Creating Context for Understanding: Accessible Report Writing Across Practice Settings and Populations

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Speech Pathology Australia National Conference, 2021

Speech Pathology Australia

At the end of this workshop we hope you will be able to:
- Identify evidence on report writing practices
- Plan and write reports for a variety of audiences
- Apply professional and plain language to your reports
- Appraise style and structure decisions

We aim to achieve this by covering:
- Background and context
- Evidence base
- Report writing practices
- Ethical considerations
- How to put it into practice

Introductions
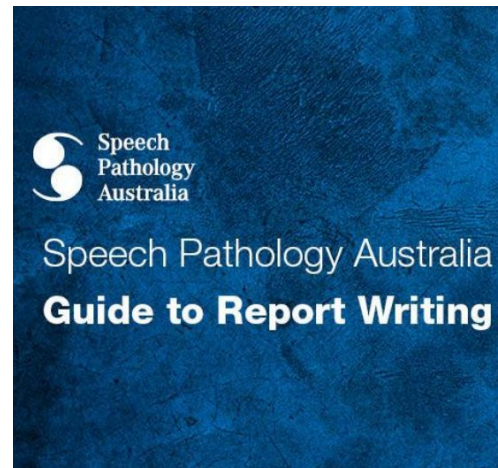
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https://learninghub.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/speechpathologyaust/1407-s02-episode-34

Report Writing: Evidence Base

Speech Pathology Australia

"This review revealed research conducted by a limited number of allied health professions, from a limited number of contexts."

Learning from our clients

"Some studies included comments on ways to improve the information accessibility of allied health reports that can be generalised to other allied health professions."

- ask readers for feedback
- explain jargon
- avoid reporting by subtests
- include functional recommendations
- individualise the format and content of reports

The readers, the writers and the documents

A scoping review of the information accessibility and health literacy demands of allied health reports

Harmony Turnbull, Leigha Dark, Ian Skinner, and Bronwyn Hemsley

This scoping review aimed to review extant literature in order to describe the readers and writers of allied health reports, determine the accessibility of allied health reports, and identify barriers and facilitators influencing the accessibility of allied health reports. We searched five scientific databases using relevant search terms relating to the accessibility of allied health reports. Nineteen peer-reviewed papers representing five allied health disciplines and six countries were included. In these papers there was little

funding-body representatives (Bigby & Fyffe, 2011). This is a shift from the "traditional" audience of allied health reports which has been health professionals, and increases the responsibility of allied health professionals to address the health literacy needs of diverse readers (Groth-Marnat & Horvath, 2006). In the context of individualised funding, and consumer-directed health care, there is an increased focus on clients making informed choices and taking control of their service needs to achieve functional goals (Dickinson, Needham, & Sullivan, 2014). Being able to access and use information from allied health reports facilitates this process, but is also dependent on the health literacy of the readers (Wühlisch & Pascoe, 2011).

According to Sørensen et al. (2012), health literacy

KEYWORDS
ALLIED HEALTH
HEALTH LITERACY
INFORMATION ACCESSIBILITY
READABILITY
READER-FRIENDLY
REPORT WRITING

Turnbull, H., Dark, L., Skinner, I., & Hemsley, B. (2020). The readers, the writers, and the documents: A scoping review of the information accessibility, and health literacy demands of allied health reports. Journal of Clinical Practice in Speech-Language Pathology, 22(2), 85–94.

https://www.harmonyturnbull.org/2020/12/02/the-readers-the-writers-and-the-documents-a-scoping-review-of-allied-health-reports/

Report Writing: Speech Pathology Australia Position

Speech Pathology Australia's position is that a client/carer should receive a written report following:

- an initial assessment
- review assessment
- at the completion of treatment/cessation of a service

The content and format of the report (i.e., content, length) may be:

- predetermined (e.g., a report for a funding application)
- influenced by organisation policy
- determined by clinician

Other factors influencing the format of the report will include the intended purpose the report and the intended audience.

