

Early Feedback on Class Paper

Due: November 14th 2005, 6:00pm
Worth: 1%
Feedback to be returned: November 21st 2005

1 Purpose

The purpose of this “assignment” is to provide you with an opportunity to obtain early feedback on your class paper before you hand it in. For many students, this class paper will be one of the first research papers you write. Therefore, we will try to provide you with additional resources to help you formulate the argument clearly. The feedback you get from this assignment should help you determine what else you need to do in order to write a good scientific paper. It will also give you feedback on what we expect to see in the class paper.

2 Common Pitfalls

In general, there are two kinds of scientific papers — a *research* paper and a *position* paper. A research paper presents new ideas and new results, whereas a position paper incorporates the state-of-the-art research findings into a coherent and compelling argument. Your class paper should take the form of a **position** paper.

One of the main goals in Science is dissemination. Therefore, your work needs to be well written in order for your audience to understand your point. Remember that your audience has knowledge in Cognitive Science but may not be completely aware of the problem of your focus. For example, if you are writing on a Psychology topic, imagine that your audience is a Linguistics researcher; if you are writing on an AI paper, imagine that your audience is a Psychology researcher; etc. Be clear and consistent with the terminology you use. When in doubt, ask! Here are some common pitfalls to watch out for:

- unclear presentation of argument
- lack evaluation of research work (i.e., take other research interpretations for granted)
- lack research references
- non-scientific writing
- re-iteration of the research finding
- summary of other work

For more information, please check <http://www.cs.utoronto.ca/~bowen/250/arg.html> on suggestions for writing a position paper.

3 What to Hand In

There are several options on what you can submit for this assignment (note: the more you submit, the more feedback you will receive):

- a full list of references that you intend to use (maximum one page), **OR**
- the above and a clear thesis statement stating the problem and your position (maximum 300 words), **OR**
- the above and the overall argument structure indicating how different pieces of evidence fit into the picture (maximum one page; point form, tree structure, any easy to read format)

You may also put footnotes to indicate questions that you may have about particular parts of your submission.

4 Submission

By email: You can submit this assignment via email to `bowen@cs.utoronto.ca` by 6:00pm, November 14th 2005. Plain text submissions preferred (e.g., Notepad produces .txt files, Word does not).

In class: You can submit this assignment on paper in class by 6:00pm, November 14th 2005. Please do not be late — assignments will be picked up at the beginning of class only. If you decide to handwrite your assignment, please be sure that your handwriting is legible.

5 Feedback

Depending on the volume of submissions, some feedback may be written on individual assignments, and common problems will be posted (with comments) on: <http://www.cs.utoronto.ca/~bowen/250/a0.html>. Please check this website at the end of November 21st for an update.