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## Articles for the Student Forum

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## Articles for the Student Forum

### INTRODUCTION

Students often have very interesting ideas. Those on the editorial board who have many years of teaching experience will concur that today's students are very different from students of 5 or 10 years ago. Whether they are dental students or graduate students, they listen to different kind of music, wear different clothes, and most importantly learn differently. Today's students, having been brought up with smart phones and social media, learn more from images. They use images to communicate, as on Instagram and Facebook, and learn using videos. While images and video can be useful to communicate some types of information, they do not generally encourage thinking. One potential reason is that today's students have only limited opportunities for writing.

### WRITING IS IMPORTANT FOR THINKING

Expressing ideas in writing is obviously very different from doing so by speaking. While both require ideas to be organized, with writing, the process of thinking can be easily followed. Writing requires an orderly presentation of ideas and a coherence of thought that is not necessary in speaking. Again, those of us with extensive experience in teaching are often surprised when a student who presents a coherent oral argument turns in a written essay that is disorganized and incoherent. While many millennials now use images and videos to present ideas, writing remains an essential and universal mode of communication. Writing is especially important for students of science where a linear form of thinking is encouraged and writing scientific papers is a standard form of communications and knowledge sharing.

### ENCOURAGING WRITING BY STUDENTS

To encourage writing by students, the Editors of Dental Hypotheses (DH) started the Student Forum as a section of DH. To promote articles, DH set a policy of no fees for publication. By promoting writing, the editors aim to accomplish two goals: encouraging the publication of students' ideas, and to provide a platform for university professors and academic researchers to teach thinking. Students represent our future and what they think is important. Unless they can present the ideas in coherent and communicable writing, their ideas may never be known.

### SUGGESTION TO IDENTIFY STUDENTS INTERESTED IN WRITING FOR DH

Not all students (dental or graduate) are interested in writing and it would be a mistake to make writing compulsory. It is ideal to present the opportunity and let the students self-

select for participation. A first step is an announcement to all students describing the opportunity. Establishing an "interest group" or a "club" is one way to begin organization. Announcing a meeting of this group would be the next step. At such a meeting, each student would be asked to volunteer a topic on which they would like to write. Once each student has selected a topic, the next step could be the most challenging – getting the writing started.

### GETTING THE WRITING STARTED

Most students think that the first draft is the final version of a manuscript. As a result, they write a sentence and rewrite it again and again to get it perfect. While some students can write a good sentence the first time, most should be introduced to the idea of editing and rewriting, preferably with independent comments and feedback. It is often useful to discuss a type of "automatic" writing where the student writes non-stop whatever they know about the topic selected. No stopping – no correcting. Automatic writing usually provides a starting point. With appropriate guidance and revision, a 1500-word article will emerge.

### REQUEST FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STUDENT FORUM

The purpose of this editorial is to request our editors and contributors to encourage student writing and contributions to the Student Forum.

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