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Taking a subject position ...



Taking a critical subjective approach also exposes relevant social, political, and cultural elements that make up our experience.


Such a critique may be central to our PURPOSE for writing.

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3. Writing ourselves as subjects ...

Have you ever been told *not* to include "your own opinion" in formal (i.e. academic) writing??

It's true that an unproven opinion does not, by itself, form sufficient grounds for argumentation.




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Writing ourselves as subjects ...

But expressing a personal opinion about an issue can be an excellent way to develop a provable *thesis* or position.




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Me, Myself, and I...EXERCISE 2

Think of your upcoming Oral Interview and Report assignment, and write informal responses to these two questions:

- What is your opinion about the value of education, based on your own personal/family experience?
- Create a research question inspired or motivated by your opinion.



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4. Using a personal, narrative style ...

Professional academic writers can and do use the first person. Why?

“I” can make our style clearer and our tone more assertive.

“I” helps us to make our position clear with respect to an issue, allowing us to be accountable to our readers.



“I” lets us explain clearly how our work compares with others’ research.

For more about uses of “I” and personal experience in academic writing, try: www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/should_i_use_i.html (Notice what this handout says about other “strict rules” or expectations about academic writing.)

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Me, Myself, and I...EXERCISE 3

<p>Once upon a time, as a walk through the woods was taking place on the part of Little Red Riding Hood, a wolf’s jumping out from behind a tree caused fright to occur in her.</p>	<p>It was decided by the committee that the issue of implementing a workplace diversity action-plan would need to be examined in a feasibility study.</p>
	

How can we bring these DEAD sentences to life?

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5. Emphasizing the active voice ...

I eventually interviewed 14 women although, because of their changing circumstances, I was not in the end able to interview all of the women over the full three years of the study. I interviewed the women four times during the period of their degrees ...

ACTIVE VOICE → I = subject/agent/doer of action
interviewed = verb/action
14 women = who/what?

The subject or performer of the action is most important in the sentence.

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Comparing active & passive...

Fourteen women were interviewed over three years, although because of their changing circumstances, it was not possible to interview all of the women over the three years. The women were interviewed four times during the period of their degrees ...

PASSIVE VOICE → 14 women = object of the action
were interviewed = verb/action
by ?? = missing agent/doer of action

*The object of the action is most important in the sentence.
The PASSIVE also adds a form of TO BE + a past participle.*

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Me, Myself, and I...Now, over to you

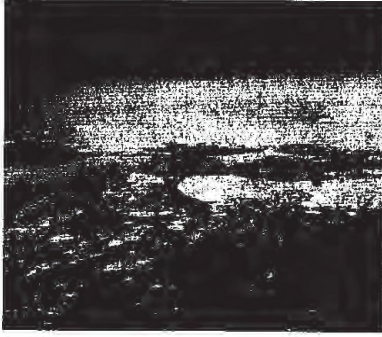
- ☀ Form into pairs. Taking 2 - 3 minutes each, describe how you got to campus this morning...but tell the story *WITHOUT* using "me, myself, or I" AT ALL.
- ☀ Each time you hear your partner using *any* of these pronouns, award 1 point.
- ☀ Here's the catch: the partner with the fewest points WINS!

*What does this say about our narrative impulses and "writing ourselves as subjects"?

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Best wishes for a successful term!



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Further resources developed under this ALTC Senior Fellowship, *Articulating a Transition Pedagogy*, are available at <http://www.altcexchange.edu.au/first-year-experience-and-curriculum-design>