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AN INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH FOR IMPROVING THE WRITING OF LITERATURE REVIEWS

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The modeling of effective instructional techniques is an essential component of college instruction. This modeling encompasses both the pedagogical choices that are evidenced during teaching and the decision process that leads toward broader change (Freer & Craig, 2003). In the case of college faculty members, such pedagogical decisions are often based on intuition and emotion rather than on the diagnosis of problems, analysis of evidence, and systematic evaluation of adjustments to course content and/or instructional techniques (Weimer, 2001). In this article, we outline a project undertaken with two graduate classes in music education. We first identified a problem that our students were having, developed an instructional plan to address the problem, examined evidence about the effectiveness of the plan, and drew implications for teaching and learning in our other courses.

For our students to learn our intended content (in this case, about literature reviews), we realized that we needed to begin with what students knew and build from that point. Taking students from the known to the unknown required us to connect the content to instructional techniques, continually assessing and adjusting those techniques in response to the learning we saw in our classrooms (Meyer-Mork, 2007). Weimer (2003) writes, “We have stopped assuming that learning is the automatic, inevitable outcome of teaching. Certainly, good teaching and learning are related. However, when we . . . start with learning, connecting what is known about how people learn to instructional practice, we come at teaching and its improvement from a very different direction” (p. 49).

Weimer (2003) has also developed a list of “Five Key Changes to Practice,” of which two are especially pertinent to our project. First, the balance of power within the classroom cannot be too focused on faculty decisions; faculty need to share decision-making with students. Second, college classrooms tend to feature teachers, though a heightened level of student agency is necessary for knowledge acquisition. We decided to approach these two areas of potential change by highlighting our own recent experiences as graduate students.

We often commented that the collegiality we felt as graduate students stood in marked contrast to the isolation we had previously felt as music teachers. Since all of the students in our classes were music educators who traveled to campus for night classes, we decided to model collaboration and scholarship utilizing a team-teaching approach. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) write, “The possibilities for reflective awakenings and transformations are limited when one is alone. Teachers need others in order to engage in conversations where stories can be told, reflected back, heard in different ways, retold, and relived in new ways . . .” (p. 13). Our approach to team-teaching was grounded in the continuous professional development (CPD) model of Harwood and Clark (2006) who noted, “Evidence . . . indicates that a team approach can result in a more continuous engagement in professional development through open channels of communication which foster a supportive and collegial environment” (p. 37). Put more succinctly, “Managerialism doesn’t work in higher education, but collegiality does” (Ramsden, 2004).

Background

Among the central responsibilities of leaders are synthesis of information, communication of that information to the field, and identification of viable routes toward

obtaining additional, necessary information. Most graduate programs in music education focus at least some attention on written communication, given that much of the professional knowledge is archived in reports, articles, theses and books. At our university, the early courses in the MM-level sequence are designed to promote the ability to read scholarly materials with understanding, synthesize contents across a broad spectrum of sources, and critically analyze the methods and results of current research.

When preparing to teach our separate MM-level courses during a recent fall semester, we noticed that the same students were enrolled in both of our introductory classes. This presented us with an opportunity to coordinate our instruction such that students might more easily view their courses as elements of a unified experience rather than discreet requirements to be completed. Our courses were already somewhat related, the first presenting an introduction to research in music education and the second incorporating an in-depth view of the teaching practices of the students via action research. Since both courses were to culminate in student papers containing extended literature reviews, we decided to create a series of parallel preparatory assignments in the two courses and planned multiple opportunities for team-teaching, instructor modeling and student reflection. Our purpose was four-fold. We wanted students to 1) understand the value of literature reviews; 2) know how literature reviews might be organized; 3) experience how literature reviews can assist readers of research; and 4) apply specific criteria when evaluating literature reviews.

The five student participants were all practicing music educators at the time. Three students were employed as full-time public school music teachers: Christopher was a high school band director, Shawn taught high school choral music, and Roy was an elementary general music teacher. The other two students were involved in music ministry as they pursued

their studies on a full-time basis: Monique had taught elementary school music and Beth had taught choral music at the high school level.

