

Defining the Core of a Research Project Narrative

Analyzing Existing Writing

Instructions:

- Find, underline, and label the three core elements (approach, purpose, gap) in the selected piece of existing writing (poster, research article, etc.) that you are analyzing.
- Transfer the core elements you found in the writing to this worksheet.
- Consider the discussion questions below.

1. APPROACH (what they did):

2. PURPOSE (what the desired outcome or goal was for doing that):

3. GAP IN KNOWLEDGE (what problem or unmet need was supposed to be solved with this outcome):

Discussion questions:

- a. Are any core elements missing or implied? If so, is there a good reason why?
- b. Do any core elements spread over 2 or more sentences?
- c. Do the core elements all relate to each other clearly and cleanly?
- d. Reading over the core elements you have recorded on this worksheet, does a complete and logical story emerge?
- e. Where are the thin or weak spots? How might they be improved?

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Planning Upcoming Writing or Presenting

Instructions:

- Fill in the worksheet with the core elements (approach, purpose, gap) of your own work, doing the best you can.
- Use *one complete* sentence for each of the core elements – no more than one sentence, and full sentences, not phrases.
- The sentences don't have to connect smoothly – these are not paragraphs or draft sentences.
- Forget creativity—just jot it down. Don't get stuck in trying to be eloquent.
- After you've filled in all three core elements, consider the discussion questions below.

1. YOUR APPROACH (what *you* did):

I _____

2. YOUR PURPOSE (what *your* goal was in doing that – not your mentor's goal!)

I did this in order to _____

3. YOUR GAP IN KNOWLEDGE (what problem achieving *this* outcome solved)

Discussion questions:

- a. Which of the core elements was easiest to articulate? Which was hardest?
- b. How does *your* purpose contribute to the purpose of your mentor's research (the 'parent' project)?
- c. Looking at the *purpose* of your work, what do you think your work's significance is?
- d. Looking at the *gap in knowledge* of your work, what do you think your work's implications are?