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RESPONSE TO WRITING

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Online Peer Review Using Turnitin PeerMark

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Online peer review has been increasingly implemented in composition and second language classes. This article reports on a pedagogical practice in which students used the Turnitin PeerMark tool to conduct peer response in a first-year writing class. In this study, students drew on multiple PeerMark functions (i.e., commenting tools, composition marks, and PeerMark questions) and provided feedback on their peers' summary and response papers. In addition to students' positive attitude toward the use of PeerMark revealed in the interviews, analyses of archived PeerMark records suggest that students provided constructive feedback in multiple aspects and that the majority of peer comments were later incorporated into students' revisions through different ways. This report expects to encourage teachers to implement peer review using Turnitin in their classrooms and further explore the role of technologies for peer feedback.

Keywords: peer response, online peer review, Turnitin, PeerMark, writing pedagogy

Peer review has been a common practice in university writing classes for decades. It is widely acknowledged that peer review fosters students' audience awareness, improves students' critical thinking skills, and enables students to become better writers (e.g., Liu & Hansen, 2002; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). With the development of new technologies, online peer review has captured instructors' attention in composition and L2 classes. The current body of literature (e.g., Chang, 2012; Guardado & Shi, 2007; Liu & Sadler, 2003; Tuzi, 2004) indicates that online peer feedback has received acclaim for the advantages observed over face-to-face feedback, such as interactive textual exchange, active student participation, and higher percentages of revision-oriented feedback and incorporated revisions. Several reasons that explain these benefits have been reported: (a) the high visibility afforded by technologies leads to heightened sense of responsibility (Sengupta, 2001); (b) the Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) environment with the use of pseudonyms encourages more honest, objective, and critical comments from reviewers (Li & Li, 2017; MacLeod, 1999); (c) asynchronous CMC allows for response rehearsal and suggestion formulation at students' own pace, which results in more helpful feedback (DiGiovanni & Nagaswami, 2001); and (d) online feedback creates a less threatening environment so that more participation comes from ESL students, who may be concerned about their language proficiency and whose cultures value attentive listening (Liu & Sadler, 2003).

Previous studies have addressed benefits of peer review associated with multiple technology tools, such as Microsoft Word (e.g., Abuseileek & Abualsha'r, 2014), synchronous chatting (e.g., Chang, 2012), bulletin-board posting (e.g., Guardado & Shi, 2007), and blogs (e.g., Chen, 2012). However, the newly developed asynchronous CMC tool Turnitin PeerMark has barely been explored. Turnitin (<http://turnitin.com/>), formerly known for its plagiarism check service, is gradually becoming accepted as a technology to improve student writing (Straumsheim, 2016). Besides Originality Check, more functions have been added during recent years, such as PeerMark, Revision Assistant, and Scoring Engine. PeerMark, an online peer review tool used in smaller learning communities, largely alleviates the concern about students' intellectual property

that Originality Check may cause (Roll, 2017), and it is beginning to capture researchers' and instructors' attention.

Li and Li (2017) initially investigated the affordances of PeerMark for peer review. Results revealed that students made full use of the platform and provided primarily revision-oriented feedback (i.e., feedback that encourages writers to reconsider and revise the content, organization, and language use, etc., of their writing) at both global levels (e.g., idea development, organization of writing, and purpose and audience) and local levels (e.g., wording, grammar, and punctuation). Students also unanimously appreciated distinctive functions of PeerMark for peer review. What is still unknown is to what extent and in which ways the students incorporate PeerMark feedback into their revisions. Further examination of the impact of peer review on students' revisions would certainly help us understand the role of Turnitin in peer review and writing activities. Therefore, in this teaching article, I share my experience of using Turnitin PeerMark for peer review in a first-year writing class. After presenting the multiple functions of Turnitin PeerMark, I will focus on how PeerMark feedback is incorporated into students' revisions, explain the students' perceptions revealed in my study, and, finally, address pedagogical recommendations.

