SLEC Seminar Paper Guidelines
Master's Literature Review Option

The seminar paper is a culminating project for which a M.Ed. candidate produces a polished piece of work under the guidance of his or her advisor or another professor. Through this project the candidate demonstrates knowledge of a specific topic in language education and showcases his or her proficiency in synthesizing academic literature and making connections with practice.

What is a **master's** literature review?[1]

One main purpose of a literature review is to provide insight into what is already known. The literature review should be considered "applied research" using "secondary data" (McKay, 2006 p.5) because you will be examining, evaluating, synthesizing and interpreting what other researchers have discovered about your topic of interest.

The literature review is the writer's analysis or critical synthesis of the "secondary data" and explanation of the state of knowledge in the field. The product of this secondary research should be useful as a meta-analysis (overarching analysis of others' analyses) for other teachers & researchers to find out more about this topic.

The literature review gives a general overview, makes connections between the literature cited, and allows the reader to understand generalizations about a large body of research. It also discusses implications for the field of language education. The literature review reports on both theoretical articles and empirical research studies from peer-reviewed publications.

What are the components of a **master's** literature review?

Your literature review should include the following sections:

0. TITLE PAGE (See attached)

1. TABLE OF CONTENTS: Headings & subheadings with page numbers

2. ABSTRACT: A brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of the paper. It includes:
   - The topic, in one sentence
   - The purpose, thesis, or organizing construct and the scope of the paper
   - Connection to the field of SLEC
   - The conclusion and implications or applications

3. INTRODUCTION: Definition and clarification of the problem
The body of the paper opens with an introduction that presents the specific problem under study. A good introduction is written in a paragraph or two. It summarizes the relevant argument and the data and gives the reader a firm sense of what was done and why.

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[1] Many ideas in this section were adapted by Dr. Melinda Martin-Beltran from McKay, S.L. (2006) *Researching Second Language Classrooms.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum. (see pp.146-154).

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Components include:
- Statement of the problem or topic and a sufficient rationale for the importance of this topic to the study of SLA/English language learners
- Statement of the purpose and scope of the review
- Rationale for literature review

4. SYNTHESIS OF CURRENT RESEARCH (empirical studies) ORGANIZED BY RELEVANT TOPICS
- The organization of what is summarized in your literature review should be tied to your main argument/ purpose. For example, your main argument/purpose may be to demonstrate that your topic is controversial so you show how studies have come to very different conclusions about your topic.
- Organize the literature thematically. Use headings and subheadings to guide the reader in understanding your organization. Some examples of organizational structures are as follows:
    - Different aspects on the same topic (e.g., culture as curriculum, culture as social practice, culture as teaching)
    - Major findings, contradictions & confirmations across the studies, different approaches to the topic (e.g., studies supporting vs. studies refuting the critical period hypothesis)
- Hint: You can use the table of contents and heading functions in Microsoft Word to designate headings and subheadings and create the table of contents.

5. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, and APPLICATIONS
- Implications and importance for teaching & learning second languages
- How will you apply what you learned from this review to future practice as a language educator?

8. REFERENCES: All citations in the manuscript must appear in the reference list and all references must be cited in the text.

WRITING APA STYLE
Your literature review should follow APA guidelines. For more detail on APA format, obtain a copy of the APA Handbook or consult this website:
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Where can I find some examples of literature reviews?
Silva (1993). Toward an understanding of the distinct nature of L2 Writing: The ESL research and its implications. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(4), 657-677.

Ellis & Sheen (2006). Reexamining the role of recasts in second language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 28, 575-600.

TITLE OF THE SEMINAR PAPER

by

The Student's Name
(University ID Number)

Advisor: (Your Advisor's Name)

Report submitted to Professor (name of advisor) in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

I recommend that this paper be accepted as a seminar paper
required for the Master of Education degree.

_____   _____
Professor Directing Seminar Paper   Date

_____
Second reader   Date

_____   _____
Advisor   Date

_____
Associate Dean for Student Affairs   Date

SLEC Seminar Paper Rubric
Master's Literature Review Option

The following elements are taken into consideration for the evaluation of the seminar paper: Quality of the literature review (comprehensiveness and accuracy); higher order thinking (analysis, synthesis and evaluation); clarity and effectiveness of writing (coherence, cohesion, organization); and conventions (APA format; control of spelling, punctuation and grammar; editing).

Each paper is read and rated by two members of the Second Language Education and Culture (SLEC) faculty. A three is a high pass, a two is passing, and a one is failing.

	Seminar Paper Rubric
3	- Reviews a wide variety of relevant peer-reviewed references with an appropriate balance between breadth and depth - Includes both foundational and current sources - Contains accurate statements, well-supported interpretations of the literature and a clear and valid line of argumentation - Synthesizes readings and discusses them in an integrated manner throughout - Demonstrates insightful and original analysis of readings and evaluation of implications and/or applications - Includes all required components of the paper, which work together to deliver the writer's message clearly and powerfully - Uses introductions, transitions, and summaries and defines and uses terms consistently and effectively in a manner that makes the paper easy to read - Follows APA format for all elements throughout, is approximately 30 pages, is free of editing errors, and shows excellent control of grammar, punctuation and spelling
2	- Reviews a variety of key foundational and current references on the topic - Contains correct facts and valid argumentation - Synthesizes information from various sources - Demonstrates thoughtful analysis of readings, evaluation of implications and discussion of applications - Includes all required components of the paper - Uses introductions, transitions, and summaries such that organization is easy to follow within each paragraph, section, and the paper as a whole - Generally follows APA format, is about 30 pages, and is generally free of editing errors - Shows good control of grammar, punctuation and spelling
1	- Reviews a number of sources, but might miss key readings or lack sufficient variety, breadth, or depth in choice of readings - May contain some incorrect assertions, misinterpretation of readings, or faulty logic - Often fails to discuss findings in an integrated manner - Contains some analysis, synthesis or evaluation, but may not include all three or may not be well-developed - May not follow guidelines or might need to develop some sections of paper more fully - Generally organized, but writer might miss some opportunities to provide introductions, transitions or summaries that that would facilitate reading - Applies APA guidelines inconsistently, has distracting editing errors, or may not approach 30-page expectation - Has distracting mistakes in grammar, punctuation spelling, or editing

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