**APA Sample Headings**

APA 7 (2020) recommends the use of subheadings to create structure and help readers follow the logic of your writing. There are five levels of headings that you can use. The sample below shows you how to format headings from level 1 to level 4.

While these studies offer examples of how to shift the research on academic probation, the move toward a strength-based qualitative perspective is by no means complete. Indeed, all of the qualitative, strengths-based studies reviewed here are unpublished dissertations (Arcand, 2013; Somo, 2013; Thomas, 2003). Thus, this study contributed to the qualitative literature on the experience of probation by using a phenomenological design. Adopting a strengths-based perspective….

A main section will use a Level 1 heading, which is centered and bolded. The text begins as a new paragraph. In this example, “Methods” is a level one heading.

**Methods**

Central to all qualitative, also known as constructivist, methodologies is the epistemological concept that reality and truth are not fixed (Creswell, 2003; Hathaway, 1995; Mertens, 2005). In stark opposition to quantitative researchers who attempt to locate their work in an objective reality, qualitative researchers believe “reality is a social construct” (Mertens, 2005, p. 12). Constructivists believe that individuals create their own realities and truths by interpreting their experiences (Creswell, 2003; Hathaway, 1995; Mertens, 2005). As Creswell (2003) explained, “individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences” (p. 8). Significantly, these subjective meanings are not created by individuals in isolation; instead, constructivists believe that subjective realities are based on the social interactions and cultural ideals within a specific context (Creswell, 2003)...

Within a section, you can further subdivide your text by using different levels of headings. Here, “Participants” is a level 2 heading, which is bold and left-aligned. The text begins on the next line as a new paragraph.

**Participants**

The current study included 32 participants from a mid-sized University in Ontario, Canada…..

A level 3 heading is bolded, italicized, and left-aligned. Here, “Sampling Method” is a level 3 heading, The text begins on the next line as a new paragraph.

***Sampling Method***

This study used purposive sampling and, in particular, an intensity sampling method (Patton, 1990). In this method, researchers seek “excellent or rich examples of the phenomena of interest” (Patton, 1990, p. 171. The current study identified students who faced academic challenges during their first year but who achieved stable, academic success or even excellence during their second year at university. The decision to focus on students who were on academic probation at the end of their first year of university stemmed from the well-documented… relationship between students’ performance in their first year of study and their longer-term

Level 4 Headings are indented and bolded**.** Here, “Method of Recruiting Participants” is a level 4 heading. There is a period at the end of a level 4 heading, and the text of the paragraph begins immediately after the period.

**Method of Recruiting Participants.** Recruiting participants for the study required the assistance of both the Office of the Registrar and the Academic Advisors….

When you come to the end of a sub-section, you can use a higher-level heading to show that you are moving to a new topic. Here, “Data Collection” is a level 2 heading and shows the reader that a new topic within the Methods section will be discussed.

**Data Collection**

Data collection for this study was based on Seidman’s (2006) phenomenological interview method…..