Background Review and Synthesis of Literature

Summary of assignment

- **Task:** You will complete the following:
  - Select a topic for the final project
  - Research that topic in OneSearch
  - Locate seven articles on the topic
  - Write a synthesis of the articles.

- **Length:** 1000-1400 words.

- **Format:** APA

- **Sources:** At least seven sources (2 from scholarly or credible trade journals)

- **Writing Process:** You will submit a first draft of the essay to the assignment folder. The first draft will not be graded. The instructor will provide comments to it.   After receiving comments from the instructor, you will submit a revised draft. The final draft will be graded.

How This Assignment Informs Future Assignments in WRTG 394

This assignment is designed to help you prepare for the final paper in WRTG 394. Keep in mind that your final paper in WRTG 394 will be a report in which you define a problem in your workplace or community persuasively and accurately and propose a solution or solutions to the problem or issue.

For this assignment, consider the problem you will address and conduct research in the library on the topic.

For example, let us assume that you are considering writing a report to the Dean of The Undergraduate School at UMUC to recommend that UMUC move from LEO as its learning management system (LMS) to a different learning management system. In preparing to write this type of report, you might complete the following: Conduct library research on the topics of learning management systems for schools, online teaching, and effective teaching in an online environment.

What do We Mean by *Synthesis*?

In a background review and synthesis of the literature, you don't take a stand on an issue. You _review what the articles say_ on the issue, dividing the arguments in the articles into themes.

For example, let us assume that you conduct library research on the topic of learning management systems for schools, online teaching, and effective teaching in an online environment. You might find that three major themes emerge from your perusing of the seven articles:

- common reasons for resisting the move to a new LMS
- impact on faculty members when transitioning to a new LMS
- impact on students when transitioning to new LMS

Selection of Topics

Examples of Topics for the Research-Based Report

A student could write a report on a number of topics. The following are some examples. ***Please note that these are examples of topics.*** You are not required to choose any of them. They are provided here to help illustrate this assignment.

- a report to your supervisor at work suggesting that email be used less frequently for communication and that another application be used to improve communication
- a report to your city council suggesting a new smart traffic light system for parts of the city
- a report to the program chair of your major at UMUC to suggest changes to one or more of the classes required in the major
- a report to the manager of your unit at work noting that recycling facilities in the workplace should be improved

Examples of Topics for the Background Review and Synthesis,
.Based on the Suggested Topics Above

In any report of this nature, some background research is necessary. For example, consider the following strategies when collecting background research for the topics mentioned above:
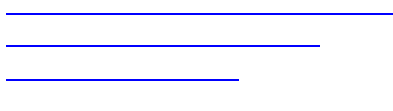
- For a report to your supervisor at work suggesting that email be used less frequently for communication and that another application be used to improve communication, some scholarly literature or articles from credible trade journals on transitioning to alternative electronic communication would be beneficial. In addition, articles that demonstrate the problems with email communication would add to the argument.
- For a report to your city council proposing a new smart traffic light system, some trade journal or scholarly literature on such systems would augment the report considerably.
- For a report to the program chair of your major at UMUC, some scholarly or trade journal articles on the skills that a graduate of that major needs in the workplace would be very effective. This information would greatly enhance the credibility of a report that suggests changes to the curriculum.
- For a report to the manager of your unit at work arguing that recycling facilities in the workplace should be improved, some scholarly articles or studies on the challenges of and benefits to implementing recycling facilities in organizations would be persuasive. Of course, there are varieties of recycling programs. The articles you find would help define what type of recycling program you would propose.

Length of Your Paper

As noted above, your background review of the literature on your topic should be 1000-1400 words in length.

The sources should be cited throughout the paper in APA format and listed in a **References** page at the end of the paper in APA format.

You will find that your synthesis will be a helpful component of your final research-based report. In fact, if your synthesis is well written, you might be able to take parts of it and copy them into sections of the final report. The skills and strategies you gain from writing the background review and synthesis of literature will be very valuable in writing your final research-based report.

Additional Topics that Previous Students Have Used

*Some possible workplace research topics are the following. These are examples to help you get started. **Please contact your instructor to have other topic ideas approved**.*

- Making a change in the computer infrastructure at your workplace
- Establishing a drug policy
- Establishing an employee leave donation program
- Establishing an equipment donation program for used computers, etc.
- Establishing a company recycling program (paper, etc.)
- Education/retraining for your employees
- Recommending the purchase of standing desks for employees
- Designing a training program for workplace safety issues
- Redesigning employee performance evaluations
- Establishing on-site day care or providing other child care benefits
- Providing gym membership or creating an on-site workout facility
- Creating or revising a charitable contribution policy
- Creating or improving a tuition assistance program
- Accommodations needed for employee/s with specific health issues (for example, migraines)

Some students have chosen topics outside of their workplaces, such as the following:

- Getting additional lighting in the neighborhood
- Changing traffic patterns around your child's school
- Starting a PTA website for your child's school
- Constructing a crying baby room at your place of worship
- Offering ESL courses at your church
- Increasing participation in a military Family Support Group
- Introducing a youth sports program to a school or community
- Changing the design of a class for your university
- Changing the learning management system for online classes for your university

Submitting the assignment:

You will submit a first draft of the essay to the assignment folder. The first draft will not be graded. The instructor will provide comments to it.

After receiving comments from the instructor, you will submit a revised draft. The final draft will be graded.