Subject, Pronoun, & Verb Agreement

The Big Picture

One of the keys to excellent academic writing is proper subject, pronoun and verb agreement. The following three topics will help you address common areas of difficulty in this area.

A person who changes his or her strategy succeeds at work

The subject is the person or thing described in the sentence. All parts of the sentence must agree with subject in number and/or tense.

- A person who changing his strategy succeeded at work.
- The people who change their strategy succeeding at work.
- A person who changes his or her strategy succeeds at work.

A pronoun substitutes a noun and must agree with its antecedent. This antecedent is often the subject in the sentence.

- A person who changes their strategy succeeds at work.
- The people who change his or her strategy succeed at work.
- A person who changes his or her strategy succeeds at work.

Verbs describe the action within a sentence. All the verbs must agree with their subjects in tense and number.

- The people who change their strategy succeeds at work.
- A person who changes his or her strategy succeed at work.
- A person who changes his or her strategy succeeds at work.

Bonus

Indefinite pronouns do not point back to a specific antecedent. Indefinite pronouns can be singular (e.g. anyone, everyone, somebody, one, either, neither), plural (e.g. both, many, others, several), or can vary by the context (e.g. all, any, more, most). All parts of the sentence must agree accordingly.

Subject, verb, and pronoun agreement is an essential building block to academic writing. No matter how great the content, poor grammar can detract from the best of papers.