Each class met once weekly for 150 minutes. The two classes were scheduled to meet on consecutive evenings. We centered our instruction on an article by Boote and Beile (2005) in the then-current issue of *Educational Researcher* concerning the structure and content of literature reviews. The article itself is an extended literature review, with attention given to the roles and purposes of reviews, how graduate course work incorporates reviews, and the perceptions of instructors, librarians and students concerning these issues. As reported in the article, Boote and Beile drew upon the work of Hart (1999) as the basis for a “literature review scoring rubric” that addressed the concerns they had identified. The authors then used their rubric to analyze a series of dissertations from three universities. Among the recommendations drawn from the results was the suggestion that “...we, the education community...must begin to value the literature review in our own work” (Boote & Biele, 2005, p. 12). From this statement sprang the component of our coordinated instruction that became the most interesting for all involved: each instructor “graded” the dissertation literature review of the other and critiqued it according to Boote and Beile’s rubric.

The remainder of the present article places this critique process within the context of the events that preceded and followed, reports student comments about the process, and concludes with recommendations for using these strategies within other introductory course work in music education.

Pedagogical Sequence

We began our project by designing an open-ended questionnaire to elicit information about how our students perceived literature reviews. The identical questionnaire was given to students on three occasions. Because the first half of the semester was used for foundational instruction related to the course topics, the initial administration of the questionnaire took place at the midpoint of the semester. This occurred after students had read a number of research studies but before any specific discussion of quality, scope and organization of literature reviews. The questionnaire comprised four items: “What is the value of a literature review to a researcher?,” “How can (or should) a literature review be organized?,” “What is the purpose of a literature review to a reader?,” and “On what criteria should a literature review be evaluated?”

Following the initial completion of the questionnaire in one of the courses involved, the Boote and Beile article was assigned as a reading for the other course. This prompted a general discussion about the nature and purpose of literature reviews, how literature reviews have been commonly situated within articles published in varying types of music education journals, and how the students had previously used existing literature to ground their scholarly papers. Specific attention was given to the scoring rubric contained in the Boote and Beile article; terminologies were discussed and the weighting of the categories was deliberated.

Because the terminologies and categories of Boote and Beile’s rubric were based on the work of Hart, one instructor presented a lecture about Hart’s approach to the structure and content of literature reviews. In summary, Hart (1999) argued that the traditional format of a literature review does not necessarily promote relevance, synthesis, or evaluation on the part of the author. Using a variety of examples and scenarios, Hart argued that the literature review ought to assist scholars in at least eleven areas: distinguishing what has been done from what

needs to be done; discovering important variables relevant to the topic; synthesizing and gaining a new perspective; identifying relationships between ideas and practices; establishing the context of the topic or problem; rationalizing the significance of the problem; enhancing and acquiring the subject vocabulary; understanding the structure of the subject; relating ideas and theory to applications; identifying the main methodologies and research techniques that have been used; and placing the research in a historical context to show familiarity with state-of-the-art developments.

Students then applied Hart's concepts to two literature reviews in the then-current issue of *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, both of which were related to topics being explored by students in the class. The two articles represented different examples of how literature reviews might be structured. The review by Abrahams (2005) was constructed as a persuasive argument about the role of critical pedagogy in music education; topics were presented from general to specific, concluding with practical applications and implications for music education. In contrast, the review by Ferguson (2005) systematically presented the extant research about movement in elementary music education settings without drawing specific conclusions for the reader.

Students were asked to prepare outlines of both articles for presentation during the next class session. During that session, students worked in collaborative groups to achieve consensus about the content of the outline. The outlines were then written on white boards, allowing for comparison and contrast during a subsequent large-group discussion. Students then "graded" both reviews using the previously discussed scoring rubric of Boote and Beile. At the close of class, students were informed that their own final projects would be evaluated using a variant of

the Boote and Beile rubric. As an assignment, they were asked to study the rubric and make any suggestions for modification.

