RESEARCH PAPER INSTRUCTIONS

*Possible research question for paper topic: Friday, January 30 by 1 pm
*Paper Topic: Tuesday, February 13 on D2L by 1 p.m.
*Paper: Friday April 20 by 10 p.m.
*No e-mail submissions will be accepted

Rationale: Writing is an important skill in any profession. In scientific writing, psychologists interpret and draw conclusions based on the research literature from scientific articles. The advantage of this literature is that it is objective, unbiased, and in many cases, provides directions for practical applications. For example, a clear understanding of how children form friendships and what factors interfere with their formation enables practitioners to develop interventions for children who have problems making friends.

For this assignment you are asked to write a 7-8 page research paper based on the scientific literature. Specifically, you will synthesize research from the scientific literature, and draw conclusions based on your research. This assignment provides an opportunity for students to explore an area of interest in developmental psychology in greater depth than time allows in our course. Research in the field of developmental psychology has important applications for many areas of child development, including the development of child assessments, interventions, and classroom teaching tools.

PAPER REQUIREMENTS: Be sure to follow these specifications for a high quality paper.

1. Choose a topic: For this paper you will be choosing a research question of interest to you. For ideas, look through your textbook, read the newspaper, or think about issues that drew you to this course. The topic must be specific enough so that it can be answered in 7-8 pages, but broad enough so that you can find enough articles. Be sure before we go to the library to have several ideas about possible topics. For assistance, contact me at medvinm@westminster.edu.

2. Write a complete paper: The paper length will be 7-8 pages, plus a reference page, double-spaced and typed. Margins should be no wider than 1”. Paper should be in 12 font. References are listed on a separate page, in the format of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition. Please number your pages. In addition, include a cover sheet with the title of your paper, your name, the class and section, and the current date.

3. Find high quality references, and the number needed: Your paper should include a minimum of 7 references. Four of those references MUST be research articles from scientific journals (not popular articles from magazines such as Psychology Today, Omni, Time or Newsweek). The rest of your references may include more articles, or peer-reviewed scientific books (but not encyclopedias or textbooks). I want you to use sources that have strong scientific support. For on-line sources, you may use the types that are listed under ‘electronic resources’ at the end of this handout.

4. Two journals we already have in our library are Child Development and Developmental Psychology, which have excellent articles. Current issues of Developmental Psychology are also online. You may use Interlibrary Loan to obtain articles or books for your paper. Please keep in mind that it can take up to 3 weeks to receive your sources, so this service requires early planning. Do not wait till the end and download articles off the internet--they are not always the best articles available for your paper. Choose your articles based on quality, not on availability.

5. Content: Your job is to paraphrase the information in these articles into your own words. In psychology, quotes are used sparingly. Focus on quality writing. Be sure that you use topic sentences to organize your paragraphs. I will give you an opportunity to check your final paper for plagiarism on turnitin.com before you submit it.
6. **D2L submission:** The electronic copy should be placed in D2L with your last name in the title of the paper. Be sure that the paper has submitted properly.

7. **Format:** Your paper should follow American Psychological Association format, 6th edition. This format dictates the style of your reference citations and bibliography. I have included examples of the format in this handout--for further information, consult an APA manual. Be sure to use quotes and appropriate citations.

8. **Guidelines:** Follow the guidelines for your paper as described on the rubric. Remember, grammar, spelling, organization, and appropriate use of quotation marks and page number for quotes are important for quality writing.

**Starting your paper**

To start working on your paper topic, begin by leafing through your textbook to look for topics that interest you, in the news, or in class discussions. You may also think about topics that may affect you or someone you know. Websites for the Society for Research in Child Development, the American Psychological Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics may also be helpful. The journal *Child Development Perspectives* has easy to read, shorter articles that might serve as a beginning.

Before you go to the library, it often helps to list three research questions that you may want to explore. Then see what references are available. Your topic should not be too narrow or broad. Due to the availability of resources I would prefer that each student choose a different topic, so be sure to tell me your topic once you have chosen it. I will also be glad to help any student define a good topic area.

Identify a good THESIS for your paper. For example, one approach to a research paper is to write an argumentative paper designed to persuade the reader. Here you present a thesis statement in the introduction that highlights the main point of your paper; for example, “...This report is intended to show that the long-term effects of divorce are much greater than previously thought...”. Here you must be careful to present all points of view, so that your conclusion is fair and unbiased. An “expository essay” provides detailed information to the reader on a particular topic. Your title would provide a preview of your topic, such as ‘What is the role of daycare in children’s socio-emotional development?’.

