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Course Offering

ENGL-1302 1507 1 Composition & Rhetoric II

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From

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SubjectEssay 1 Literature Review

Dear Students,

Essay 1: Literature Review

Your first essay is due Friday, 02 October 2020. As you have concluded by now, this researched essay will be a review, specifically a literature review as discussed in Chapter 16. Please refer to "The Effects of Mindfulness Meditation and Exercise on Memory" by Crystal Aymelek (pp. 350-55) for a well-written example of a literature review. Please note, however, this essay is not formatted to MLA requirements, but APA which is not permissible for this class. Following are six topics from which you are to choose your essay topic.

1. Prejudice and discrimination (i.e., homophobia, sexism, racism, ageism)
2. Language acquisition
3. Long term effects of bullying
4. Nonverbal communication
5. Dreams
6. Metacognition

A literature review discusses published information in a particular subject area, and sometimes information in a particular subject area within a certain time period. The focus of a literature review is to summarize and synthesize the arguments and ideas of others without adding new contributions.

A literature review usually has an organizational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis. A summary is a recap of the important information of the source, while a synthesis is a re-organization, or a reshuffling, of that information. It might give a new interpretation of old material or combine new with old interpretations. Or it might trace the intellectual progression of the field, including major debates. And depending on the situation, the literature review may evaluate the sources and advise the reader on the most pertinent or relevant.

For a paper of this nature, 3 to 5 sources are sufficient. These sources should be academic journals and publications taken from Lone Star College's Library data base. If you have problems locating or accessing materials, please contact a librarian through the library website.

Remember to summarize, synthesize, or critique your sources by discussing a common theme or issue and evaluate your sources by relevance and most recent publication. Some background information, such as definitions and/or a history may be useful if your topic is more obscure in nature.

Begin Composing

Once you have chosen a general pattern of organization, begin to write each section. There are a few guidelines you should follow during the writing stage as well. Here is a sample paragraph from a literature review about sexism and language to illuminate the following discussion:

However, other studies have shown that even gender-neutral antecedents are more likely to produce masculine images than feminine ones (Gastil, 1990). Hamilton (1988) asked students to complete sentences that required them to fill in pronouns that agreed with gender-neutral antecedents such as "writer," "pedestrian," and "persons." The students were asked to describe any image they had when writing the sentence. Hamilton found that people imagined 3.3 men to each woman in the masculine "generic" condition and 1.5 men per woman in the unbiased condition. Thus, while ambient sexism accounted for some of the masculine bias, sexist language amplified the effect.

Use Evidence

In the example above, the writers refer to several other sources when making their point. A literature review in this sense is just like any other academic research paper. Your interpretation of the available sources must be backed up with evidence to show that what you are saying is valid.

Be Selective

Select only the most important points in each source to highlight in the review. The type of information you choose to mention should relate directly to the review's focus, whether it is thematic, methodological, or chronological.

Use Quotes Sparingly—if at all

Direct quotes are seldom used in literature reviews because there is no in-depth discussion or detailed quotes from the text. Some short quotes here and there are okay, though, if you want to emphasize a point, or if what the author said just cannot be rewritten in your own words.

Summarize and Synthesize

Remember to summarize and synthesize your sources within each paragraph as well as throughout the review. The author of the sample paragraph summarized important features of Hamilton's study, but then synthesize it by rephrasing the study's significance and relating it to his own work.

Maintain Your own Voice

While the literature review presents others' ideas, your voice (the writer's) should remain front and center. Weave references to other sources into your own text, but maintain your own voice by starting and ending the paragraph with your own ideas and words.

Use Caution when Paraphrasing

When paraphrasing a source that is not your own, be sure to represent the author's information or opinions accurately and in your own words. Directly refer in the text to the author of the source, such as Hamilton, or provide ample notation in the text when the ideas you are mentioning are not your own, for example, Gastil's. Review Chapter 27 and your syllabus concerning plagiarism.

Revise, Revise, Revise

Once your first draft is complete, you may begin to revise. Much revision is always needed because your main objective is to present the material, not the argument. Then, just as you would for most other academic forms of writing, rewrite or rework the language of your review so that you have presented your information in the most concise manner possible. Be sure to use terminology familiar to your audience; get rid of unnecessary jargon and never use slang. Finally, double check that you have documented your sources and formatted the review in strict accordance to MLA specifications.

Contractions, and 1st and 2nd Person are *not* Allowed in Academic Writing

Works Cited

Your Works Cited page is the last page of your essay and will follow your pagination. Please see the sample paper in your text (pp. 601-617). Page 617 provides a clear depiction of a properly formatted Works Cited page. Note that the heading (p. 601) does not include the professor's first name, but know that it is required.

All the very best,
Prof. Lane

* Reference: The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill