

## TIPS FOR WRITING FORUM POSTS

*Prompt: Please describe in detail the Plan/Do/Study/Act (PDSA) process, and how it is distinct from other forms of quality improvement (QI).*



### A “NOT-SO-GOOD” FORUM POST

### WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

The PDSA process is a process that helps people study<sup>a</sup> whether or not a change is helping or hindering an agency. Its<sup>b</sup> often done over a short period of one<sup>b</sup> and involves four steps. These steps include the plan, do, study, and act phases. The plan phase is where the nurse determines what they want to do, they then move on to the do phase where they perform an experiment to investigate whether the change works. Next they move on to the study phase where they study the data they collected. Finally we have the act phase where they give their results to the agency<sup>c</sup> to decide whether or not to make the change permanent.

As I mentioned<sup>d</sup>, the big difference between this and other qi<sup>b</sup> stuff<sup>f</sup> is that **this one is much shorter and easier for nurses to do while they do their regular job.** It also costs less money, which is another big perk<sup>f</sup>. In conclusion, I believe<sup>d</sup> that the PDSA cycle is the best choice for any agency to use; it is the most efficient system that is<sup>f</sup> out there right now to better improve the agency.

References:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PDSA>

### Take a moment and reflect on this post.

Does this give you all the information you need to understand the PDSA process and how it is different from other forms of QI? Is it in a professional, impersonal, and academic voice?

- a) **Avoid vague language.** “Helps people study” is not very detailed or clear. How does it help? Who are these people? Study for what purpose?
- b) **Proofread carefully.** (Should be: It’s , one what [day][hour][year]?, and QI)
- c) **Avoid ambiguous language.** By the last sentence in the paragraph, the author has used the pronoun “they” so much the reader is confused by who or what is happening.
- d) **Avoid personal pronouns.** Using personal pronouns such as “I” (we, our/s) is not usually appropriate for academic papers and forum post, unless the writing product is a personal reflection of your own experiences.
- e) **Compare** this clause in green with the same thing in the “good” post below. Check out how much more professionally and academically this idea can be re-stated.
- f) **Use academic language.** “Big perk,” “stuff,” and “out there right now” are conversational and informal, not appropriate for academic postings.

First, this website citation is not formatted to APA standards. **Always check your reference guide for how to format websites and other reference materials.**

**Be sure you are using appropriate, scientific reference materials.** The source cited here is not a peer-reviewed professional journal or government website that can be found in the OHSU library’s databases (such as PubMed or CINAHL).



# TIPS FOR WRITING FORUM POSTS

## A “GOOD” FORUM POST

The PDSA process involves a four-stage system to help assess, address, and follow-up on, an issue at your agency. Starting with the (P)lan<sup>1</sup> phase, where one identifies objectives, creates goals, and establishes what processes will need to be engaged to address the need. (D)o<sup>1</sup> involves implementing the plan established, and collecting measurable data to assess whether the SMART goals were met. (S)tudy<sup>1</sup> reviews the data itself, determines whether there were positive results, and whether those results met the goals established. Finally, (A)ct<sup>1</sup> is where the staff can recommend further action going forward, which might include scrapping the entire plan and starting from scratch, circling back to the “Do” stage to collect more data, or recommendations for larger-scale changes to the agency.

The process is distinct from other forms of QI primarily in its complexity and length.<sup>4</sup> While there is no set amount of time for a PDSA process, compared to other more formal studies, they tend to be very short, focusing on smaller-scale changes. The purpose of this method is not to enact massive change within an organization, but instead to make incremental changes that are less resource-intensive to investigate. This makes them ideal for boots on the ground-type staff members, like nurses, **who have other obligations beyond running a formal quality improvement initiative**. It also increases the likelihood of support and buy-in from administrators as it is unlikely to disrupt services, or be overly costly.<sup>5</sup>

### References:

Coury, J. Schneider, J. Rivelli, J. Petrik, A. Seibel, E. D’Agostini, B. Taplin, S. Green, B. Coronado, G. (2017). Applying the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) approach to a large pragmatic study involving safety net clinics. *BMC Health Services Research*, 14(411). doi: 10.1186/s12913-017-2364-3

Science of Improvement. (n.d.). *Institute of Healthcare Improvement*. Retrieved from <http://www.ihl.org/resources/Pages/HowtoImprove/ScienceofImprovementTestingChanges.aspx>

## WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

### Take a moment and reflect on this post.

Does this give you all the information you need to understand the PDSA process and how it is different from other forms of QI? Is it in a professional, impersonal, and academic voice?

- 1) **Note** how the author describes and refers to PDSA and what each of those letters means and the goals of each stage, including specific details.
- 2) **Use a variety of sentence types.** Note the author’s use of a variety of sentence types to avoid repetition of structures and maintain reader interest.
- 3) **Write from the “third person” perspective.** Don’t use personal pronouns, maintain an objective, academic distance.
- 4) **Write clear topic sentences.** This first sentence transitions to answer the second part of the prompt, letting readers know they will soon read about the way PDSA is distinct.
- 5) **Use specific examples.** In four sentences, the author tells the reader the purpose of this process and gives several concise examples of why this process is valuable.

**Compare** this **green highlighted clause** to the one in the “not so good” example above. This is a much more appropriate academic and professional tone.

**Cite reputable sources such as peer-reviewed journals or government websites.** Both of these references are formatted according to APA standards. Use your APA manual or other tools to help you format correctly!