I have made my suggestions electronically and you may need to view the document in Word 2007 to view them all. I made comments by inserting them near the text I’m referring to. They should appear in the right column, if not go to the toolbar and click REVIEW then select MARKUP. [you should see one to the right of this paragraph].

Areas of grammatical difficulty are usually highlighted in RED. I suggest reading the offending phrase aloud. I hope that it will make the problem readily apparent.

On occasion, I have made some changes, they are in red since I’ve used the TRACK CHANGES feature available under TOOLS. Sometimes I’ve merely deleted a redundant or unnecessary word. You can accept or reject them one at time by right clicking on the red text and then clicking accept or reject.

**Some statements to avoid**:

**Avoid vacuous, empty statements, without any meaning, meant only to pad the essay. Notice what I just did? It wastes the reader’s time and they got the point the first time. Oops! I did it again.**

Avoid padding: Always ask yourself if the last paragraph you’ve written furthers your research. Does it explain an important concept? Does it motivate the reasons you have given for your research? If it’s tertiary, then eliminate or certainly minimize the distraction to the reader.

Examples: “Being students at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, we are very curious as to what we will find. Students should be very interested in this study as well, because it pertains to them”

“There are many different choices and factors that a college student will face as they enter or continue on with their higher education. These choices can either help or harm their health and specifically their weight.”

“Through rigorous research of students, statistics, and our base knowledge that we already have or will obtain, we will determine what the main causes of weight gain is in college students.

Following are the terms and definitions as used in this study

**Avoid listing the activities you did, the reader doesn’t care.**

Avoid the laundry list of activities. (First we did this….then we did this….next we talked to so and so, then so and so….) This sounds like an essay on “What I did last summer”, or as Professor Sherony refers to it, “A letter from Camp”. Concentrate on discussing why you did those things, and what you discovered when you did them.

Example: “Most of our background material was found on the Internet, as most of the printed literature which could be found at the Murphy Library was very outdated and insufficient.”

**Avoid making sweeping generalizations, assumptions**

Examples: “Obviously...” It might not be so obvious to the reader. Only use this when it truly is obvious, not just to you.

“Everyone knows...” Maybe not everyone knows, and if they did why did you write it down? Only use this technique when you want to refresh the reader’s memory, just be careful not to use in place of a substantive argument. Often times writers say “Everyone knows...” because they can’t construct an argument to convince everyone, so they disarm the other side of the argument by saying “Everyone knows...”

**Avoid overusing the word This, and for that matter These, That are overused as well. Go through your paper, circle all the This, That, and These, then try eliminating half.**

Examples: “This study will...”

Example: “This study took into account 67 college women from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and exposed them to two different sets of photographs”

Rearrange until it sounds good.

Sixty seven females from the University of Alaska Fairbanks were exposed to two different sets of photographs.

**Avoid excessive colloquialisms**. Informal language generally does not belong in written reports. It just makes you sound juvenile, so save it for the presentation and use it sparingly. I know I use it too often...

**Avoid Cliches.**

<http://lifehacker.com/5091810/30-cliches-you-should-basically-avoid-going-forward>

**Avoid Misusing Words.** Today, with spellchecking software this is less of an issue, but pay attention to incorrect usage of words like there, their or effect, affect, or your, and you’re. I know they are the three that challenge me most. Check for the correct usage here: <http://www.confusingwords.com/>

The research hypothesis does not need to be the first sentence of the paper nor the last sentence in the first paragraph. It doesn’t even have to be in italics or made bold. A well written introduction will make your research focus, clear and unambiguous. Remember that your goal is to draw people into your research, make them interested. It may entail an explanation of the research that builds to a statement of the hypothesis.

**Citations**: Did they appropriately cite source material? Did they use a consistent style? For the moment they do not have to have a reference list, but they should use appropriate in-text citation. For example: According to Frank and Bernanke (2007) the stock market does not affect consumption Or this: Few researchers find the stock market affects consumption (Frank and Bernanke, 2007). Look for lazy citation practices where the end of every paragraph has a parenthetical citation. This does not help the reader understand WHICH idea in the preceding paragraph is due to the cited authors. Also do not list the journal title or the authors affiliation in the literature review.

Technology provides several tools to becoming a better writer. Word 2007 provides spell check, grammar check, and readability stats. Use the readability stats to check for passive voice.

<http://lifehacker.com/5170941/enable-readability-statistics-for-office-documents>

explanations of the statistics here <http://corporategeek.info/Measure-Readability-Documents-Emails>