METHODOLOGY OF WRITING

CHAPTER THREE: TECHNIQUES OF REDACTION

I. Introduction:

The thesis or dissertation should present a summary of the student's work during training or a project. The student must highlight the problem they aim to solve, the methods employed, and the results obtained. The thesis is a scientific and technical document. To accurately determine the content that should be included, it is essential to pose the following questions before starting:

1. What are the objectives of this work?

2. What are the expected results of this work?

3. What are the essential primary and secondary information about this work?

4. How can this information be organized to serve the research topic and be comprehensible?

The student should be mindful that the work is directed towards other researchers, and it is not written for oneself. Therefore, they should avoid inappropriate judgments and unjustified conclusions. It is crucial for the student to continuously question the clarity of the comments made and whether they are necessary or not.

II. Tasks to be undertaken before, during, and after drafting the report, dissertation or thesis:

II.1. Before Writing:

Before composing any academic document, it is essential for the student to have sufficient understanding of the missions or tasks assigned by the supervising professor. This enables the student to articulate the main objective of the work, which can later be incorporated into the introduction. Subsequently, the student should prepare a plan for the work, organizing the various stages, reading, and researching information related to each stage, and processing and analyzing the data and information obtained during the research. Additionally, the student should develop a plan for crafting the thesis, outlining the goals of the work, developing key ideas, specifying main and subheadings, and organizing chapters and structuring thoughts: introduction, presentation, and conclusion.

II.2. During the redaction

Preparing an outline facilitates the initiation of writing, even if it is just a preliminary outline. With time, all essential steps become clear, allowing for the organization of texts and paragraphs:

- Organizing main headings (chapters) and subheadings: There should be a logical sequence of information.

- Numbering headings: Main headings are numbered with a single number (1., 2., 3., ...) or large Roman numerals (I., II., III., ...). Subheadings are numbered using two or three digits at most (I.1., I.2., ...) (II.1.1, II.2.1., ...). In the case of subheadings under subheadings, alphabetical letters can be used (A, B, C).

- Organizing paragraphs to enhance the understanding of the information and the overarching title.

- Maintaining a balance between different paragraphs.

- When writing within an academic framework, grammar, spelling, and punctuation rules must be observed.

II.3. After the Writing:

It is essential to review the text after completing the writing process to ensure all the aforementioned points are addressed. While utilizing the proofreading tools integrated into the writing software is helpful, it is not always the best practice. It is often better to reread the text aloud to confirm its coherence and clarity.

III. Basic Rules of Writing:

III.1. Punctuation Mark:

- **Period (.):** Placed at the end of a complete sentence to indicate a full stop.

- **Comma (,):** Used in long sentences to allow the reader to pause and breathe, or when listing consecutive items (e.g., "The department includes several specializations, such as electrical and mechanical engineering, civil engineering, and irrigation"). Also used with conjunctions like "but," "if," etc., or ordering words like "firstly," "finally," etc.

- **Semicolon (;):** Placed between two complete sentences that are closely related in meaning or to clarify the previous sentence (e.g., "Water should not be poured on acid; it may lead to an explosion").

- **Ellipsis (...):** Used when omitting irrelevant information in the research topic.

- **Colon (:):** Used to explain an idea and list consecutive points.

- **Question and Exclamation Marks (؟ !):** Expressive marks used to draw attention to a specific idea.

- **Quotation Marks (‹‹ ››):** Used to indicate a direct quotation without alteration.

- **Parentheses ( ) or Square Brackets [ ]:** Parentheses are used for clarification or providing examples, while square brackets denote precision within a quote or citation. In both cases, the text enclosed within parentheses or brackets should be concise to maintain readability.

III.2. Syntactic Rules and Sentence Length:

Writing in a grammatically correct manner for academic work requires adherence to grammatical and spelling rules to achieve a precise and concise style. It is essential to maintain tense consistency while striving to use short sentences, preferably not exceeding twenty words. Depending solely on the grammar checker of the writing software is not always advisable.

III.3. Paragraph Division:

Each paragraph should contain one important idea, avoiding the writing of paragraphs that extend beyond one page.

III.4. Style:

- Use the third-person pronoun to maintain objectivity, avoiding the use of personal pronouns such as "I" or "we" for a neutral and objective style adhering to scientific expression standards.

- Minimize repetition and enhance vocabulary by using dictionaries to avoid unnecessary complexity.

- Each paragraph should explain only one idea precisely, avoiding complexity in expressions. The explanation should be simple and clear, using scientific and technical terminology accurately.

III.5. Readability:

Compose any written work in a way that clearly and coherently presents ideas for the reader to understand its meaning from the first read. The writer should put themselves in the reader's position, reading aloud or having someone else read to identify errors in rhythm, sentence structure, vocabulary, and clarity of ideas.

III.6. Objectivity:

Being objective means keeping your opinion neutral towards the information added to the research, whether through description, analysis, or proof of ideas. Avoid using unethical expressions that criticize or conflict with the opinions of other researchers.

IV. Intellectual Rigor and Plagiarism:

Intellectual rigor involves basing any information presented on various elements that prove its credibility, such as logical arguments, statistics, established facts, or testimonials. This is crucial to substantiate the validity of theories or assumptions in the work.

Plagiarism is the act of stealing words, ideas, or results from another person and presenting them as your own. To avoid plagiarism :

1. If quoting directly without alteration, use quotation marks (‹‹ .... ››) and mention the source.

2. If presenting the idea in your own words, such as summarizing or translating, mention the reference.

3. Use different vocabulary or rephrase while ensuring the idea remains unchanged, always citing the reference.