Report Writing: Context, Readers, Writers, Documents

Contexts:
- Frameworks
- Service delivery
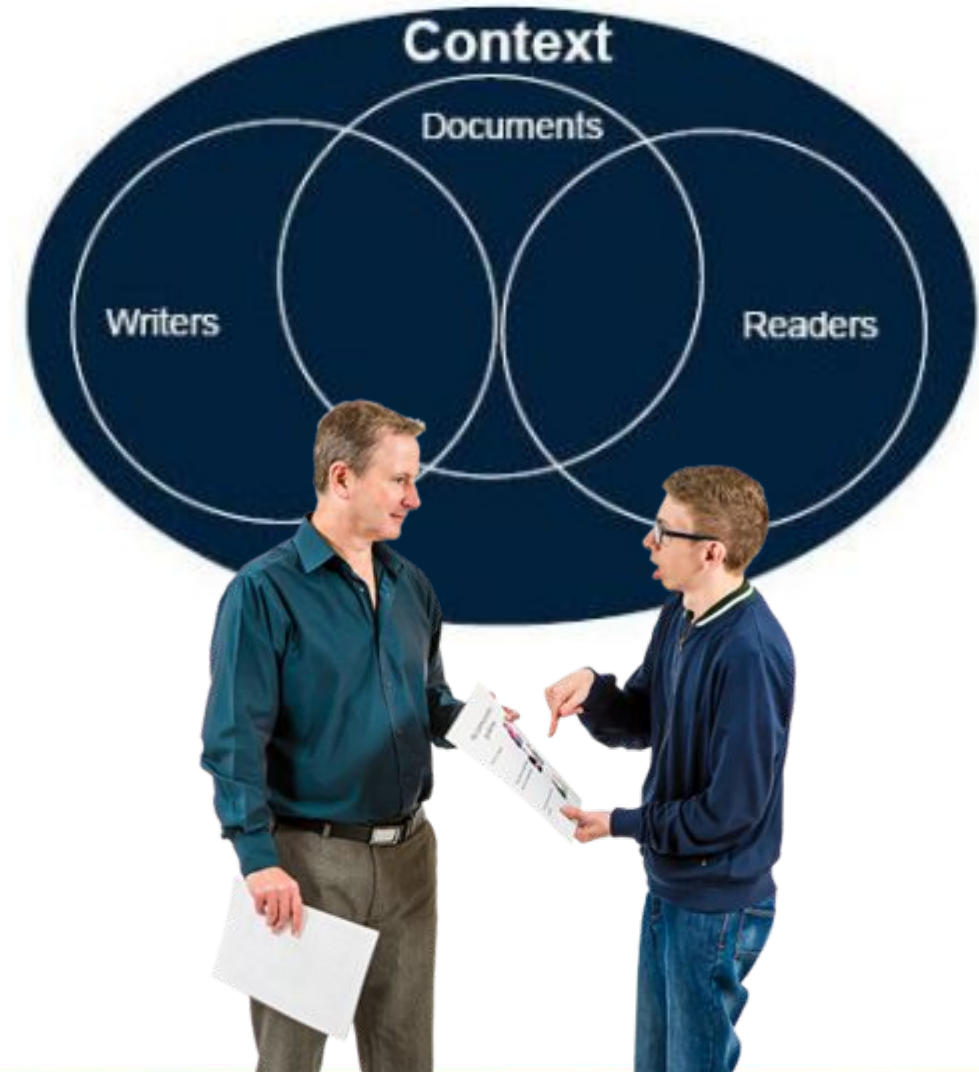- Policy and governance factors

