Sample Literature Review (Bad)

**Literature Review of Studies on the History of Technical Writing**

In 1983, R. John Brockmann compiled a bibliographic essay of research on the history of technical writing. Out of thirty-six works listed, only seven focused on nineteenth century writing. In 1994, when William E. Rivers wrote his bibliographic essay, the number of studies devoted to nineteenth century technical writing remains the same. However, Rivers' bibliography is larger, with 200 works versus Brockmann's 36, since Rivers also included studies of historical research in business writing.

Out of the seven works dedicated to the nineteenth century in Brockmann's earlier essay, the majority concentrated on individual works or are limited to works by a single author. This is most likely because the studies listed in Brockmann's bibliography are short works, mostly articles.

In his article, Rivers noted that most work had been concentrated on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British writing; therefore, he recommends the need to focus on neglected time periods, especially using studies that take a multidisciplinary approach. Similarly, Elizabeth Tebeaux and M. Jimmie Killingsworth wrote in their 1992 article, "Expanding and Redirecting Historical Research in Technical Writing: In Search of Our Past," of the need for more historical research.

**Annotation:** This is a failed attempt at a literature review that belongs in a thesis involving historical research in technical communication. It doesn't start with a statement that would establish the context for the review; in other words, why is it being written and included in this thesis? It fails to establish its theme and lacks organization. The style could be more coherent; note the use of mixed tense instead of the preferred present. To see how this literature review could be improved, see its [revision](#).