In the next class session, students were given examples of rubrics that one of the instructors had used to assess final papers in other graduate classes. These rubrics had been developed with student collaboration over several years and had their origins in numerous rubrics widely available through the Internet. The students were first asked to compare the Boote and Beile scoring rubric with these examples, noting differences and similarities in both content and format. This enlivened a discussion about the benefits of using rubrics as assessment tools (versus simple checklists), the need for terminology that is clear and precise, and, finally, clarification of the Boote and Beile terminology for use within music education settings. The class members made three decisions regarding the rubric that was eventually adopted: 1) for matters of *content*, they decided to maintain the Boote and Beile rubric but modify the *format* to match the rubrics used in the instructor's previous graduate classes; 2) for matters of writing style, they decided to retain the portions of the rubric that had been used in previous classes; and 3) since category weights had not been specified in the Boote and Beile rubric, these were added by consensus of the class and incorporated within the final version of the rubric. The final version of the rubric appears in Figure 1.

Now that we felt the students were ready to "field-test" their rubric, we embarked on what proved to be the most interesting part of our teaching process. We (the two instructors) had exchanged copies of our dissertations several weeks earlier (Barker, 2003; Freer, 2003). We read the literature review chapters carefully and evaluated them using the rubric that had emerged during class discussion. We discussed the results privately before the next class meeting and decided to present the critiques without modification in the format of a scholarly dialogue.

We also decided to use this presentation format when providing feedback to students about their own literature reviews that would be submitted at the end of the semester.

The class meeting where we presented our critiques began with descriptions of how we had each decided upon our dissertation research topics, what the experience of writing had been like, and what steps we had taken to discover the relevant literature for our topics. We then took turns presenting the basic outline of our research, following the format of a 15-minute conference research presentation. The literature review critiques were then presented by the other instructor, with the incorporation of many questions and requests for clarification typical of a scholarly exchange. The completed scoring rubrics were then distributed, prompting further comments and questions by the students. Students were especially curious to know what we had learned about writing literature reviews since the completion of our dissertations. This proved to be one of the most collegial conversations we have ever had with students. At the end of this class session, students completed the four-item questionnaire for the second time.

Three weeks passed as students worked on their own literature reviews. Along with the primary document, students self-assessed their work and submitted a completed scoring rubric. When students met for the final class session, they completed the four-item questionnaire for a third time. We then gathered with the students for an exit interview that was recorded, transcribed and coded for related themes.

Responses to the Student Questionnaires

Student responses to the questionnaire prompts were gathered at the beginning of the process, following the presentation of the instructors' dissertation materials, and again after the students wrote their final literature review paper. The first and second administrations of the

questionnaire were separated by about three weeks, as were the second and third administrations. A comparison of student comments on the three questionnaires demonstrates how students refined their thoughts about literature reviews.

The first question, “what is the value of a literature review to the researcher?” generated more thoughtful answers at the beginning and end of the process than at the midpoint. Because the middle questionnaire was distributed following the critique of our colleague’s work, students may not have had enough time to absorb the content from that class session. Responses from the first questionnaire were basic, stating that the literature review “allows the researcher to gain a large knowledge base of the topic” (Shawn), “situates the study within the larger body of knowledge” (Roy), “shows how the study relates to previous methodologies” (Monique), and “can be structured to inform about what has been done” (Christopher). Responses at the end of the semester were more nuanced, noting that the literature review should prompt the researcher to construct a “careful investigation of present and past research, with...insights...through the eyes of other researchers” (Shawn), present a “tool to set up the methodology for a study or experiment” (Roy) while “assuring that you don’t simply ‘reinvent the wheel’” (Beth) and should “provide a grounding for research by generatively building on past efforts” (Christopher).