Readers:
- Various people
- Varying backgrounds

Writers
- Speech pathologists
- Varying practice contexts
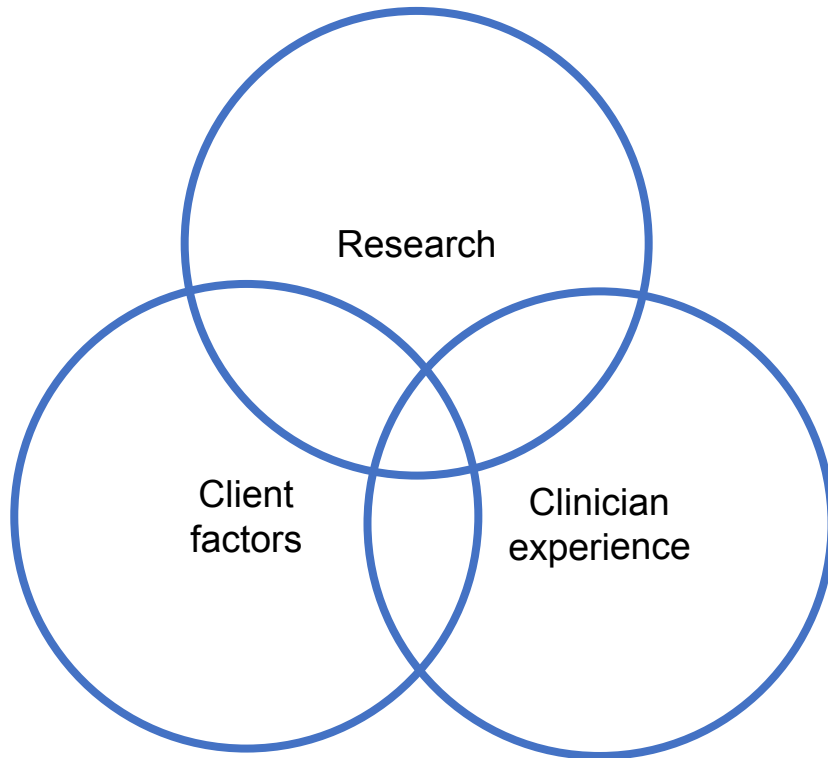- Varying clinical practice areas
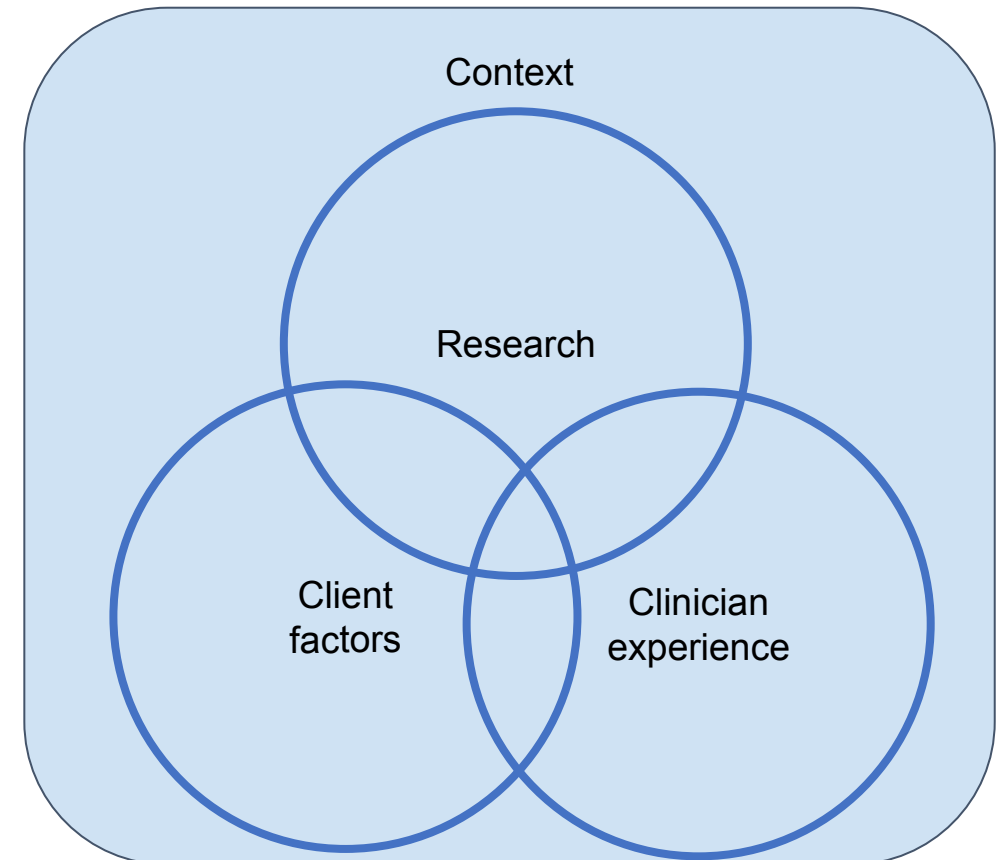
Documents
- Various reports
- Various purposes

