

Proposal for Faculty in Residence Position

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Goal: The goal is to improve the writing skills of students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

Objectives: To meet the goal, the objectives of this proposal address the skills of the students at two levels: the surface level and meaning level. The surface level includes grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The meaning level includes clarity and coherence and incorporates building sentences, constructing paragraphs, and organizing entire documents.

Background: There are two classes that will be included in this study, one for graduate students and one for undergraduate students. The graduate class is METR-202, Research Methods, and the undergraduate class is METR-100W, Writing Workshop: Meteorological Reports.

Method: The Research Methods class is divided into 5 three-week sessions. Different professors will conduct the sessions, covering their individual areas of expertise. The students will be responsible for a literature review at the end of each session, typically a 5 to 8 page paper. Students will be asked to hand in two copies of their papers; one will go to the individual professor and one will go to me. The professor's primary focus in grading the papers will be primarily on the meaning level, i.e. how well the students grasped the science topic and how well they have assimilated background material. I do expect some professors to comment on surface level errors. My focus will be on both the surface and meaning layer. I will track individual student's progress through the semester, quantifying the number of surface layer errors and assessing the meaning level. They will be given comments from both the professor and me on each paper and have those comments before they write their next paper.

I am the instructor for the Meteorological Reports class. The students are given weekly assignments as well as two longer literature reviews, one at mid-term and the other as a final assignment at the semester end. The objectives of the weekly assignments vary, sometimes focusing on individual components of a technical report (e.g. an abstract), while other times emphasizing specific writing aspects (e.g. paragraph coherence). The first week of class, the students are given a three page assignment, which will serve as a benchmark for improvement. I will assess the students' progress throughout the semester; however, I will compare the benchmark to the mid-term and final assignments.

Outcome: I will produce a report assessing the students in both classes, including surface level and meaning level improvements. I expect the students in the graduate class to be better writers at the beginning of the semester, likely leaving less room for improvement. However, the focus in that class is not solely developing writing skills. The focus of the undergraduate class is improving writing skills and I expect the improvement to be much greater. The final analysis will include how well the students in the two classes compare.