Question two invited students to consider how a literature review might be structured. Initial responses simply referred to chronologies and the exclusion of non-essential items, with no detail about how these decisions were to be made. The interim responses – those that followed the critique of instructor-written literature reviews – each included statements about the importance of connectivity and transition statements within the review structure. This theme was prevalent during the critiques of instructor-written reviews, no doubt leading to its appearance in

the survey responses. Responses at the end of the semester were more complex, including the following statements:

- “It should first be very easy to follow. It should take the reader through a timeline of research while relating that research to the current study. It should flow like chapters in a good book, making smooth connections from one topic to another” (Christopher).
- “It should identify problems and sub-problems, justify delimitations, provide definitions, and explain assumptions and hypotheses” (Monique).
- “It should serve as an introduction to the larger topic. It should include a treatment of the historical data, a review of the most recent research, and it should act as a bridge to the methodology” (Roy).
- “It should answer the following questions: ‘What has been done in relation to this topic?’, ‘How was it handled?’, ‘What is left to be done?’, and ‘How might the research base be improved upon and furthered?’” (Beth).

The third question dealt with how readers might view the importance of literature reviews. The basic responses were not wholly unexpected since the students were simultaneously taking two perspectives – that of the reader and that of the emerging researcher. Excerpts from Monique’s comments were typical of the way in which the class responded:

- Beginning: “The literature review is important to familiarize readers with extant, relevant research that has been done or not done; to situate the (current) research in relation to the broader field/body of knowledge (to give the study some context).”
- Following Presentation of Instructor-Written Literature Reviews: “Readers need literature reviews to provide a clear understanding of the purpose for the study.”

- End: “The literature review helps readers put the topic in a perspective with other research; it might help readers by suggesting new insights or new approaches to the topic/issue. Reviews should help expand – critically – a reader’s knowledge of the relevant literature.”

Though each of this student’s comments is similar, there is a sense of refinement in the thought process by the final statement. Whereas the beginning statement focuses on breadth and awareness, the final comment alludes to the analytical, evaluative, and methodological perceptions that can be advanced by literature reviews. Perhaps the most informative response came at the end of the semester from Christopher: “[literature reviews] give the reader confidence in the researcher’s knowledge of the subject area...readers must believe you, and your ability to gain their confidence helps your case throughout the study that is to follow.”

The final question, dealing with the criteria for evaluating literature reviews, did not prompt responses that differed substantially from one another. This might have been because criteria-driven rubrics are commonly used throughout our MM program and students may have already been accustomed to their use. Several differences were evident in the student responses across time, however. Shawn initially responded that the evaluation criteria should include only writing style and breadth. At the close of the semester, she broadened those criteria to ask, “How did the researcher show that the studies related to the current research topic?” Roy asked, “Does the literature review present a new or fresh perspective?” and included the statement that “Rhetoric should be central – listing components in an un-engaging form is not acceptable.”

Student Exit Interview Comments

Students met during final exam week to discuss the project as a group. The hour-long exit interview was audio-recorded for later transcription. During this interview, we explained why we had chosen the literature review project, we discussed what we had intended from a pedagogical perspective, and we shared our thoughts about how the project had succeeded in the goal of creating a collegial, collaborative academic atmosphere. We were especially interested in how the students viewed the project. From this discussion, four broad categories of comments emerged concerning the pedagogical process, the team-teaching instructional approach, the result on the relationship between student and teacher, and the students' growth as scholars. Representative comments for each category appear in the sections below.

The Pedagogical Process

As seen in the following dialog, it was clear that students were able to retrospectively view the project and analyze it for both content and instructional approach. But, there was some concern about how effective the rubric was as a tool for ensuring a quality review when papers were due at the end of the semester:

- Beth: "It was very helpful when we used the reviews in *Update*, but as I was writing my paper to meet the deadline, I didn't leave time to grade it on the rubric. I waited to think about the rubric until the last minute. It would have been helpful to have us grade a draft and then revise it before handing in the final version."
- Monique: "But, I think that fact that we went through the process of grading someone else's work first created a safe zone where we could look at literature reviews for both

strengths and weaknesses. I went beyond thinking that I ‘liked’ what a person wrote. I began to think about what was effective and what was not effective.”

