

Advice for Students Entering/About to Enter Div III

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Recommended Steps to Begin Division III

1. **Pass Div II!** – see Div II Portfolio and Pass Meeting Guidelines document.
2. **Meet with your Div III Chair early in your 7th Semester.** Reserve a half hour with your Div III Chair soon after the Div III request process is over and you know who your Chair will be. This allows you to talk about the requirements for Div III before you file for Div III, typically in the Fall Semester of your final year at Hampshire.
3. **Find Div III examples.** Become familiar with what a Div III is/can be/looks like... . GO to the library, pull at least 5 Div IIIs off the Div III shelf and read them.
4. **SEARCH the Div III Archive** on the Hampshire Library website. Put in search terms that are relevant to your Div ideas. Don't recreate the wheel. If someone has "already done it" [your idea] it's not the end of the world - you can extend their work, continue their work but in a new time period (current), do it in another context, etc. Learn from your fellow, previous Div III peers.
5. **READ!** - yes, you have ideas but so do others. Find books, journal articles, artistic scholarship, etc. Again, don't recreate the wheel, leverage what is already out there.
6. **Write your Div III Contract.** Once you've done steps 2-5, *then* start drafting your Contract. Concentrate on what it is you want to learn and not what you want to do. The *doing* will come from the focus on the *learning*.
7. **Be pro-active with you committee.** Much of Div III is consumed with your Advanced Individual Project which means you need to be reaching out,

- asking questions, requesting meetings, etc. This is your last year of learning; guidance from your professors/committee is crucial.
8. **Use technology to your advantage.** Learn how to use Google Scholar and a citation management system, if you've not already
 9. **Create a support network! You'll need it.** Find a Div III buddy or two or three - D3 is an isolating time at Hampshire, creating a community and support network is crucial to getting through Div III.
 10. **Get writing help early and often.** Make friends with someone at the Writing Center, or Writing Fellows, etc. to help you with any and all writing aspects of your Div III.
 11. Think hard about these words: theory, conjecture, speculation, hypothesis, research, study, sustainability, learning, curriculum v. lesson How do YOU define them? How others doing work in your area define them? Once you know what they are, then you can "operationalize" them (put them into practice) but you need to know what they mean to you.

Common writing challenges at the Div III level

Academic Brain dump

- Students often write and write and write without stepping back to assess where they are going. Brainstorming/free-writing is great, as long as you step back and assess.
- Students often create written products full of academic stuff with little to no connection across the ideas. Help your reader see the connections you see. Make the connections clear and explicit.
- Too many words. Word economy is important. Find ways to say the same thing with fewer words by choosing your words carefully.
- Sometimes the "set-up" to a paper is long, arduous to read, and lacks clarity. Focus your writing.
- Written work by students often jumps from topic to topic. Make connections across work you are including and provide a clear path for your readers to follow.

Non-academic fluff

- Sometimes there is a lot of writing with a lack of citations or any reference to scholarly work. Again, leverage the work of others.
- Arguments are sometimes built on conjecture, personal experience and common knowledge and are not backed up by evidence (from existing work or from evidence gathered during the Div III). Anecdotes are useful and important but the plural of anecdote is not "data."
- For some students, they writing is similar to the way they speak. This ends up with a paper full of language is simple, informal. Seek and academic voice in your writing.

- No clear connection between the citations and evidence. Some citations might exist but they are more name-dropping than citations.
- If citations exist, make sure they are from academic sources. You can, of course, include non-academic sources (popular media from internet – Huffington Post; Wikipedia; general websites; popular books) but if you do, you should also include academic sources.

Pseudo-academic

- Student writing can sometimes include good citations but is lacking analysis.

Guidelines for preparing for your Div III Pass Meeting

For your Pass Meeting, come prepared to discuss anything and everything in your Div III Contract and the events across your Div III. Spend time in advance of the meeting re-reading any written work you've produced and reflecting on your own journey during Division III. Identify your strengths and weaknesses as a student, etc. Be prepared to talk about the nature of the Div III and your learning. Also expect to discuss how your Advanced Learning Activities. The meeting will last an hour.

That's it. Now wasn't that easy?!

Of course, contact me (tzimmerman@hampshire.edu) or schedule a meeting with me if you have questions or concerns.