Evidence-Based Practice

E3BP

Research

Client factors

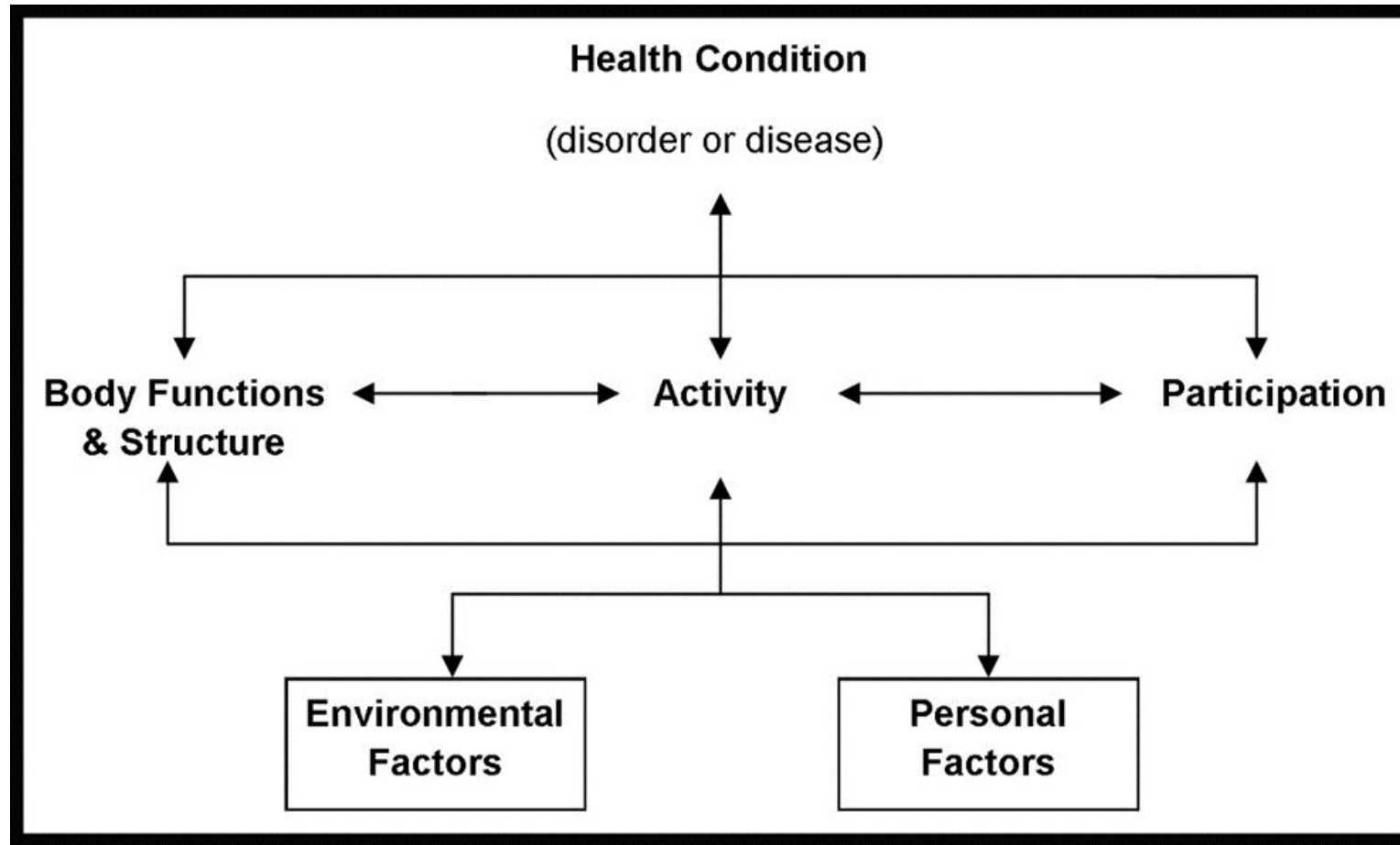Clinician experience

E4BP

Context

Research

Client factors

Clinician experience

ICF

World Health Organisation. (2001). International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health: ICF. World Health Organization.

