Some cross-cultural issues in writing award applications

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Three important elements of award applications:

1. The need to 'sell' yourself

2. The need for a clear, linear approach

3. The need to be concise.

You need to 'sell' yourself in your application…

…but in some cultures, modesty is a strong ideal and self-promotion is not acceptable.

Be open, honest and sincere, but also remember that getting the balance between confidence and arrogance can be difficult.

There are different cultural approaches to writing

Preferred English writing style — linear directness

Another common rhetorical style — non-linear indirectness

Here is the flower. Let me tell you about each petal.

Here is a garden. Let me take you on a walk and I will show you something.

- Western writing has **strong lineal organisation.**

- **Important information is usually written first** (eg as the topic sentence of each paragraph)

- Writing in a Western context is ***concise***, meaning: "expressing much in few words" [1]

[1] The Macquarie Dictionary, 3rd Ed.

Text before the editing process. Red text should be deleted to produce a more concise text.

3. Statement addressing chosen criteria:

Criteria 1. Approaches to teaching that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn

In my challenging but rewarding role as first year coordinator I have been acutely aware of the diversity of learning approaches and motivations that exist in large cohorts and the potential for students to feel anonymous and disenfranchised. The literature on learning styles research shows us that in any one class, there will be different learning approaches used by students that may include visual/aural preferences, differing abilities in concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation, and many, many other ways of understanding student learning. I have a strong belief that students must be better engaged in large groups than is often the case with straight lecturing. To this end, I have worked tirelessly in cross-disciplinary teams to develop projects that encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. I firmly believe that to become a lifelong learning is an important and significant ideal in tertiary education, and to become a lifelong learner requires a deep sense of responsibility for one's own learning. In thinking about the many ways open to us to address our students' learning styles, we decided to develop a project in which the aim was to empower students to capitalise on their preferred styles of learning. We felt that the best way to do this was by providing individualised formative feedback to students on their learning, linked to the specific assessment tasks of the course. We spent quite a long time ensuring the feedback would be as useful as possible to the students. Rather than just a line here and there, the feedback was comprehensive. As a result of this carefully designed and articulated research, we developed profiles of the learning preferences of all of our students in a range of courses. The research data were very interesting and enlightening, and led to the understanding that there was a strong visual preference amongst my students. I have therefore redesigned my lecturing style to account for this. Using principles of PowerPoint design articulated by Michael Alley (2007), students in my lectures now experience strong use of visual material with many and varied opportunities for active interaction.

The final edited version[1]:

3. Statement addressing chosen criteria:
Criteria 1. Approaches to teaching that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn

In my role as first year coordinator I have been aware of the diversity of learning approaches and motivations that exist in large cohorts and the potential for students to feel anonymous and disenfranchised. Seeking to better engage students in these large groups, I have worked in cross-disciplinary teams to develop projects that encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. In one project we empowered students to capitalise on their preferred styles of learning by providing individualised formative feedback to students on their learning, linked to the specific assessment tasks of the course. As a result of this research we developed profiles of the learning preferences of students in a range of courses. Based on this data and a strong visual preference amongst my students, I have redesigned my lecturing style. Using principles of PowerPoint design articulated by Michael Alley (2007), students in my lectures now experience strong use of visual material with opportunities for active interaction.

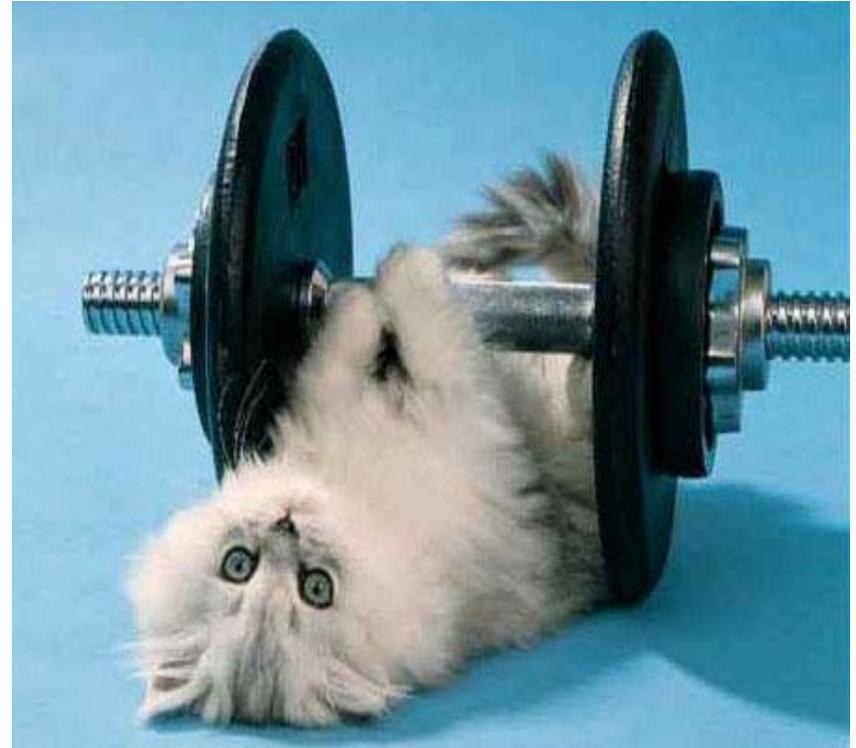[1] RMIT (2011). *Teaching Awards,* Learning and Teaching. Retrieved from: http://mams.rmit.edu.au/qjvuop9l6cwd.pdf

Trim the **fat** from your writing…

…and make it **fit** for its purpose.

1

2

[1] Source: http://www.j-m-e.net/CSSS/details.php?image_id=174&sessionid=f50224b6f41fd6f22d5e5e276337f34

[2] Source: http://www.associatevets.com/Default.aspx?tabid=240&language=en-US