The Study

Context and Participants

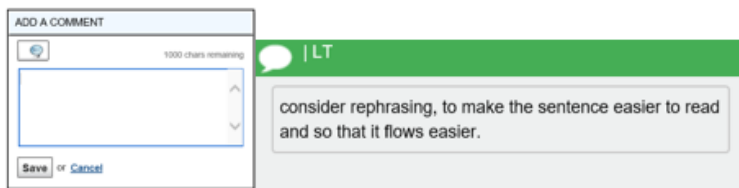
This study comes from a larger research project on the affordances of Turnitin for online peer review conducted in a first-year writing course named "Composition I" at a public university in the southeastern United States (Li & Li, 2017). Composition I aims to develop college students' academic writing skills. The students used the textbook *They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* (Graff & Birkenstein, 2014), which introduces rhetorical moves of different genres and recommends effective techniques on multiple aspects of academic writing such as quoting, summarizing, responding, and distinguishing the author's voice from others' voices. In the mainstream class that I taught, 13 students (out of 19 in the class) consented to participate in the study. They were native speakers of English and had received little previous formal training in academic writing. Some students had former experience in peer review, but

no one had used Turnitin PeerMark for peer review prior to the start of the project.

Procedures

I set up Turnitin as an external tool embedded in the course management system Desire2Learn (D2L). I offered a 50-minute training session in which I gave a brief PowerPoint lecture on using PeerMark to conduct peer review and guided students to watch and discuss a relevant YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EL32ovtZiKc>), and students then practiced using multiple PeerMark functions (i.e., commenting tools, composition marks, and PeerMark questions) to provide feedback on a short paragraph that peers had submitted. Specifically, they used commenting tools to highlight text and leave comments directly on the paper (see Figure 1 for examples); they added composition mark symbols (see Figure 2) for specific problematic words or phrases by clicking and dragging them; they also evaluated peer writing on both global and local areas by answering assignment-specific PeerMark questions. Figure 3 provides an example of how students performed peer review using Turnitin PeerMark.

1) Comment icon and bubble.



2) Inline comments overlaid on the paper.

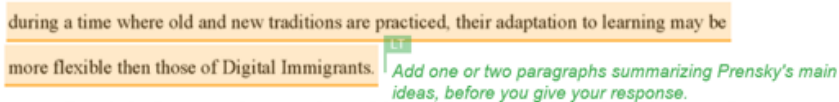


Figure 1. Screenshots of two types of commenting tools used by participants.

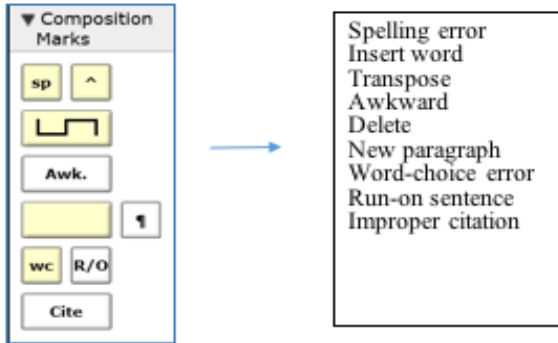


Figure 2. Screenshot of composition marks.

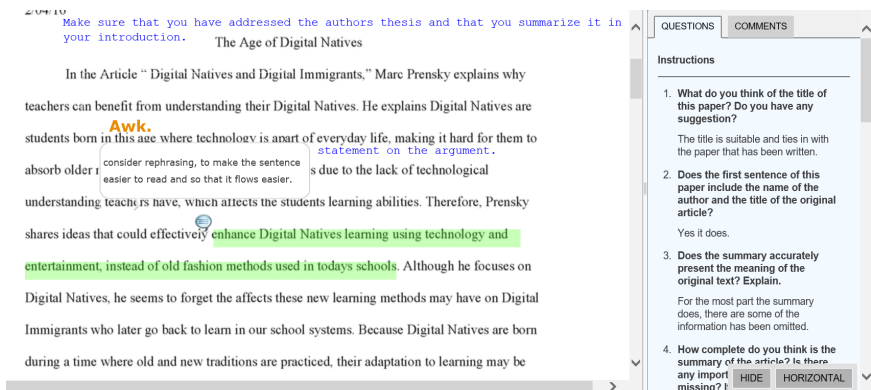


Figure 3. Screenshot of sample PeerMark review.

In the larger project, students conducted double-blinded peer review activities using PeerMark on three writing tasks (i.e., summary and response, argumentation, and rhetorical analysis) sequentially. Students' writing drafts, the peer comments made via commenting tools and composition marks, and students' responses to PeerMark questions were all archived on the D2L Turnitin site. Students were able to review the comments that peers provided on their own essays upon the completion of each peer review session. After completing the three peer review tasks, five students volunteered

to take semistructured individual interviews with me. I also collected students' revised essays submitted to D2L.

Data Analysis

In this teaching article, I focus on students' peer reviews on only one assignment, the summary and response essay. I specifically examined the summary and response papers written by four participants who had taken individual interviews with me and meanwhile had received complete peer comments, indicated as 100% in the PeerMark module (one of the five students who took interviews was excluded due to the incomplete peer work he received). Students' perceptions of using Turnitin for peer review helped interpret how they considered peer comments and how they incorporated these comments into their revisions. Drawing on the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), I conducted content analysis of the interviews after transcribing them, in which I identified a major theme through reading and rereading the data: the advantages of Turnitin-based peer review.

To analyze incorporated versus nonincorporated feedback, I compared the four students' first drafts of their summary and response essays with their revised papers, and focused on revision-oriented comments. In particular I examined the revisions that were generated from peers' feedback using commenting tools and composition marks and from peers' responses to PeerMark questions. More specifically, I did frequency counts for incorporated comments and nonincorporated comments in relation to three PeerMark functions—composition marks, commenting tools, and PeerMark questions, so as to evaluate the potential role of Turnitin PeerMark for peer response and revision. After distinguishing between incorporated feedback and nonincorporated feedback, I analyzed the specific ways in which the students incorporated peer feedback. Rather than imposing existing categories of peer revisions on the available data, I read and reread revised texts in comparison with original texts and induced four salient categories: direct correcting, deleting trouble sources, rephrasing, and adding. These revisions were then divided into different categories that emerged from the data, including title, citation, syntax,

discourse, lexicon, and mechanics. Please see Table 1 for definitions and representative examples of the different revision categories.

Table 1
Taxonomy of revisions

Revision types	Definitions and examples
Direct correcting	<p>Correcting mistakes directly pointed out by peer reviewers</p> <p>E.g., “For citations, move the period to the end of the last parenthesis.” Ex: “. . . it is presented” (Prensky 5).</p> <p><i>[The citation format was corrected by the writer.]</i></p>
Deleting trouble sources	<p>Removing texts that are confusing or have language problems</p> <p>E.g., “By taking into account the evolution of technology, Prensky introduces a way to conform to the people who have grown up with new technology and have different ways of absorbing information, not all digital natives require new methods.”</p> <p><i>[In response to “Sentence too long and run-on,” the writer deleted “, not all digital natives require new methods.”]</i></p>
Rephrasing	<p>Expressing existing ideas in an alternative way</p> <p>E.g., “In his essay ‘Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants,’ Marc Prensky tries to highlight that the younger generation is so different . . .”</p> <p><i>[In response to “highlights would be more of a bold and sure statement,” the writer changed “tries to highlight” to “states.”]</i></p>
Adding	<p>Adding information to existing contents</p> <p>E.g., In response to “Add one or two paragraphs summarizing Prensky’s main ideas before you give your response,” the writer added a new paragraph: “He also points out that even though there were chances for digital immigrants to educate themselves with technology, . . . this new change could be more difficult for the old rather than the new.”</p>

In the following section, I take a quantitative overview of incorporated and nonincorporated comments in relation to three PeerMark

functions and present the four ways in which peer feedback on multiple writing issues was incorporated, with illustrative excerpts. Then, I relate these findings to students' perceptions of the advantages of using Turnitin PeerMark for peer review and interpret the results of the study.

Results and Discussion

Quantitative Overview of Incorporated Comments

Table 2 shows the instances and percentages of feedback incorporated and feedback not incorporated for each summary and response paper that the four focal participants completed. The results show that students provided revision-oriented peer feedback mainly using commenting tools, followed by composition marks. As Student A reported in the interview, commenting tools enable peer reviewers to “provide feedback on multiple aspects without messing up the paper.” Student B, on the other hand, addressed the usefulness of composition marks: “They are handy,” “help identify grammatical errors,” and “provide different choices to fit the reviewers’ needs.” In responses to PeerMark questions, students provided some constructive comments addressing improvement of the title, documentation format, quotations, contents, and organization of writing. PeerMark questions are considered as “guidelines for commenting” (Student C), and they “give more insight to what needs to be fixed” and “ensure thorough checking” (Student D). As depicted in Table 2, the majority of PeerMark comments were incorporated into students’ revisions (namely, 77.8%, 100%, 91.7%, and 73.3% for the four essays respectively). This observation was connected with students’ positive attitudes toward the PeerMark tool. Students praised the efficiency of the tool; for example, Student C stated, “I like the clarity of it. It is simple and easy to use. It helped me revise my papers more effectively.” Students also appreciated the anonymity that this tool affords. Student D said, “I feel like this reduces the awkwardness that comes with revising others’ work in person. This allows us to write responses/comments more thoroughly.” Therefore, writers felt that they benefited from more thorough peer comments generated on PeerMark (compared to face-to-face comments) and incorporated them into their revisions.

