Peer Editing Assignment

To the Editor: General Guidelines for Feedback.

The peer editing process should be a constructive one. My recommendation is to read the paper through once fairly quickly, without focusing too much on specific components, then go back and do a second thorough editing pass. Identify both positive elements and elements needing improvement. Be as specific as you can, focusing on how the student can change the paper to improve it. Try to avoid making comments simply to the effect that, "this is wrong"; instead, try to offer means of improving the piece of writing in question.

On the next page is a list of "Elements to Consider when Editing". I've tried to give a relatively generic listing of components that will be applicable to most papers of the sort students are writing in this course. However, be advised that the paper you are editing might be somewhat unique in its approach, and not all of the items in the list may be relevant. Alternatively, you might think of something specific to the paper you are editing that is not on the list; feel free to add any additional comments that you feel are relevant. Some space has been provided in the following list so that you can provide some written feedback, but whenever possible you should also make direct notation on the student's paper to draw attention to specific elements.

Besides providing written commentary, notes, etc. on the paper itself, you will be meeting with the author of the paper in person. Thus, if you don't understand something in the paper you are editing you can ask for clarification during the meeting. Similarly, if you are having a difficult time articulating an issue through written feedback you may be better able to express and explain your concern when speaking with the author. Notes that you make on the list of "Elements to be Considered when Editing" may be very useful to you as an "outline" to guide you through your meeting with the author.

With respect to editing on punctuation and grammar, if you aren't entirely sure of whether or not something is wrong or how to fix a problem, you might raise the issue in the form of a question; for example: "Should this be a semi-colon here?" "Is this a run-on sentence." "The wording is somewhat awkward here; can we find a way to make the sentence more clear?"

Remember, you must meet with the author to discuss your editing and return the edited draft copy (and the notated "Elements to Consider") of the paper *no later than* 25 March.

To the Author of an Edited Paper:

First, treat editing comments as constructive criticism. Don't take comments personally, but look on them as a means to improve your writing. Second, editing comments are just suggestions. You should consider the suggestions carefully, but ultimately it is up to you to decide how to implement them or even whether or not to implement them at all. Finally, keep in mind that it is a draft copy of your paper that is being edited, not the final paper itself, and that the editorial comments in no way reflect what your ultimate grade on your paper assignment will be.

Editor's Name: _____

Name of Writer of the Paper: _____

Where appropriate, make comments on these sheets in addition to directly on the paper itself. Both the edited paper and these sheets must be turned in to the professor with the final term paper.

Elements to Consider when Editing

Thesis statement

Is a thesis statement present?

Is the thesis statement explicit and understandable, or could it benefit from greater focus and coherency?

Does the thesis statement accurately express the main idea(s) of the paper?

Is the thesis statement supported in paper? Is there material that goes "off topic" that could be removed or refocused?

Coherency and Clarity

Are ideas well explained and understandable (as opposed to being vague, poorly delineated, and/or unfocused)?

Are ideas developed sequentially and logically throughout the paper?

Are ideas developed sequentially and logically within paragraphs?

Are paragraph breaks used appropriately? (There should be one central idea in a paragraph; if a new concept is introduced, this should result in a new paragraph.)

Does the idea in one paragraph transition, or "bridge", easily into the next paragraph?

Content

Is the content appropriate and kept on-topic with respect to course content (i.e., evolutionary psychology)?

Are the number of theories, studies, examples appropriate in that each is well explained, interpreted, and contextualized, or are there too many or too few components in the paper.

Is the level of detail and analysis appropriate for a 12 page paper in a 400-level course?

Are elements, concepts, principles well explained?

Is there sufficient interpretation and analysis of material? (For example, are studies or experiments just described, or is the material interpreted and analyzed?)

Are examples, facts, theories well contextualized with respect to the focus of the paper?

Do transitions (both between sentences and paragraphs) help connect ideas?

References

Is appropriate APA embedded citation used in the paper?

Is appropriate APA citation used in the reference list?

Are there citations that appear in the paper, but not in the reference list?

Are there sources in the reference list that are not cited in the paper?

Are there ideas, concepts, details, facts that are not appropriately referenced?

Are enough sources cited, or does the paper need more references (keeping in mind that this is a 12 page paper for a 400-level course).

Grammar and Style

Are there spelling mistakes?

Are there consistent punctuation errors (e.g., use of semi-colons, colons, commas, quotation marks, periods)?

Are there problems with sentence structure (e.g., run-on sentences, comma splices, incomplete sentences).

Does time tense agree within and between sentences?

Does numerical tense agree within and between sentences?

Are possessive and plural cases used correctly?

Does the writing "flow" easily, or is it difficult and cumbersome to read?

Mechanics and Formatting

Is there a title page with the title of the paper, the student's name, and ID?

Are pages numbered?

Are there 1 inch margins top, bottom, left, right?

Is the paper double spaced throughout (i.e., 23 lines per page)?

Are paragraph breaks indented?

Does "References" appear at the top of the first page of references?

Is 12 point Times font used?

Is the paper 12 pages, plus or minus one page? (as a draft, keep in mind that the required length may not have been achieved yet)