

### Literature Review Feedback Guide

Please read through your partner's draft and give them ideas for how they can improve it. Write your ideas directly on the draft and then discuss your suggestions with the writer. Give the writer both definitive and tentative feedback.

As you read through the different sections, consider the questions below. And be sure to give your partner thorough and honest feedback. This is her opportunity to test-drive the draft, to see how it's working with real readers who don't live inside her head.

#### **Introductory Section**

Does the introduction introduce the readers to the topic of the literature review, forecast the discussion, and give you a sense of the gap they've found? It should.

#### **Very Long Middle Section**

The goal of the literature review is to locate the project within a research tradition, as well as identify a gap in that research. The literature review should discuss the topics (related to the topic) that have been studied before, the methods used to study them, and the findings.

In a sense, a literature review should read like a bunch of "summaries with a purpose." The literature review should include a lot of summaries of articles, but it shouldn't read as if the summaries are there only to prove that the writer read a lot of things, and the literature review should not read like the story of the writer finding sources. There should be a purpose to the summaries, and that purpose is to identify a gap in the research that has been done before.

A good literature review is organized around ideas, not sources. It is organized around the topics that have been studied before (if the writer's gap is a gap in topics), what we know about particular topics (if the writer's gap is a gap in knowledge), or around the methods used to study those topics (if the writer's gap is a gap in method). A good literature review is never organized chronologically – "Here is something I read and it says this. And then I read this other thing and it says that. And then this third thing.... *Zzzzzz...*"

As you read your partner's literature review, you should get the sense that it's building toward something. It's not just randomly summarizing sources. Give your partner ideas for how she can accomplish this better in her paper. (Or if she's doing a good job already, draw big smiley faces in the margin.)

#### **End Section**

Does the writer discuss the gap in the research? By the time you get to the end of the literature review, you should have a good sense of the gaps in the literature and maybe a little sense of how the writer's project will eventually fill those gaps. Point out how the writer can do this better.