Report Writing: Contexts

Purpose

Health Literacy

Health
Information
Facilitators and
barriers

Access

Understand

Appraise

Apply

Knowledge

Motivation

Skills

Report Writing: Readers

Accessible Information

"Making information accessible means more than just making it easier to read – it also involves delivering the information to people in an accessible way, so that the person's choice and control over the information is maximised."
(McVilly et al., 2017, p. 2)

McVilly, K., Anderson, J., Koritsas, S., Johnson, H., Wiese, M., & Stancliffe, R. J. (2017). Accessible written information resources for adults with intellectual disability: Compiling the evidence to inform good practice (pp. 594–594). https://researchdirect.westernsydney.edu.au/islandora/object/uws%3A49334/

Consent

Consumer Feedback

Research has documented that clients and other readers of allied health reports (such as parents and teachers) have opinions about what information should be in their reports and how the information could be presented.

Peer Review

- Use person-centred and person-first language

- Use first person pronouns (e.g., I, we, you) (Baker et al., 2002)

- Use plain language and active voice (Garwood, 2014). Avoid passive language.

- Explain jargon or provide examples (Wiener & Kohler, 1986).

- Consider whether you can avoid jargon.

- Be efficient with words and use 'everyday language' with a professional tone. Avoid a conversational style.

- Avoid multiple clauses in sentences.
- Differentiate clearly between information reported by others and information obtained directly through clinical observation.
- Report information from the client, parents or carers or other professionals accurately.
- Present information (particularly case history) in chronological sequence.
- Ensure that information in the report is culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs of the client/carers (Rahill, 2018).
- Avoid exaggeration and overstatement.

Report Writing: Documents

- Avoid reporting by subtests (Flynn & Parsons, 1994; Rahill, 2018)
- Report assessment findings objectively and avoid judgemental language
- Avoid abbreviations
- Include functional recommendations that link to referral reasons (Rahill, 2018)
- Only include information in the summary section of any report that has been included in the body of the report
- Provide information in accessible formats (Keefe & Copeland, 2011)
- Ask for feedback from readers about how well they understood the information in a report (Rahill, 2018)
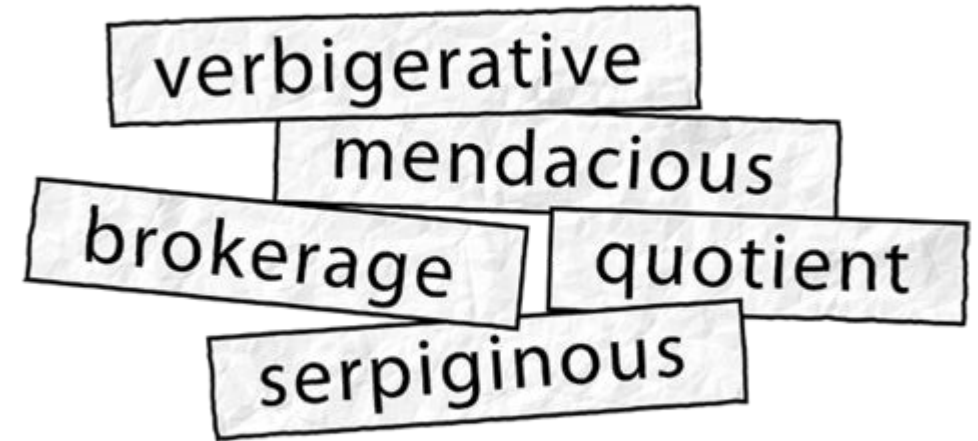
Report Writing: Documents

Readability

Common readability tools include:
- Flesch-Kincaid formula
- Flesch Reading Ease score
- FOG index (Gunning FOG formula)
- Simple Measure of Gobbledygook (SMOG)

(Australian Department of Health, 2018)

Also:
- Grammarly https://www.grammarly.com/
- Hemingway App http://www.hemingwayapp.com/
- More in the Guide to Report Writing

Formatting Considerations

Consider:
- Spacing between paragraphs or sections
- Signposting
- Grouping content
- Left justification
- Font type and size
- Word and sentence completion

