

Master of Arts in Education – Admissions Essay

Viterbo University Guidelines for Scholarly Writing/Written Narratives

- ✓ Entire paper/narratives must be Times New Roman 12 font AND DOUBLE-SPACED (when you begin a document, you should go into the spacing properties in Word and unmark ‘add space between paragraphs’ – this will insure absolute double spacing for the document).
- ✓ Avoid overuse of pronouns (they, she, he, it, they, them), particularly without a noun to which the pronoun refers.
- ✓ Use the word “toward” or “regarding”, not “towards”
- ✓ Format the words “however”, “rather”, and “therefore” like the example: “Males performed at higher levels on computation; **however**, females . . . (note semicolon, then comma).
- ✓ Remember that the pronoun ‘who’ is needed to refer to animate nouns
Incorrect example: “The students that they used in the study . . . “
Correct example: “The students who completed the assignment . . . “
- ✓ Avoid the use of informal, casual language like “a lot”, “really”, “very”
- ✓ If you use a figure of speech or word you might typically put quotation marks around, instead put it in italics. This distinguishes the word or phrase from a direct quotation. (For example: The teacher should not be a *sage on the stage* rather the teacher should...)
- ✓ Use the words for 1-10 (one, two) and for 1st through 10th (first, second). For any numbers over 10, you may use the numeral. There are MANY exceptions to this general rule, and they can be found in the APA guide.
- ✓ Avoid the use of rhetorical questions. “What strategies should a teacher use to....?” “How can we increase student engagement...?”
- ✓ Any phrase that could be taken out of the sentence without losing the intended meaning should be set off by commas ‘The roof collapsed and, in turn, the rain damaged the home’.
- ✓ Watch verb tenses using past, present, and future tenses correctly; the past tense of ‘lead’ is ‘led’
- ✓ Make sure your pronouns match the noun. Examples: Incorrect: “When a student is given choices **they** may experience increased motivation”. Correct: “When a student is given choices **he** may experience increased motivation”. (NOTE: Use **he** OR **she**, not he/she.
- ✓ Correctly use the possessive form of nouns - “A student’s response” (singular possessive), as opposed to “Four students’ responses” (plural possessive).
- ✓ Use the word “feel” to describe affect or senses, (he felt afraid that he would not pass the course); use the word “believe” to describe your cognition or thinking (Teachers believe that using groups can enhance learning).
- ✓ Be certain that you use colons and semicolons properly. A colon is used most often before a list, such as “The weather today included the following: rain, sleet, fog, and ice”.
- ✓ Semicolons are most often used to separate the two parts of a compound sentence, such as: “The girls did not seem to mind working in small groups; however, many of the boys reported that they preferred working alone”. When a semicolon is used, BOTH sides (preceding and following) must be a complete thought.
- ✓ Use the word “that” when needed. For example:
Incorrect: I believe I have improved in my vocabulary instruction by implementing...
Correct: I believe that I have improved in my vocabulary instruction by implementing
- ✓ Avoid sentences using “not only”. For example: Not preferred: “Not only does professional development help teachers improve in their use of instructional strategies, it also increases collaboration among teachers.”
Preferred: Professional development helps teacher improve in their use of instructional strategies, as well as increasing collaboration among teachers.”
- ✓ **MAKE SURE YOU UTILIZE “SPELLCHECK”**
- ✓ **Read through your paper/narratives carefully to “catch” errors**
- ✓ **Ask a colleague to read your paper/narratives and provide edits and suggestions.**
- ✓ **Refer to the writing rubrics provided to ensure that all areas are addressed in your paper/narratives**