Table 2
Incorporation/nonincorporation of PeerMark feedback in summary and response papers

Paper	Feedback	Composition marks	Comments	Responses to PeerMark questions	Total (percentage)
Student A's paper	Feedback incorporated	1	5	1	7 (77.8 %)
	Feedback not incorporated	1	1	0	2 (22.2%)
	Subtotal	2	6	1	9 (100%)
Student B's paper	Feedback incorporated	1	5	1	7 (100%)
	Feedback not incorporated	0	0	0	0 (0%)
	Subtotal	1	5	1	7 (100%)
Student C's paper	Feedback incorporated	5	6	0	11 (91.7%)
	Feedback not incorporated	0	0	1	1 (8.3%)
	Subtotal	5	6	1	12 (100%)
Student D's paper	Feedback incorporated	4	5	2	11 (73.3%)
	Feedback not incorporated	1	2	1	4 (26.7%)
	Subtotal	5	7	3	15 (100%)

Moreover, the interviews revealed that students were able to revise their own papers more effectively after conducting peer review using PeerMark functions. As Student C commented, “The [PeerMark] questions that are asked ensure that I have checked everything that is necessary, and I will start asking myself these questions in my own writing.” That is, responding to task-related PeerMark questions was helpful not only

for writers, but also for reviewers. This finding echoed recent research (e.g., Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Tigchelaar, 2016) positing that reviewing texts can bring even more benefits than receiving feedback.

Ways of Incorporation

The participants demonstrated four ways of incorporating peer feedback into revisions: direct correcting, deleting trouble sources, rephrasing, and adding. The revisions are in multiple areas at both global levels (e.g., contents and organization of writing) and local levels (e.g., title, citation, syntax, lexicon, and mechanics). The comments on the titles and citations were mostly triggered by PeerMark Questions 1, 9, and 14 (see the Appendix for specific questions). The comments on content and organization were generated from PeerMark Questions 3, 4, 5, and 10. The comments on syntax were generally made using two types of commenting tools: comment bubbles and inline comments overlaid on the paper (see Figure 1). Composition mark symbols assisted with feedback on lexicon and mechanics. Table 3 shows an overall picture of how the students incorporated feedback into their revisions through the four methods concerning multiple writing components.

The following are some illustrative examples demonstrating the four types of incorporation. Textual changes are highlighted in bold.

Direct correcting. Students directly corrected the mistakes (e.g., in grammar, spelling, punctuation, format) that their peers pointed out.

Example 1 (from Student B's paper):

Original text: Prensky also believes that the technology has become a major part of almost every **student's**.

PeerMark feedback: I would change "student's" to "student's life" or "student."

Revised text: He believes that the technology has become a major part of almost every **student's life**.

Table 3
Four ways of feedback incorporation at different levels

		Title	Citation	Syntax/ discourse	Lexicon	Mechanics	Total
Student A's paper	Correcting	0	0	0	0	3	3
	Adding	1	2	1	0	0	4
	Rephrasing	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Deleting	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student B's paper	Correcting	0	0	0	1	2	3
	Adding	1	0	1	0	0	2
	Rephrasing	0	0	0	2	0	2
	Deleting	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student C's paper	Correcting	0	1	0	1	4	6
	Adding	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Rephrasing	0	0	1	2	0	3
	Deleting	0	0	1	1	0	2
Student D's paper	Correcting	0	0	0	1	2	3
	Adding	0	1	2	0	0	3
	Rephrasing	0	0	1	3	0	4
	Deleting	0	0	0	1	0	1

Example 2 (from Student A's paper):

Original text: Prensky comments, "There is no reason that a generation that can memorize over 100 Pokemon characters with all their characteristics, history and evolution can't learn the names, populations, capitals and relationships of all the 181 nations in the world. It just depends on how it is **presented**." (Prensky 5)

PeerMark feedback: For citations, move the period to the end of the last parenthesis. Ex: . . . it is presented" (Prensky 5).

