ACES ABSTRACTS: GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

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Adapted from:
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Professor of Linguistics
Distinguished Teaching Professor
What is ACES?

- **Annual Celebration of Excellence by Students**
  - Research
  - Creative Activities

- **Wednesday, March 25, 2015**
  - All day long!
  - Entire UC!

- University-wide
  - Not college-specific
  - Not department-specific

- [http://www.uta.edu/aces](http://www.uta.edu/aces)
The ACES Audience

- Who attends?
  - Faculty
  - Students
  - Alumni

- Audience members are...
  - Intelligent
  - Well-educated
  - Successful
  - Invested in student success

- The “ACES challenge”?
  - *Diversity of the Audience*
Connecting with the Audience

- Dumb down / water down your material

- Make your work **accessible**
  - “easy to approach, enter, use, or understand”

- How might you enhance accessibility?
  - Be clear
  - Make connections
  - Be inclusive (not exclusive)
  - Avoid jargon
ACES Abstracts
(from http://www.uta.edu/aces)

❖ Submission ≠ acceptance
❖ Limit = 250 words
  (Excessive texts truncated)
❖ May require revision + resubmission
❖ Deadline: February 6 (11:59 PM)
❖ Notification: February 19
ACES Abstract Committee

- ~20 faculty members
- Diverse disciplines
- Random assignment
- Shared assumptions / rubric
  (we’ll get to these later)
What does a conference abstract do for you?

- Summarizes... *your presentation*
- Previews... *your talents*
- Requests... *that you be included*
- Commits... *you to participate if selected*
...and from the **Organizers’** View?

- Summarizes the presentation
- Previews your talents
- Requests that you be included
- Commits you to participate if selected
- Builds
- Indicates
- Gauges

**Minimize Risk!**
A Point to Ponder

❖ “Many abstracts are rejected because they omit crucial information rather than because of errors in what they include.”

Linguistic Society of America’s “Abstract Guidelines and Specifications”
http://lsadc.org/info/meet-ann10-abguide.cfm
ACES: Past Rejections

- Insubstantial
- "Promissory Note"
- Unprofessional
- Overly specialized
  - Too technical
  - Excessive jargon
  - Lack of attention to audience

What potential risks do each of these issues raise?
ACES: Past Rejections

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You must convey to the reader why this work is or could be impactful. It may be helpful to frame this in terms of how it might advance your discipline (field of study).
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Your abstract should not solely reference future work.
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ACES is a professional setting. Check your abstract for grammatical errors and ensure it’s appropriate. Make sure your faculty mentor reads and approves your abstract before submission.
ACES: Past Rejections

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- Unprofessional
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Let’s look at some examples.
Consider this abstract

Green consumerism and the role of eco-marketing have become increasingly important for increasing the market share of sustainable (non-) food products. The current study examines the effect of social identification with certain green consumer groups on brand knowledge, brand attitude and buying behavior. An online panel study was conducted among a representative sample of the German population (N=961). For brand knowledge and brand attitude, we presented five well-known organic brands in the German market to the respondents. To test the hypothesized model, we used structural equation analysis in SPSS Amos 16.0. Several competing path models were tested. One of the main conclusions of the current study is that people who are aware of their social identity concerning environmentally friendly consumer groups also seem to feel more attached to consumers who buy organic food products. In addition, brand knowledge and brand attitudes concerning specific organic brands have an effect on buying behaviors for organic food products. Moreover, the influence of brand knowledge on buying behavior seems to be mediated by brand attitude. The results of the current study can be used to develop more effective branding strategies in eco-marketing. Aside from classical strategies, marketers could use social identity theory to create future market strategies with regard to green consumerism.

http://www.palgrave-journals.com/bm/journal/v18/n9/abs/bm20113a.html
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Consider this abstract

Development of highly sensitive and selective sensing systems of divalent zinc ion (Zn2+) in organisms has been a growing interest in the past decades owing to its pivotal role in cellular metabolism, apoptosis and neurotransmission. Herein, we report the rational design and synthesis of a Zn2+ fluorescent-based probe by assembling lanthanide-doped upconversion nanoparticles (UCNPs) with chromophores. Specifically, upconversion luminescence (UCL) can be effectively quenched by the chromophores on the surface of nanoparticles via a fluorescence resonant energy transfer (FRET) process and subsequently recovered upon the addition of Zn2+, thus allowing for quantitative monitoring of Zn2+. Importantly, the sensing system enables detection of Zn2+ in real biological samples. We demonstrate that this chromophore-UCNP nanosystem is capable of implementing an efficient in vitro and in vivo detection of Zn2+ in mouse brain slice with Alzheimer's disease and zebrafish, respectively.

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What does the Committee Seek?

1. Clear statement of the **central issue**
   - *What’s it about?*

2. **Description** of results, including reference to what was investigated
   - *What did you find?*

3. **Interpretation** of results
   - *What does it mean?*

4. **Significance** of the work
   - *Why does it matter?*

Adapted from https://www.uta.edu/aces/submissions/
Consider this abstract...

In high school social studies it is common for students to study important historical events that have bearing on contemporary life. For modern historians we try to generalize this by studying recurring themes across time. In this talk we will discuss methods of communicating the study of history to high school social studies students. It will also be discussed how the students responded to these modern history lessons.
What could be improved in that abstract?

1. Clear statement of the **central issue**
   - *What’s it about?* What are some of the methods?

2. **Description** of results, including reference to what was investigated
   - *What did you find?* There is a mention of results but they aren’t described.

3. **Interpretation** of results
   - *What does it mean?* This is missing entirely.

4. **Significance** of the work
   - *Why does it matter?* This is missing entirely.

Adapted from https://www.uta.edu/aces/submissions/

What about the next abstract?
The language of mathematics is one that is universal; not only does it transcend spoken language, but it also forms the framework upon which every branch of science is built. One area of mathematics that is responsible for many new advances within the scientific research community is algebra. Though many times overlooked as an applicable field of mathematics, algebra has numerous essential functions in areas such as coding theory and cryptography, communications networking, and computational biology.

In commutative algebra, one current area of research involves the study of totally reflexive modules. Such modules have nice homological properties and are found to have application in physics, coding theory, and computational biology. However, this research is still very open-ended, as the existence of totally reflexive modules has not yet been completely classified.

This talk will focus on my current research involving both necessary and sufficient conditions under which the existence of totally reflexive modules is guaranteed. The new results will generalize the results of current research through a constructed class of examples. Time permitting, we will investigate some interesting related open questions, as well as address future work.
Key Linguistic Property of Abstracts

- Propositionally Dense
  - Large number of clauses in a small space
  - Each clause contributes new information

- Abstract Enemy #1:
  - Redundancy
Eliminate Redundancy

- **Macro-level**
  - Present each concept once
  - Order concepts logically

- **Micro-level**
  - Parsimony of words

In the apparent unlikelihood that the subject were to experience physical discomfort akin to seasickness, ...

⇒ *If the subject becomes ill, ..."*
What **not** to Eliminate...

- **Transitions**
  - transition words enhance logic
    - *However, ...*
    - *Conversely, ...*
    - *Consequently, ...*
    - *Additionally, ...*

Make every word count!
Recap...

Your abstract should include:

1) Central Issue
2) Data
3) Interpretation
4) Significance

... in a way that is:

- Accessible
- Propositionally Dense