A report template or proforma can be a time-saving tool when clinicians are writing many reports that have similar readers and purposes
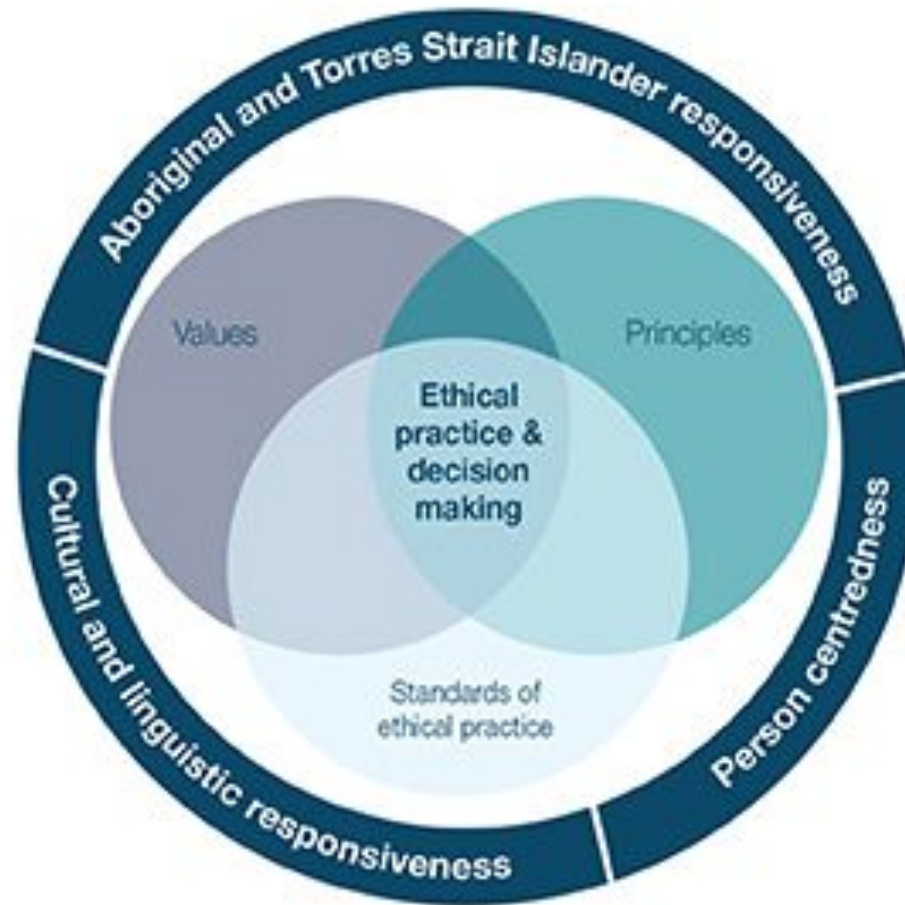
Report Writing: Resources
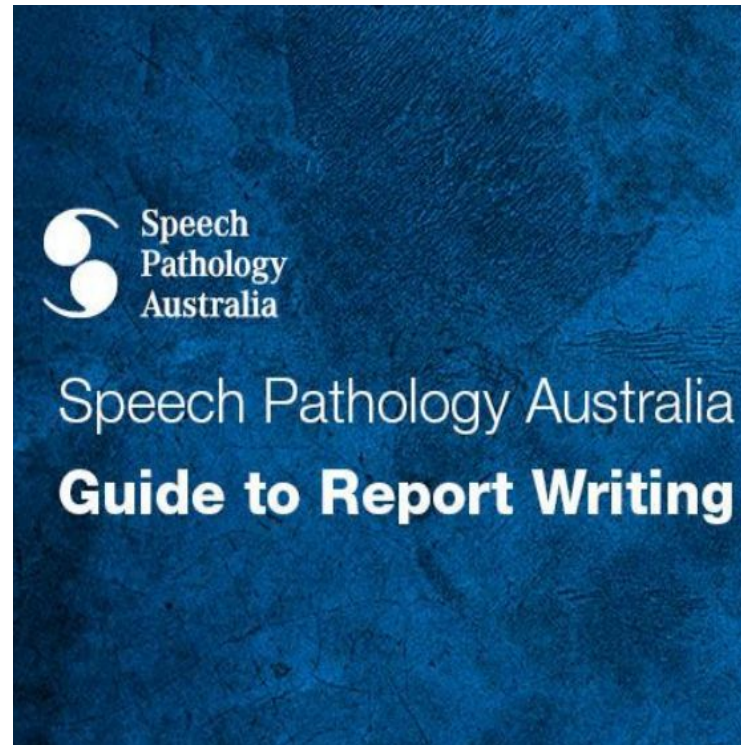
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Report Writing: Putting it into Practice

Ethical considerations in report writing

Questions or Comments?

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