

Salutations and thanks!

I am grateful that you have agreed to serve as a mentor for one of my AP Research students during the 2020-2021 school year. In order to facilitate this project, I wanted to take a moment to give you an overview of the requirements of the project and what your role in that endeavor entails. Please take a moment to read over the course and exam description below, which has been adapted from the course materials provided by the College Board.

About the Course

AP Research, the second course in the AP Capstone experience, allows students to deeply explore an academic topic, problem, issue, or idea of individual interest. Students design, plan, and implement an eight-month-long investigation to address a research question. Through this inquiry, they further the skills they acquired in the AP Seminar course by learning research methodology, employing ethical research practices, and accessing, analyzing, and synthesizing information. Students reflect on their skill development, document their process, and curate the artifacts of their scholarly work through a process and reflection portfolio (PREP). The course culminates in an academic paper of 4,000 - 5,000 words (accompanied by a performance, exhibit, or product where applicable) and a presentation with an oral defense.

Goals

- *Develop and apply discrete skills within five big ideas: Question and Explore, Understand and Analyze, Evaluate Multiple Perspectives, Synthesize Ideas, and Team, Transform, and Transmit
- *Develop an understanding of ethical research practices
- *Learn and employ research and inquiry methods to develop, manage, and conduct an in-depth investigation of an area of personal interest, culminating in an academic paper of 4,000 - 5,000 words that includes the following elements:
 - Introduction (including Literature Review)
 - Method, Process, or Approach
 - Results, Product, or Findings
 - Discussion, Analysis, and/or Evaluation
 - Conclusion and Future Directions
 - Bibliography
- *Use a process and reflection portfolio (PREP) to document the inquiry process, communicate with teachers and expert mentors, and reflect throughout the process
- *Participate in regular work-in-progress interviews with their teachers to review progress and receive feedback on their scholarly work
- *Develop and deliver a presentation (using an appropriate medium) and an oral defense to a panel on their research process, methods, and findings

As students complete their literature reviews, develop their project proposals, collect and evaluate data, and prepare their paper and presentation, they may need support that I, as a high school English and Drama teacher, am unable to provide. These supports include helping students develop methods and data collection tools consistent with those used in their

project-specific discipline, completing statistical analysis, identifying information sources which they may have overlooked, and making sense of conflicting theories or foundational ideas in a field of study. However, you are not expected to assess their work or correct it in any way. In fact, because their paper serves as 75% of their AP exam score, there are some limitations on what you can and cannot do to assist them. The College Board states that expert mentors may and may not do the following:

Expert Mentors **MAY**

- Ask questions and provide feedback and guidance regarding research questions, methods, materials, and analysis strategies
- Hold work-in-progress interviews or conversations about students' drafts and materials
- Provide necessary background for a topic (by explaining something in response to a student's question) / access a material to share at a student's specific request
- Help students with the mechanics of the research process
- Provide general feedback to students through the use of questions and conversations

Expert Mentors **MAY NOT**

- Generate questions or research goals for students
- Conduct or provide research, articles, or evidence (You may recommend broad sources such as an academic journal or an author. For example, you can say "Have you looked at anything by Piaget or Vygotsky?" but you cannot link a student to a specific research study and tell them to use it in their work.)
- Write, revise, amend, or correct student work
- Provide or identify the questions students will be asked prior to their oral defense
- Provide unsolicited help

The completion deadline for all aspects of this project is April 30, 2020. By that date, students will have completed and uploaded their papers to the College Board for scoring and will have given their presentation and oral defense which I must score and report. Mentors are welcome to join us for their mentee's presentation, but attending is not required to be a mentor.

Finally, due to the fact that you are working with a high school student, there is a process you will need to go through in order to meet the requirements of CPS for mentors and volunteers. Someone at ISTI will be reaching out to you to facilitate this shortly if they have not already done so. One change this year is that, due to the virtual learning environment, we are still waiting for clarification from CPS on the use of the MME video conferencing feature. At this time, please do not schedule video conferences with your mentee; if that changes, I will let you know.

Thank you so much for your support and time. Please contact me with any further questions through the MME platform or at sbaranoff@cps.edu, using subject "AP Research Mentor."

Sincerely,

Sarah Baranoff, NBCT

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