

Scholarly Revision of Draft Papers

Rationale

The structure of this program is built around the idea of continuous development through reflective learning. Accordingly, most of your assignments include a first draft followed by subsequent feedback from your peers and/or your coach and the final version and often different assignments build on each other. When preparing your submission for the final version, you are expected to revise your paper based on the feedback you receive. You may also make any other changes that you see fit. Your coach will give you feedback on the final version of documents, which you will have to take it into account in your future work. This is especially so when it comes to the teaching innovation project, which is completed in sequences and in which one sequence is built on the previous one(s).

In addition to the revisions themselves, we ask you to reflect on these revisions including the feedback you received. In the rest of this document, we explain how to address feedback in your assignments and how to communicate the effected changes to your coach. This practice has two benefits.

First, it helps you become a reflective teacher, which requires more from you than slavishly executing the advice of your coach. It asks you to think about the recommendations and decide for yourself if and how it would indeed improve your paper. Reflections allow for achieving a deeper understanding and, thus, facilitate your growth as a teacher.

Second, you also learn a transferable skill that you can use when working toward (especially English-language) publications. During the publication process many manuscripts are neither rejected nor accepted—rather, the author is given the opportunity to revise and resubmit the paper after modifications based on reviewer comments. When resubmitting the manuscript after alterations, author(s) are required to include a document that reports on how they incorporated recommendations from the reviewers into their paper.

Relatedly, the ultimate goal of your teaching innovation project that takes up the Fall 2017 and most of the Spring 2018 semester is to write a study that will be published in a book. This book is designed to offer examples on how to innovate courses and improve student learning to early career teachers like you without the opportunity to participate in this program.

The Feedback

The feedback you receive on your work from your coach (but not your peers) will be posted by your coach in the same folder where you submitted your first draft. Your coach will define the exact form of feedback. Coaches are only asked to provide feedback in writing (although they may also choose to discuss this feedback over Skype) and give sufficient explanation for their suggestions. They are free to decide whether they use a separate document to list all comments, mark up your paper using comment bubbles and track changes, or a combination of the two.

If you have questions about the feedback you received from your coach, you should contact your coach via email, Skype, or another method of communication that the two of you agreed on. Depending on the quality of your paper, coaches may give you feedback that requires you to make either a few or a significant amount of alterations to the paper. Although the primary focus of the feedback is its teaching and learning content, changes may be suggested regarding style or grammar. We ask you to take recommendations by your coach seriously.

Revising the Paper and Reporting on Revision

Dealing with Feedback Received

In general, we ask you to consider all the recommendations you received. As part of this process we expect you to critically evaluate these and if you see a good academic reason for it, you may exercise discretion to include an altered version of the recommendation or decide against following it in your paper at all. However, feedback that asks you to add an element to the paper that are required in the exercise (including citations) must be incorporated into the paper.

When making any kind of changes to any part of your paper, **use track changes** to highlight them.

Reporting Changes

Method

The general idea behind reporting on the changes is transparency and making it easy for your coach too see what, how, and where you have done in the paper.

In general, reporting can be done in two ways: by drawing up a document explaining the changes or by responding to the comment bubbles your coach placed in the document (or by a combination of the two). It may be a convenient way to mirror the method your coach uses to provide feedback. Your coach may also ask you to use one or the other method.

Whichever method you end up using, it must be clear what advice you respond to. When using bubbles, it needs to be clear which comments belong to the coach and which to you. Therefore, do not write into the same comment bubble as your coach; instead either “click” reply at the bottom of the coach’s comment and add your answer there or add a new bubble to the same place in the text (ideally comments should also keep a chronological order: try to avoid adding a response above the original comment).

Examples:

Comment Bubbles

My teaching innovation examines if using minute papers at the end of classes will enhance students’ ability to remember the information they receive during the class.

Document:

You asked me to include a control group in my design so that the impact of the experiential method can be compared against the impact of another teaching method. I added a control group as I explain in the 3rd paragraph of the section entitled “Research Design” on page 2.

AS

Agnes Simon

This requires comparison but you only teach one section of the class. You either need information on students’ retention of information before you introduced the minute papers or some of the students will have to serve as the control group (i.e. they will not complete the minute paper).

ES

Eszter Simon

I have decided to split my class into two—one will fill out the minute paper at the end of each class and the other will be asked to leave five minutes early. See actual alterations in the third paragraph of the “Research Design” section on page 2.

When you use the method of compiling a separate document to accompany the final versions of your papers, it should not be longer than two single-spaced pages and in most cases, especially in case of shorter exercises, will not exceed one page.

Note: Below there are examples for reporting the changes in a document accompanying the paper itself. If you use comment bubbles, adapt the approach accordingly.

Reacting to Recommendations for Modifications

When you are asked to change “X” to “Y” it is rather straightforward what you need to do and how you report on it. But when the advice is “to make the exercise more interactive”, you have a lot more explaining to do. This section contains examples for various scenarios as to how to react to feedback. There might be other special instances—nonetheless, the examples below will provide guidelines for you about how to deal with those by following the logic herein.

1. Implementing Changes as Advised by Your Coach.

See the above examples.

2. Incorporating Advice into the Paper with Minor Modifications.

“In your third comment, you have asked me to provide detailed information about all statistical comparisons—including those that do not reach statistical significance—in the “Analysis” section of the paper. I added the requested information, but instead of spelling it out in the text, I have included a table on page 3 (table 3) with the relevant statistics and made a reference to the table in the paragraph above it”.

3. Choosing One of Two Pieces of Advice, which also Affects Other Parts of the Paper.

“Based on your suggestions that I either change the method of analysis to qualitative or I change the research design, I have decided to do the latter because I have no training in statistics. This resulted in several other changes in the paper. First, I changed the kind of data that I am collecting to qualitative (see paragraph 3 on page 4). Second, I reworked my literature review to situate my research better among existing studies (see changes on page 2)”.

4. Discarding an Advice.

When you decide not to incorporate an advice, we would like you to state which advice you are talking about and explain why you have decided not to take the advice. You should have a good reason for going against the advice of your coach and by doing so, you cannot jeopardize the success of your project. As much as possible try avoiding justifications like “I didn’t have time”, “I didn’t understand what you want me to do here,” and “I didn’t feel like doing it”. Your explanation should also not be an opinion (incorrect: “I didn’t include a control group because I don’t think a control group is necessary”; correct: “I didn’t include a control group as you suggested, because the professor whose teaching assistant I am, does not allow me to treat my students differentially”).

5. Revisions You Made but Not Requested by Your Coach.

Note that major changes (i.e. that changes to content not rewording a sentence) need to be mentioned and explained.

6. Grammatical and Spelling Recommendations.

In general, your primary focus should be on the content of your assignments not on excellent English prose so long that ideas expressed therein are comprehensive. Coaches are not required to suggest language changes, but in the rare cases when your coach suggest grammatical or spelling changes, we recommend you accept these. There is no need to reflect upon these in your scholarly revision document.