**Research Design Activity: Literature Critique**

**Research Designer’s Name:**

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**Purpose**

Reviewing the literature in the area related to your problem is an important step in the research process. Reviewing the literature will not only inform you about current research completed by others, but it can also help inform your own research. It can be intimidating to criticize a published research study. However, no research study is perfect. Only by repeating similar studies over time can knowledge be truly established. Notice that you will be discussing strengths along with weaknesses. In the end, the usefulness of a study is judged by how well the strengths balance the weaknesses, and how applicable a study is to the reader's context.

It is also important to critique the research that has been completed as a part of the literature review of any research project. Becoming a critical consumer of research can help you apply the research results in ways that are meaningful and useful to you. This, in turn, can help you become a more effective practitioner.

A final purpose of this assignment is to survey a wide assortment of current (hot) research studies for the benefit of all. So, as you write your critique, please be sure the publication date is no more than three years ago. Also know that your critique will be shared with the entire class.

**Choosing the Study**

The research study you choose should fit these criteria:

* It should truly be a research study. The study should have a research question or hypothesis, data, results, and conclusion.
* It should be very recent - a publication of date no older than three years. This helps us address the goal of graduating with an understanding of current research.
* It can be about any topic that is somehow relevant to instructional technology. We need to know about the hottest new findings in all subject areas, brain research, school reform, even childhood health. If you can see a connection to instructional technology, the study will probably work.
* If the study relates somehow to your major research project for this class, that is all the better.

**Guidelines for the Critiques**

Read your article. Jot down any initial reactions you might have. Do not rush the reading of the article. In fact, plan on reading the article well at least three times and not all at the same sitting. Read it once to get the overall gist of it. Then, read it again right away and take some initial notes as you do. Read it at least one more time well, preferably after a break of a half a day or so, taking more notes. Then, write your critique, rereading the article as often as needed as you do so.

Next, use a tool to help you evaluate the article. One tool is the checklist by Leedy and Ormrod (11th edition) on pages 65-66:

* In what source did you find the research article? Was it reviewed by experts in the field before it was published?
* Does the article have a stated research question or problem. That is, can you determine the focus of the author's work?
* Does the article describe the collection of data, or does it describe and synthesize other studies in which data were collected?
* Is the article logically organized and easy to follow? What could have been done to improve its organization?
* Does the article contain a section that outlines and reviews previous studies on this topic? In what ways is this previous work relevant to the research problem?
* If the author explained procedures that were followed in the study, are these procedures clear enough that you could repeat the work and get similar results? What additional information might be helpful or essential for you to replicate the study?
* If data were collected, can you describe how they were collected and how they were analyzed? Do you agree with what was done? What additional things would you have done if you had been the researcher?
* Do you agree with the interpretation of the results? Why or why not?
* Finally, reflect over the entire article. What is, for you, most important? What do you find most interesting? What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of this article? Will you remember this article in the future? Why or why not?

Next, begin composing your critique. In this RDA, your critique will have the following components: Summary, Strengths, Weaknesses, Personal Relevance. You should write each of these four components of your critique in a narrative fashion, that is, with complete sentences and complete paragraphs. The total length of your critique should be no less than one double-spaced page (400 words) and no more than two double-spaced pages (800 words). You will be required to redo your critique if it is excessively too short or too long.

Again, we will share these critiques for the benefit of all.

**Title of the article**

(If the title is lengthy, it is OK to abbreviate it. What you type here will become the linkable text to the rest of your critique on a list of all of the critiques done by the class.)

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**Author/s of the article**

Use this format:

Smith, L., Jones, T., & Barney, D.

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**The Complete APA Citation**

Use this model:

Authors. (Year of publication). Title of article. Journal Title, volumeNumber(issueNumber), page numbers.

Smith, L., Jones, T., & Barney, D. (2007). The effect of good instruction versus poor instruction on really smart people. Journal of Knowledge, 20(2), 101-122.

Also, here is a good web site with easy-to-follow examples of how to cite references using APA formatting: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/1/>

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**Article Summary**

Briefly summarize the article. Your summary should communicate the article's essence in no more than 1 paragraph.

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**Strengths of the Article**

Explore and discuss strengths of the article, or points of the article with which you agree.

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**Weaknesses of the Article**

Explore and discuss weaknesses of the article, or points of the article with which you disagree.

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**Personal Relevance**

Describe and discuss how this article relates to you. What points made by the authors communicates something important to you?

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