Abstract

This paper contains nine criteria or guidelines for reviewing written work. I have published these criteria in Books 1 and 2 of the Dr. Mac! Dissertation Mentoring Handbook. Book 1 is the Strategies for Quantitative Research. Book 2 is the Strategies for Qualitative Research. These criteria are important because they must reflect in each section of a written piece. The nine criteria are (a) depth of scholarship, (b) originality, (c) theoretical and conceptual framework, (d) use of literature, (e) substantive value, (f) clarity and logic of presentation, (g) grammar, (h) APA style, (i) and readability.

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Writing Like a Star

I would like to address in this paper, how you write your papers for rapid approval by the Journal of Global Health Care Systems. Writing well will save you hundreds of hours you would have to spend rewriting your document. I discuss criteria that you can use to help you develop a good written piece. I have published these criteria in Books 1 and 2 of the Dr. Mac! Dissertation Mentoring Handbook (Waruingi, 2010a, 2010b). The nine criteria are (a) depth of scholarship, (b) originality, (c) theoretical and conceptual framework, (d) use of literature, (e) substantive value, (f) clarity and logic of presentation, (g) grammar, (h) APA style, (i) and readability. Let us explore each one of these criteria.

Depth of Scholarship

Depth of scholarship means that your manuscript shows that you covered all the key elements of each section. Make sure that you address each element in a section comprehensively. A good strategy for making sure that you have addressed every element comprehensively is by responding to the following questions: What is it? How does it work? How does it apply to the paper I am developing?

Responding to the first question (what is it?), helps you to define the element. Be sure to define every element that you introduce. A good definition means that you do not lose your reader. Defining each element helps to maintain the flow of thought and keeps the reader interested in continuing to read the section. It is very confusing for the reader to come across new elements in a section, and the writer did not define, or explain. Seek not to confuse the reader. Seek to make the work of reading your paper easy by defining each element you introduce. Depth of scholarship means not only making sure that you covered all the elements, but also defining each element clearly so that the reader can understand it's meaning.

Second requirement of comprehensiveness is an explanation of how the element works in the real world. You develop an explanation of the operation of the element by responding to the question: How does it work? Provide at least two examples of how the element works and give citations for each example.

Finally, explain how the element applies to the situation at hand. Responding to the question (How does it apply to the concepts in the paper I am developing?) helps to tie the element back to your study. It is quite common to read manuscripts containing elements that do not tie to the study. Tying the element back to your study renders your work thematic to the specific area of study. Ensure accuracy and be persuasive in your arguments.

Originality

Originality requires three important actions: (a) comparing, (b) contrasting, and (c) integrating. You know that your work is original when you compare similar ideas in literature, and note all similarities. If everything is similar, then your work is not original. It is simply a reproduction of other work, and thus lacks in originality.

You also know that your work is original by contrasting it with similar work. Contrasting means describing the differences between your work and the other published work on the same subject. Take time to review all the relevant literature on the subject of your study. Make sure that you note all the differences between your idea and similar ideas reported in literature. It helps to draw a table of contrasts to illustrate key differences.

Originality emerges when you take the similarities and differences, and develop new concepts—this is the act of integration. A detailed analysis of similarities and differences integrates to a higher level of understanding where new concepts begin to emerge. In order for this to happen, your research must be timely and adequate.
Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Theoretical framework is the road map of how things work. As we have seen, things work the way they work and things do not work the way they do not work. Theoretical or conceptual framework is a process map, or an explanation of how things work. For example, if your topic of interest is about strategic planning, you must demonstrate that you understand all the elements of the topic. For example strategic planning contains strategy and planning. Strategy involves understanding organization’s environment: the external environment, the intermediate environment, and internal environment. Strategy also involves understanding all the stakeholders who inhabit these different environments and how they affect the organization’s operations. A good demonstration of understanding of the concept of strategy, that is, the conceptual framework of strategy, necessarily means a discussion about the organizations environment, and the stakeholders, and the strengths and weaknesses of dealing with each group of stakeholders.