- Roy: “You know, we’ve never really looked at other person’s work for the quality of the writing – we usually look for the content instead of the writing. This semester, we looked at how the reviews were written instead of just looking at the content. Seeing different examples and comparing them was helpful, whether they were yours or the ones from *Update*. Perhaps presenting them sooner in the semester would have been even more helpful. The rubric was helpful.”
- Christopher: “I don’t quite agree that we should see examples early in the semester. Instead, I’d say that we should see examples like these more frequently in all of our classes. Looking at your dissertations, analyzing the *Update* articles, then applying the information in different ways was very enlightening.”
- Roy: “It was initially much easier to read reviews of people we didn’t know than to critique our own work. Reading the Boote and Beile article in *Educational Researcher* was where I began to get engaged in these courses and see the connection to what I want to do in music education. The language of that article is especially provocative for the music education community, saying basically, ‘you’re doing a bad job’ [with the standard literature review] and ‘here’s what you can do about it.’”
- Beth: “Yes, the Boote and Beile article was eye-opening. But, at first read, it just established the problems commonly found in literature reviews. My schema at the time couldn’t even comprehend the rubric that the authors proposed. It was these classes, the presentation of [the professors’ work], and the analysis of the *Update* reviews that helped me understand the rubric criteria and how it might apply to my writing.”

- Shawn: “OK – I’ll admit it. I had never considered looking at the work of others as a guideline for how I should write!”

The Team-Teaching Approach

The fact that we reinforced the importance of literature reviews within two distinct courses made our teaching more interdisciplinary. The students, who also indicated a desire to see other teaching models where both instructors taught the same classes simultaneously, appreciated this approach:

- Roy: “It all blurred together. Sometimes I didn’t know which class I was in, but I think that was a good thing. The literature review project seemed like one big topic covered in the same way within two distinct classes.”
- Shawn: “I think that using the same rubric in both classes was very helpful. It helped me keep track of what I was doing on the projects for both classes. But, since we were working on two distinct literature reviews, I only saw overlap, not redundancy. I think it would have been better if y’all could have team-taught all of the time...an impossibility, I know!”

Teacher-Student Relationship

We have long been interested in how students become independent scholars and thinkers. We modeled the kinds of conversations that scholars have with each other when we critiqued our dissertation literature reviews in the presence of the students. We wondered if the students enjoyed the academic dialogue that emerged as much as we did. Their comments reinforced our

developing awareness that academic collegiality commences at the beginning of graduate school rather than at the end:

- Christopher: “I liked that there was an attempt to break down the barriers between professor and student. It allowed us to think about how ideas work in the world. When you taught together, it was like ‘we’ll put ourselves out there and see what happens.’ I appreciated the risks you took in doing that!”
- Beth: “Sometimes our small graduate classes involve ‘the intellect’ so much that we don’t get to see the professors as people. This can be extremely uncomfortable. I liked how friendly this was – and that you were able to laugh at yourselves along the way. Oh – and modeling how to respond to criticism was a good idea, too.”
- Roy: “It was nice to see teamwork on the part of the professors.”
- Monique: “My experience this semester has been completely different than what I thought graduate school would be like. I thought I’d be completely on my own. Instead, I liked the integration of the coursework and how you [the two professors] discussed your reviews and critiqued them publicly. That helped me feel part of a community.”

Scholarly Growth

As was our hope from the beginning of this project, the students’ comments indicated that they benefited from the process of applying discernable criteria when writing or reading literature reviews. No more did students regard the literature review as a perfunctory requirement of academic papers, but as a means of refining scholarly inquiry:

- Monique: “I am much more pleased with these papers than with any others I’ve written in my academic life. They are more well-written, they flow more carefully, and they tell a story that makes sense. I am especially pleased about the writing style of my literature reviews, which is far better than a forced, academic-sounding list of citations.”
- Beth: “Long before you start the literature search, you understand that you need to ‘sing a new song’ when piecing it together.”
- Roy: “The literature review is, basically, your research project ‘put in the dryer.’ You’re choosing the topic, you’re formulating the research problem, you’re designing methodology, you’re thinking about analysis, and you’re already thinking about issues of importance and relevance.”
- Shawn: “The relationship between the literature review and the research project now makes more sense to me. There’s a purpose to the literature review; it’s not just an academic exercise or requirement.”