Revised text: Prensky comments, "There is no reason that a generation that can memorize over 100 Pokemon characters with all their characteristics, history and evolution can't learn the names, populations, capitals and relationships of all the 181 nations in the world. It just depends on how it is **presented**" (Prensky 5).

Deleting trouble sources. Students deleted the texts (e.g., words, clauses) which had problems that their peers had pinpointed.

Example 3 (from Student C's paper):

Original text: Being that natives have had the opportunity to have technology readily available from an early point in life, they need it to succeed in a school setting.

PeerMark feedback: WC (composition mark meaning word choice) pointing to "readily"

Revised text: Being that natives have had the opportunity to have technology **readily** available from an early point in life, they need it to succeed in a school setting.

Example 4 (from Student C's paper):

Original text: By taking into account the evolution of technology, Prensky introduces a way to conform to the people who have grown up with new technology and have different ways of absorbing information, not all digital natives require new methods.

PeerMark feedback: 1) This sentence is kinda long. 2) R/O [composition mark meaning run-on sentence] pointing to the last clause.

Revised text: By taking into account the evolution of technology, Prensky introduces a way to conform to the people who have grown up with new technology and have different ways of absorbing information, **not all digital natives require new methods.**

Rephrasing. Based on peer comments, students improved the original text by using substitute words or phrases.

Example 5 (from Student D's paper):

Original text: This struggle in Prensky's eyes is hampering students from learning.

PeerMark feedback: Awk [Composition mark meaning awkward expression]

Revised text: This struggle in Prensky's eyes is **hampering students' ability to learn.**

Example 6 (from Student A's paper):

Original text: In his essay, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants," Marc Prensky **tries to highlight** that the younger generation is so different. . . .

PeerMark feedback: I think saying "highlights" would be more of a bold and sure statement.

Revised text: In his essay, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants," Marc Prensky **states** that the younger generation is so different. . . .

This example clearly shows students' attention to reporting verbs, which was a topic reviewed in this course.

Adding/elaborating. Based on peer comments, students added requested information or elaborated on the original ideas to improve contents and organization of their writing (at discourse levels).

Example 7 (from Student D's paper):

Response to PeerMark Question #14 (Does the citation/format style meet MLA/APA requirements?): No, there is no citation page.

Revision: [Works Cited page was added, according to the MLA format.]

Example 8 (from Student D's paper):

Response to PeerMark Question #10 (Which way does the author choose to respond? . . . Is the response effective? Explain.): I don't see a clear response to the article and your point of view.

Revision: [Response section was largely elaborated. Due to the word limit, added texts are not presented here. The writer critically responded to three content areas, as addressed in the revised paper: (1) "Students born in the digital age are tech savvy," (2) "Teachers need to blend more digital aspects into their curriculum," and (3) "Teachers need to learn to communicate in a language that students understand."]

Example 9 (From Student C's paper):

Response to the inline comment: Add one or two paragraphs summarizing Prensky's main ideas, before you give your response.

Revision: [The paragraph was added.] He also points out that even though there were chances for Digital Immigrants to educate themselves with Native technology, they turned down the opportunity to become familiar with new programs. For his example, he shares that the CAD software created by Digital Immigrants was quickly turned down due to their lack of technological understanding of this new program. Throughout the article Prensky points out the bad affects Digital Immigrants have on Natives and why “future” teaching methods should be used; however, this new change could be more difficult for the old rather than the new.

