 24).

Paragraph courtesy of a former student
Revised Paragraph: Improved Integration

Red = topic sentence, blue = evidence, green = wrap-up, purple = signal words

To help young people form a connection to their culture, some educational programs have embedded indigenous language immersion into the curriculum. For example, several First Nations in Northern Saskatchewan – Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Lac La Ronge Indian Band and Onion Lake Indian Band – have implemented successful Cree immersion programs (Sisco et al., 2012). In another example, the Dene Kede First Nation in the Northwest Territories is teaching cultural experiences in Dene (Sisco et al., 2012). These First Nations have recognized the importance of language in maintaining culture and have therefore made language a key part of their Aboriginal education programs.

Paragraph courtesy of a former student
What Do You Think of the Integration in This Paragraph?

Tsubone et al. [21] investigated the oxygen permeation of DLC deposited on semicrystalline PET, polyethylene and polypropylene polymers, and amorphous PMMA polymer. The gas barrier property of DLC-coated samples dramatically improved after DLC deposition. The gas barrier property of fractured DLC on mechanically deformed substrates has been measured. The substrates with more cracks and higher residual strain, such as PET, had less damage to the gas barrier. Kodama et al. [20] fabricated high gas barrier carbon films on PET substrate .... The gas barrier of the coated films was 23 times stronger than the barriers of the uncoated PET substrates.

Courtesy of a former student
Revised Paragraph: Improved Integration

Red = topic sentence, blue = evidence, green = wrap-up, purple = signal words

Several researchers have investigated the gas barrier properties of different polymers using DLC coating. Tsubone et al. [21] investigated the oxygen permeation of DLC deposited on semicrystalline PET, polyethylene (PE) and polypropylene (PP) polymers, and amorphous (PMMA) polymer. The authors reported that, after DLC deposition, the gas barrier property of DLC-coated samples dramatically improved. Tsubone et al. also measured the gas barrier of fractured DLC on mechanically deformed substrates [21]. They found that the substrates with more cracks and higher residual strain, such as PET, exhibited less damage to the gas barrier. In related research, Kodama et al. [20] fabricated the high gas barrier carbon films on PET substrate ... These studies suggest that DLC deposition can improve the gas barrier of certain polymers, particularly PET.

Courtesy of a former student
Problems with Integration Due to Inadequate Citing

- Students often have trouble knowing where to position citations. Incorrect positioning can confuse your reader about the origins of the claims made and ideas discussed in your paper.

- Students also often don’t know how often to cite the same source more than once in the same paragraph.

- This can lead to excessive citing, which can distract the reader.

- Remember, though, that it is better to over-cite than to under-cite!
What Does This Citing Suggest About the Origin of Ideas?

Since the early 1970s, deaths in Canada from automobile accidents have dramatically declined. Richards et al. (2016) studied Canadian traffic accident statistics from 1970 to 2010 and discovered more than a threefold decrease in deaths during this period. This reduction can be attributed to lower speed limits as well as to safety features now standard in cars, including seat belts, air bags, anti-lock brakes, and a third rear brake light. However, traffic safety is once again being threatened, this time by drivers’ prolific use of the cell phone. This claim is borne out by recent Statistics Canada (2016) figures that show that deaths and injuries in Canada caused by distracted drivers increased by 15% from 2010 to 2015. Although overall deaths from traffic accidents have declined, this new threat to safety must be taken seriously.

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Courtesy of a former student
Reporting Verbs and Signal Words

Here are some reporting verbs and signal words that you can use to signal to your readers that you are continuing to refer to evidence from a source:

- The authors/they go on to suggest/maintain/argue/contend/describe ...
- The authors/they further suggest/maintain/argue/contend/note ...
- The authors/they also suggest/maintain/argue/contend ...
- Additionally, the authors suggest/maintain/argue/contend ...
- In addition to suggesting/maintaining /arguing that ..., the authors ...
- The authors/they conclude ...
Summary

- Maintain your own authorial voice; assign your sources a supporting role.
- Focus on the construction of your argument and use your sources as evidence for your own claims and points.
- Watch for the following problems:
  - not integrating the evidence into your paragraph,
  - beginning the paragraphs with evidence from sources instead of your own claim or point,
  - not using citations effectively to distinguish between your own points and those of your sources.