Use of literature

Good use of literature means that you ground your arguments in appropriate and timely academic literature. You must strive to obtain the best sources for the literature about the topic. Typically peer reviewed journals are the best sources. Avoid using textbooks, newspapers, and magazines.

Substantive Value

Substantive value means that you address a substantive area of study. Every area of study has boundaries, which define external limits of a substantive area. For example, nursing is a substantive area of health care workforce. The concept of nursing is governed by specific principles, whose boundary conditions are knowable. For example, the work of a nursing professional differs substantively from the work of a medical technician, even though both can be found in the same hospital. Sub-specialization produces finer substantive areas. For example, intensive care nursing is substantively different from community nursing, which is different from cardiac nursing, which is different from neurosurgical nursing, which is different from internal medicine nursing. Each of these areas of nursing has developed in sub-specialties, each with its own substantive value. A good written piece of substantive value demonstrates good understanding of a substantive area with an exploration of all aspects of the area, with supporting literature and examples.

Clarity and Logic of Presentation

Clarity and logic of presentation means that you establish a clear pattern of explaining yourself. To establish clarity and logic, you must do the first things first. Start by introducing the concept of a section in each section. We easily forget to introduce our concepts to our readers. For example, you are already familiar with the concepts, and because of this, the concepts may seem as if they are obvious. Yes, they are obvious to you, but not to everyone else. Make sure that you define every new concept you introduce, even if the concept seems very obvious to you. In any case, the way you understand the concept is not necessary the same way other people understand it. To avoid confusion, introduce your concepts and define them well.

After defining a concept, stay with it. Explain how it ties in with the purpose of your work. Do not introduce other new concepts, in the midst of a concept. If you need to introduce a new concept to support the foregoing concept, say so. Explain that present concept leads to another concept. Close the paragraph and start a new paragraph for the new concept. Make sure that your story flows from concept to concept. Establish a flow in logic, so that the story cascades from the top to the bottom. The conclusion of your paper must be comprehensive. Make sure that you address all the key elements required for each section.
APA format
Make sure you follow the APA guidelines. Do not be creative with the format. Just read the manual and do what the manual says. Cite ideas properly. Make sure that your reference list on the reference page follows APA guidelines. Place the references on a separate page. Lay out your paper effectively, using headings, and subheadings. Use graphics to enhance readability of your work.

Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling
Be sure to follow the rules governing the use of standard American English. Counter-check the spelling and punctuation, making sure that you pay attention to detail.

Readability
Sentences. Make sure that your sentences are complete, clear, and concise. Construct your sentences well. Each sentence should contain only one concept. Make your sentences must be short and to the point. Most of your sentences should be less than 10 words. Good sentences contain 5 to 10 words. Make sure that the transition between sentences is clear. Each sentence must support the concept described in the previous sentence. In this way, you will establish consistency of concepts in consequent sentences. Maintain a smooth flow in logic from sentence to sentence.
Paragraphing. Your paragraphs must be comprehensive. Each paragraph should contain only one concept. Introduce the concept of the paragraph with the first sentence of the paragraph. Then explain the application of the concept of the paragraph. Next, provide examples that can help the reader understand the application of the concept. Finally, conclude the concept of the paragraph, and transition to the next paragraph, in which you introduced the next concept. The transition between paragraphs is smooth.
Sectioning. You must develop your sections are well. Each section necessarily contains several paragraphs exploring the topic of the section. Make sure you address all the key elements of the topic of the section. Address each key element in a separate paragraph. Make sure that each paragraph is self-contained, addressing only one concept. Establish a logical flow of thought, from paragraph to paragraph in each section. The first paragraph should contain definitions of the key elements in the section. The subsequent paragraphs address each key element, paragraph by paragraph. The final paragraph concludes the section and introduces the next section. Use precise words. Make sure your words are not ambiguous.
Tone. Know your audience. Make sure that the tone of your paper is appropriate to the audience. Use formal tone in academic writing. Avoid informal tone. Avoid use of jargon words, or colloquialisms. Use simple plain English.

References