Conclusions and Implications

This project was intended to provide instruction regarding the style and content of literature reviews, and to draw students into a collaborative process of scholarship and inquiry. While we won’t know for certain whether the first aim has had a sustained benefit until these students progress further in their studies, we believe that the foundation has been established for the writing of literature reviews that are rigorously coherent, theoretically provocative, and methodologically grounded. We expect to build upon this foundation as these students progress toward their masters-level theses and possible work on doctoral research projects with our guidance.

We recommend that instructors of graduate music education courses model the process of self-critique within their introductory courses. At least two goals may be filled by utilization of these techniques. First, instructors will have the opportunity to create a collaborative classroom environment where students are welcomed into the broad community of music education researchers and teachers who employ research-supported pedagogy. The establishment of these types of collaborative communities has been advocated for teams of librarians and course instructors (Isbell & Broaddus, 1995), teams of instructors and students (Cambridge, 1996), and many variations of these teams within music education (Luce, 2001). Second, these types of collaborative experiences may assist new faculty members during the transition from graduate student to university instructor. We found that this project encouraged us to overtly incorporate characteristics of mentorship, guidance and facilitation within our teaching personas. This process also allowed us to seamlessly integrate our own doctoral work into our present roles as instructors, helping us more clearly define our roles as faculty members.

This project involved changes to our instruction in response to a problem of scholarship that we identified in our students. Our approach toward addressing this problem matched our broader philosophy of teaching such that the teaching techniques were logical steps within a complex pedagogical sequence. Weimer (2002) states, “We need something in addition to techniques. We need an approach that comes to reflect an integrated, coherent philosophy of education and one with enough intellectual muscle to work on the problems we face” (p. 186).

We further offer our narrative as a response to the profession’s need for “stories of music teachers engaged in change” (Conway, 2003, p. 35). Although this report contains elements of narrative inquiry, we do not propose that we undertook the project with the rigor befitting any

sort of methodological label. Referring to the processes of narrative inquiry however, Bowman (2006) provides a rationale that seems apropos to our literature review project:

Narrative inquiry also attempts to understand music and music education from the bottom up and the inside out – offering to restore some of the power and significance of which they have been deprived by off-the-rack, one-size-fits-all accounts. It draws its force from daily detail that highlights events and experience rather than logic . . . It offers profound insights into the ways actual people build and drape their lives around musical engagements (pp. 13-14).

We intend to integrate more of these modeling and self-critique techniques, sharing stories of scholarship and pedagogical change with our future graduate classes. Most importantly, we look forward to engaging our students in rigorous academic work as we build upon the collaborative spirit that this project engendered.

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Figure 1 – Literature Review Rubric

