

## **Manuscript jigsaw – how to help students write dissertations**

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Students find it challenging to write dissertations. In order to tackle this issue an activity for final year students enrolled into the Forensic Science course was introduced. This activity was designed to help them prepare for writing through examining a research article. The students were given a manuscript, divided into small paragraphs, and were asked to (i) identify the section of the paper (e.g. Introduction, Results, Discussion); (ii) piece the manuscript together. The effectiveness of the intervention was evaluated by comparing marks for their research proposals and their dissertations. Most of the students did not achieve higher marks for their dissertations, even if they were present at the session. However, on inspection, it was found that students had tended to write dissertations drawn from literature reviews rather than applied research; therefore it is proposed that they do the same exercise but with a literature review.