Comparing the four feedback incorporation methods, I found that direct correcting tended to be the one most frequently used, followed by adding (in both local areas and global areas) and rephrasing. Deleting was the least frequent method that students adopted. On a specific note, because most of the peer feedback points, being revision-oriented, were explicit, appropriate, and correct, students adopted them directly. In response to composition mark symbols (e.g., awkward expression, insert words), rephrasing acts were performed. As to other, larger parts that needed to be reworked mainly triggered by PeerMark questions (e.g., summary section and response section), students added text/ideas at discourse and paragraph levels. Regarding the small portion of trouble sources involving words and clauses, deletion acts were performed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study suggests that the Turnitin PeerMark activity helps students improve their skills as both reviewers and writers. PeerMark enables them to use various feedback tools to provide written comments, particularly revision-oriented feedback, at different levels (e.g., discourse, syntax, lexicon, and mechanics). Students incorporated up to 100% of peer feedback into their revisions. They appropriately incorporated peer comments by direct correcting, deleting trouble sources, rephrasing, and adding/elaborating. This study reinforces the results of previous studies (Chang, 2012; Guardado & Shi, 2007; Tuzi, 2004) that reported positive effects of online peer feedback, such as convenient interactive textual exchange, increased revision-oriented feedback, and a majority of peer-initiated revisions incorporated into writing products. Moreover, students in this study were found to have made not only writing revisions based on what

peers initiated but also additional changes to their own essays after carefully evaluating peer writing according to the assignment-tailored guiding questions.

This study has a few limitations. A small data set involving four focal participants was examined in the study; a quantitative analysis of a larger sample size would better help evaluate the value of Turnitin PeerMark in writing classes. The study only focused on students' PeerMark review concerning one writing assignment (the summary and response essay); examining peer comments across multiple writing assignments would reveal the interaction between the technology tool and tasks and thus further explain the affordances of PeerMark for online peer review.

Despite the limitations presented above, this study draws our attention to Turnitin PeerMark's pedagogical potentials. The unique functions of PeerMark scaffold and facilitate students' peer review process. Specifically, composition marks (with automatic explanation of the terms) help students highlight problematic segments; the commenting tools allow them to provide feedback in both local and global areas; the assignment-tailored PeerMark guiding questions raise their awareness of more global issues and enable them to apply newly learned knowledge in writing. Moreover, students perform double-blind peer review using Turnitin PeerMark. The anonymity enables students to conduct review in a more comfortable environment, thus leading to more honest, constructive, and quality feedback. This article calls for more use of Turnitin PeerMark as a new and effective platform for peer review in the composition and L2 learning contexts. Fortunately, Turnitin PeerMark can be integrated into commonly used course management systems (CMSs), such as Blackboard, Canvas, Desire2Learn, and Moodle, with the cost included in the Turnitin package that institutions purchase. Practitioners are therefore encouraged to implement Turnitin PeerMark activities in their classes via the CMS their institutions adopt.

Instructors need to train students to use multiple PeerMark functions (i.e., commenting tools, composition marks, and PeerMark questions) for peer review. Lecture slides together with video tutorials accessible online would be useful for the training session. It is necessary to arrange a trial session in which students practice commenting on peers' short papers

using the PeerMark functions. Before implementing peer review tasks, designing effective assignment-tailored PeerMark guiding questions is also important because they will facilitate the peer review process and consolidate students' learning of new knowledge in writing. Moreover, a well-established grading rubric for peer review (concerning the use of multiple PeerMark functions) would encourage students to take full advantage of the PeerMark tools and help improve the quality and quantity of peer feedback. In addition, instructors should emphasize the connection between students' peer review activities and the revision of students' own writing. For instance, have students consider if the constructive feedback they have given on their peers' writing also applies to their own writing and double check if their paper meets the criteria indicated in the assignment-tailored PeerMark questions.

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Appendix

Turnitin PeerMark questions for the assignment of summary and response essay.

1. What do you think of the title of this paper? Do you have any suggestions?
2. Does the first sentence of this paper include the name of the author and the title of the original article?
3. Does the summary accurately present the meaning of the original text? Explain.
4. How complete do you think is the summary of the article? Is there any important information missing? If so, what is it?
5. To what extent do you think the summary helps you understand the structure/logic/development patterns of the original article? Explain.
6. Does the summary include personal judgement? Any instances of “closest cliché syndrome” are identified?
7. Are the original points and examples summarized concisely? Explain.
8. Can you see a clear thesis statement? Explain.
9. Are quotations integrated smoothly? Any instances of “Dangling Quotations” are identified? Explain.
10. Which way does the author choose to respond (i.e., disagree—and explain why, agree—but with a difference, agree and disagree simultaneously)? Is the response effective? Explain.
11. Is it easy to differentiate between the original author’s points of view and those from the summary writer? Explain.
12. Are the signal/reporting verbs used effectively? Explain.
13. How effective is the author’s use of transitional words/sentences? Explain.
14. Does the citation and format style meet MLA/APA requirements?

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