Campusweite Schreibwerkstatt

Revision
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Revising a text is one of the most important steps in scientific writing because it helps putting it in a reader-based form. It takes several steps of correcting regarding content, structure, language and form. This requires repeated reading, feedback and step-by-step revision. As a precondition, you must create a certain distance towards your own text – by letting it rest at least one day before revising it, by formatting it in an unusual way (e.g. another typeface or size, typeset, page margins etc), or by revising it in a different place than in your usual working environment.

The following methods will help you revise your texts. You should use only those tools that you consider appropriate and helpful.

1. Content/Structure:
- macro-structure = global structure of a text, outline, succession of chapters/parts
- micro-structure = structure of paragraphs
- elements of reader's direction = announcements, back references, summaries

For the macro-structure
- Summarize each chapter/paragraph in one statement that contains your main point. Read your statements successively to find out if they connect logically. If not, you can add/delete/rearrange statements.
- Read only the first one or two sentences of each chapter/paragraph and check if these provide you with the central thoughts of your paper. If not, you can add/delete/rearrange statements. If not, you can add/delete/rearrange statements at the beginning of the chapters/paragraphs.
- Imagine your readers and the goal of your text. Then highlight every passage of your text that serves this purpose. Think about your main statement and arrange the highlighted parts in a sensible way. If necessary, add missing elements. At the end, check if your introduction and conclusion are related to each other.
- Create a text network that contains all central thoughts and how they are connected. If this is not possible, add missing information.

For the micro-structure
- Jump between paragraphs and read them separately, keeping in mind that each of them should treat only one central thought, which you can note as a headline for your paragraph. If that is not possible, divide/rearrange/delete/add paragraphs.

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For the reader
- Scan your text fast and highlight all elements that help the reader orient himself with different colors or symbols: announcements, back references, or summaries. If necessary, add more elements of reader's direction if you have not highlighted anything (especially at the beginning and end of paragraphs).
- Scan your text and highlight all words and phrases that contain logical connections. Draw arrows to show what they refer to. Substitute all connectors that have no clear reference. Add more connectors if there a more than three sentences in a row without highlights.
- Tools of logical connection:
  - conjunctions (e.g. because, whereas, though, but, yet, also)
  - substitutional forms (e.g. pronouns, synonyms, generic terms or subtopics)
  - substitutional forms for clauses (adverbs such as therefore, so that, thereby)

2. Language:

Revise your text with regard to the following aspects:
- scientific style
- comprehensibility
- grammar
- orthography
- punctuation

Procedure:
- Print and **read** your unformatted text **aloud**. Set highlights whenever you come to a halt or when you get lost. Write down notes or alternative phrases simultaneously or in the end. With a recording device or smartphone, you can also record yourself reading. Afterwards, listen to yourself without reading along. [for style, comprehensibility, grammar]
- Activate the spell check of your word processor, always double-checking the corrections. [for grammar, orthography, punctuation]
- **Print and read your unformatted text** paying attention to grammar, orthography and punctuation only – not the content. Try reading your text backwards, sentence by sentence. [for grammar, orthography, punctuation]

3. Form

Revise the following aspects last:
- format
- quotations
- bibliography

Exemplary checklist for formal requirements

- cover page, table of contents with correct page numbers, bibliography, annex
- consistent typeface?
- consistent line spacing?
- no duplicate blanks?
- correct word divisions?
- page numbers?
- footnotes: beginning with a capital letter and ending with a full stop?
- are longer quotations (more that 3 lines) indented?
- have you copied your quotations correctly and given the right page number?
- complete bibliography?
- consistent citation style?
- consistent and complete bibliographical references (e.g. page numbers of articles, request date of websites)?

Partner Feedback

Choose a partner for a mutual text feedback.
1. Give each other some general information about your text following the questions below and specify the aspects you want to talk about.
2. Exchange your texts and read them, highlight and comment on them. Briefly discuss your reading impressions.

Possible guiding questions for preparing your text feedback:

1. What is your text about? How does your extract fit in the general structure?
2. How advanced is your text so far (draft, first revision…?)
3. What is your personal feeling about your text (critical, confident, strong and weak points…)?
4. What are the specific aspects you want to receive feedback about (e.g. structure, argumentation, elements for reader , style, typing errors, language, comprehensibility, effect

Possible guiding questions for reading:
- What is the main point the text?
- What is well done?
- What parts are still unclear?
- What kind of additional information does a reader need?
- Is the difference between you own thoughts and those of other researchers marked clearly enough?
- Is there a clear structure?
- Is the argumentation transparent?

- Are there too many repetitions?
- Are the paragraphs divided in a sensible way?
- Is the language comprehensible?
- Adopt the position of the text and continue its reasoning. Then take the role of a critique and express doubts or counterarguments.

Creative variation:
[vgl. Zegenhagen, Jana: „Sollte ich vor der Einladung warnen? Potentiale und Grenzen einer kreativen Feedback-Technik", JoSch Journal der Schreibberatung 7 (2013), 1-10.]
As a written feedback, compose a well-meaning invitation or a critical warning by taking into account content-related or stylistic features of the text.
Afterwards, briefly discuss your impressions.