Writing Across the Curriculum within Communication Sciences and Disorders: A Focus on American Psychological Association Formatting

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INTRODUCTION

- Lane & Johnson (2017) discovered that many students were not learning about writing after their required, freshman year writing course
- Various disciplines have adopted writing across the curriculum (WAC) as a method to address writing needs for upper level students (Horton & Diaz, 2011)

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

- "WAC maintains that writing is a valuable learning tool, helping college students to better synthesize, analyze, and apply knowledge specific to their discipline" (Lasley & Wittstadt, 1993)
- WAC recognizes that "literacy in a discipline is the same as learning in a discipline" (Harper & Vered, 2016)

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING WRITING

- A model of a writing workshop or a supplementary piece of writing material is beneficial to support students’ writing (Salter, 2011)
- Integrating writing lessons along with the typical lesson plan is important to increase comfort with writing in the profession and curriculum (Lane & Johnson, 2017)
- Use of a direct teaching method for specific skills improves student writing (Horton & Diaz, 2011)
- The expressive mode, using formative writing exercises and informal writing tasks to help students think through and about content are emphasized in the literature on WAC (Harper & Vered, 2016)

WRITING RUBRIC

- A rubric is used in a class for both teaching and grading (Horton & Diaz, 2011)
- Incorporating a standardized rubric helps students understand expectations and faculty score consistently across students (Luthy, Peterson, Lassetter, & Callister, 2009; Minnich, et al., 2018)
- Accuracy and consistency when using a rubric is imperative (Luthy, Peterson, Lassetter, & Callister, 2009; Minnich, et al., 2018)
- By utilizing a structured set of outcomes, such as an APA checklist, students will know their expectations (Hudd, Smart & Delohery, 2011)
- Rubrics can be used to write papers in the future (Horton & Diaz, 2011)

METHODS

- Previous Assignment 9 submissions from CSD 726: Organic Voice and Speech Disorders
- Created rubric: APA checklist, and screen-scrap resources for current CSD graduate students
- Students asked to complete checklist with Assignment 9 submission
- Compared previous Assignment 9 with current Assignment 9 that used APA resources

RESULTS

- Significant decrease in the number of APA errors within the Assignment 9 submissions
- The accurate use of Times New Roman font increased by 71% after intervention
- Use of 1-inch margins increased to 100% correct use
- Total number of errors per assignment before the implementation of APA resources was 3.86, after the intervention, the total number of errors dropped to 1.05 per assignment

CONCLUSION

- The number of APA errors decreased per paper after explicit instruction
- APA resources were provided to the students to increase their knowledge of APA
- The provided APA resources and checklist had a positive effect on altering graduate student performance within the guidelines of APA, similar to previous research (Hudd, et al., 2011; Luthy, et al., 2009; Minnich, et al., 2018)
- Additional resources and explicit instruction should be encouraged to use across target areas in the future

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- Incentive checklist to improve checklist submission rate
- Development of writing workshop geared towards academic disciplines
- Consider potential new targets for intervention

REFERENCES

- Lashley & Wittstadt, 1993: “WAC maintains that writing is a valuable learning tool, helping college students to better synthesize, analyze, and apply knowledge specific to their discipline” (Lasley & Wittstadt, 1993)

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