*Lecture Five:* ***How to Approach Writing a Lab Report***

1. Begin with **the** **Material and Methods section**. This is a good section to begin with because it just involves detailing the steps that were taken in doing the experiment.
2. After the materials and methods section, **the** **Results section** can be written. By writing the materials and methods first, it is easier to order the results section based on when data was collected. When writing the results section, keep it in mind that the goal is to summarize the data. Therefore, things like how and why the experiment was formed and a discussion of the quality of the results and what they mean should not be present in the results section. Any verbalization of the results should be a summary that draws attention to key points in figures. Therefore, it is best to create the figures first then go back to verbalize the results.
3. After writing the results section, **the Discussion section** can be written. Considering the fact that the latter is an examination of the results in relation to expectations about how the experiment would turn out. It makes sense now why this section can only be written after the results section. In this section the expectations should be stated with supporting references and then the results of the experiment should be analyzed in relation to the expectations. Reasons for unexpected results should also be offered.
4. After the bulk of the lab report has been written, you can go back and write **the Introduction section**. It is best to save this section for the end because the introduction gives an outline for the entire lab report in addition to giving background information about the topic. In other words, the introduction outlines the issues that will be examined in the rest of the lab report and, because of this; it is easier to save this section for near the end. While writing the introduction keep in mind that you should state the problem or question and then include factual details that are supported by references.
5. After all other sections have been written it is possible to write **an Abstract**. If the abstract is to be included, it should be saved for last because it summarizes the content of the entire lab report. Keep it in mind that abstracts are typically written in the passive voice -- written in a single paragraph and should be informative enough.
6. After the other sections have been written, **a Reference section** can be included based on what sources were used throughout the lab report.

***Note:*** The **title** should be included and it should be descriptive and give some insight into what your experiment was about specifically.