Coverage – 10 Possible Points				
Justified criteria for inclusion and exclusion		Justified inclusion & exclusion of literature 10	Discussed literature included & excluded 7	Did not discuss the criteria for inclusion or exclusion 0
Synthesis – 35 Possible Points				
Distinguished what has been done from what needs to be done		Critically examined the state of the field 4	Discussed what has and has not been done 2	Did not distinguish what has and has not been done 0
Placed the topic or problem in the broader scholarly literature		Topic clearly situated in broader scholarly literature 8	Some discussion of broader scholarly literature 5	Topic not placed in broader scholarly literature 0
Placed the research in the historical context of the field		Critically examined history of topic 8	Some mention of history of topic 5	History of topic not discussed 0
Acquired and enhanced the subject vocabulary		Discussed & resolved ambiguities in definitions 5	Key vocabulary defined 4	Key vocabulary not discussed 0
Articulated important variables and phenomena relevant to topic		Noted ambiguities in literature & proposed new relationships 5	Reviewed relationships among variables, phenomena 4	Key variables and phenomena not discussed 0
Synthesized and gained perspective on literature		Offered new perspective 5	Some critique of literature 4	Accepted literature at face value 1
Methodology – 10 Possible Points				
Identified & critiqued the main methodologies and techniques in field	Introduced new methods to address problems with dominant methods (5 Bonus Pts)	Critiqued research methods 5	Some discussion of research methods to produce claims 4	Research methods not discussed 0
Related ideas and theories in the field to research methodologies		Critiqued appropriateness of methods to claims 5	Some discussion of appropriateness of methods to claims 4	Research methods not discussed 0
Significance – 15 Possible Points				
Rationalized the practical significance of the research problem		Critiqued practical significance of research 10	Practical significance discussed 7	Practical significance of research not discussed 0
Rationalized the scholarly significance of the research problem		Critiqued scholarly significance of research 5	Scholarly significance discussed 4	Scholarly significance of research not discussed 0
Rhetoric – 10 Possible Points				
Coherent, clear structure supports the review		Well developed, coherent 10	Some coherent structure 6	Poorly conceptualized, haphazard 2
Style – 10 Possible Points				
Feel	Writing is compelling. It hooks the reader and sustains interest throughout. 2	Writing is generally engaging, but has some dry spots. In general, it is focused and keeps the reader's attention. 1	Writing is dull and unengaging. Though the paper has some interesting parts, the reader finds it difficult to maintain interest. 0.5	The writing has little personality. The reader quickly loses interest and stops reading. 0

Tone	The tone is consistently professional and appropriate for an academic research paper. 2	The tone is generally professional; it is appropriate for an academic research paper. 1	The tone is not consistently professional or appropriate for an academic research paper. 0.5	The tone is unprofessional. It is not appropriate for an academic research paper. 0
Sentence Structure	Sentences are well-phrased and varied in length and structure. They flow smoothly from one to another. 2	Sentences are well-phrased; some variety in length and structure. Flow from sentence to sentence is generally smooth. 1	Some sentences are awkwardly constructed so that the reader is occasionally distracted. 0.5	Errors in sentence structure are frequent enough to be a major distraction to the reader. 0
Word Choice	Word choice is consistently precise and accurate. 2	Word choice is good; goes beyond generic to be more precise and effective. 1	Word choice is merely adequate; range of words limited; some used inappropriately. 0.5	Many words are used inappropriately, confusing the reader. 0
Grammar, Spelling, Writing Mechanics	The writing is free or almost free of errors. 2	Occasional errors that don't represent a major distraction or obscure meaning. 1	The writing has many errors; reader is distracted by them. 0.5	There are so many errors that meaning is obscured. The reader is confused and stops reading. 0
Format – 10 Possible Points				
Length	Paper is the number of pages specified in the assignment. 1		Paper length exceeds the framework of the assignment 0.5	Paper length does not meet the framework of the assignment. 0
Citation Within the Paper	Compelling evidence from professionally legitimate sources is given; attribution is clear & fairly represented. 3	Professionally legitimate sources that support claims are generally present; attribution is clear & fairly represented. 2	Attributions occasionally given; many statements unsubstantiated; confusion about sources & ideas. 1	References are seldom cited to support statements. 0
Quality of References	References are primarily peer-reviewed professional journals or other approved sources (e.g., government documents, agency manuals, ...). The reader is confident that the information and ideas can be trusted. 3	Although most of the references are professionally legitimate, a few are questionable (e.g., trade books, internet sources, popular magazines, ...). The reader is uncertain of the reliability of some of the sources. 2	Most of the references are from sources that are not peer-reviewed and have uncertain reliability. The reader doubts the accuracy of much of the material presented. 1	There are virtually no sources that are professionally reliable. The reader seriously doubts the value of the material and stops reading. 0
APA Use	APA format is used accurately and consistently in paper & on "References" page. 3	APA format is used with minor errors. 2	There are frequent errors in APA format. 1	Format of the document is not recognizable as APA. 0

Table Totals: _____ / 100

Letter Grade: _____