**Commonly Observed Challenges in Term Papers**

dfleming@uottawa.ca

This is not a substitute for an APA guide! Consult the OWL Perdue On-Line Writing Lab

**Organization and Argument**

* direct clear speech: avoid passive voice, no run-on sentences, clear topic sentences for each paragraph, logical development of argument
* a term paper is NOT a research or synthesis paper
* careful of claims: you can not empirically prove anything definitively here
* rather, this is a **focused** literature review or critique
* thus, NO statement of research problem, methodology or theoretical framework
* you still need a clear argument with an introduction, body and conclusion
* ALL claims must be supported (citation, data or SOME personal experience)
* keep personal experience to the minimum; just enough to make the links between theory and practice clear and to emphasize your authority in making A FEW claims that are not backed up by the literature; the occasional use of “I” is okay to avoid ‘pseudo-scientificism’, but I think research should be about other people.
* after a brief intro, make the purpose and organization of your paper clear
* in a lit review, your conclusion should make some kind of comment of the literature: where are the gaps? What should future research focus on? How could practice be enhanced by more attention to theory (the implications for the classroom)? How can theory be enhanced by a greater focus on practice?

**APA Format**

* above all, be consistent
* title page needed; double-spaced; 12-point fonts; single-sided pages
* abstract not needed
* small case titles; italicized titles of book title or name of journal
* NO italics for article or chapter titles
* Pay attention to APA heading levels; no colons
* indent +40 word quotes; no quotation marks for indented quotes
* all direct quotes need page numbers; year beside author name
* note differences between in-text vs. reference list: ‘&’ vs. ‘and’; use of et al.
* title page is numbered; pagination top right
* use running head
* “blah, blah, blah.” BUT “blah, blah, blah”!
* terms in italics; “ironic” “coined”
* single quotation marks only within double quotation marks
* no first names with authors or editors
* reference list:
  + hanging indent; double-spaced
  + book chapters: (pp. xxx)
  + chapters: (Ed.), or (Eds.),
  + family name, first initial for authors; first initial, family name for editors
  + journals: *Canadian Journal of Education 23*(4), 455.