**How to Write an Abstract**

We have a couple variations on abstracts, one of which is the research article abstract and the second of which is the conference proposal abstract. Let’s begin with the first.

Working from Swales and Feak (2009), we can outline a series of parts (what S&F call “moves”) that comprise an abstract. Note that these parts are functional units:

Part 1 – Background or introduction (*What do we know about the topic? Why is the topic important?*)

Part 2 – Research purpose (*What is this study about?*)

Part 3 – Methods (*How was the study done?*)

Part 4 – Results (*What did we find?*)

Part 5 – Discussion (*What do the results mean?*)

Conference proposal abstracts are similar.

Part 1 – Background or introduction; problematizing topic (*What do we know about the topic? Why is the topic important? What is the missing element, the “gap”?*)

Part 2 – Research purpose, justification (*What is this study about? How will it address that research gap?*)

Part 3 – Methods (*How was the study done?*)

Part 4 – Results (*What did we find?*)

Part 5 – Result highlights (*What are the star results?*)

Part 6 – Discussion, further observations (*What do the results mean? What implications can be drawn? What future plans or developments should be undertaken or are expected?*)

**Reference**

Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2009). *Abstracts and the writing of abstracts.* Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.