**TIPS FOR DOING WELL ON THE PAPER**

- Find a good paper topic. If you cannot find enough scientific sources, or the field seems too technical, look for another topic.
- When writing, first write out an outline of your entire paper. The outline helps you to organize your ideas, and to see if your paper has a clear beginning, middle, and ending.
- Write a rough first draft of your paper. If you have a first draft, you then have a paper that you can revise. Make sure that your ideas are clear, and that all of your references are correct. Correct your spelling, punctuation, and your grammar.
- For this psychology paper, it is important to synthesize the conclusions of the studies you are using. Overall, what is the pattern of findings? Are there disagreements among investigators? Our goal here is to not simply say what others have said, but to rephrase ideas and information into your own words. Never simply list information.
- Be sure to double space your paper so that it is easily readable. Double-check your spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- Proof read your paper over one more time, making sure it is in your own words and that it flows well.

**PLAGIARISM POLICY**

Academic integrity is a central concept at Westminster. You are expected to follow all guidelines as cited in your student handbook. Plagiarism includes stealing, borrowing, buying or distributing research papers,
creative papers, speeches, etc., including anonymous publications and online publications. Plagiarism includes:

1. copying phrases, sentences, or sections from a source and failing to indicate that it is a direct quote.
2. paraphrasing or making slight changes to passages, and attempting to pass them off as your work (three words is a passage).
3. inserting passages from another source within your own writing and failing to identify them as a quote.
4. taking original ideas (not just exact words) from a source and failing to cite your source in a citation.
5. submitting work that is not your own.

In all of these cases, a student would be guilty of plagiarism, a serious offense. Independently of whether or not you intended to plagiarize (intentions are difficult to determine), if there is evidence of plagiarism, disciplinary action will occur. While plagiarism is sometimes difficult to detect, it must be discouraged by any means.

I will be using Turnitin to evaluate plagiarism in your papers. I am required by the college to notify the academic dean of any plagiarism cases, and a letter will be placed in your file. If there are no repeat cases, that letter will be removed after you complete your degree here. The additional possible disciplinary actions include failure for the assignment, and lowering of grade and/or failure for the course.

Please see your college catalog for further details. The college academic integrity policy is clearly specified.

* I am indebted to Tom Taylor and Jackie Gusell for this policy

ASSIGNMENTS

T, January 30-3 possible paper topics. Look through your textbook; what are some interesting possibilities for paper topics? 5 points. 1 pm D2L.

T, February 13- Paper topic due. 1 pm D2L.

PAPER TOPIC PROPOSAL: The paper topic is worth 15 points.

Please follow the format below:

(1) (1 points) Type your name, class, date, and paper question/title at the top of the page.
(2) (6 points) Describe your paper, including the research question, thesis, and conclusions you hope to draw from the information that you find.
(3) (8 points) Find four sources in the library that are appropriate for your paper (you may include the article from the summary form, if appropriate). These references must be research journal articles or books. Type the reference citation for the article at the bottom of the page, as you would in the reference section of your paper, using the format of the American Psychological Association manual, 6th edition. If you can find four references on your topic in our library, you are in potentially good shape for the final paper. If you cannot find four references, you should consider changing your paper topic at this time. For each reference, briefly indicate how this article relates to your paper. For every grammatical, spelling, or reference format error, -.5 points will be subtracted.
Paper Grading Rubric

Psy 219

Name: ______________________

CONTENT: 75%
1. Introduction:
   ____ 5 a. Research question: The purpose, problem, or question to be considered is stated clearly.
   ____ 5 b. Interest: The author convinces the reader that the paper is worth reading in an interesting fashion.
   ____ 5 c. Thesis: The author presents a thesis statement of what the researcher expects to find out in the paper.

2. Body:
   ____10 a. Analysis: It is clear that an analysis of the literature has been used to support the statements made, and that the assumptions are logical. Critical thinking skills are evident.
   ____25 b. Presentation of evidence
      • Integration: If sources contradict one another they are dealt with adequately. Multiple sources are compared if available. A simple listing of information is avoided.
      • The points are internally consistent, (i.e. one point follows from another), plausible and well supported.
      • References are recent, high quality, and appropriate to the paper topic (research articles and edited books).
   ____ 5 c. Suitability of focus: The problem chosen is focused enough to be adequately covered in the space of the paper, but not too narrow or broad.
   ____ 5 d. Organization and fluency: Presentation is easy to follow and well organized.

3. Conclusion:
   ____ 10 a. The author summarizes the findings adequately, and draws appropriate conclusions.
   ____ 5 b. Applications of the findings are discussed (i.e. interventions, assessments, etc.), or suggestions made for future work (i.e. research studies, other areas related to your paper topic, links with work from ours or other classes, etc.)

FORM: 25%
____ 5 1. Spelling:
____ 5 2. Grammar and use of words correct (not awkward or inappropriate)
____ 5 3. Paragraph form: Topic sentences are used to introduce transitions, and the order of transitions is appropriate. Supporting statements and a conclusion for each paragraph are included.
____ 5 4. Borrowed ideas and statements are given credit (citations used frequently--one or more times in a paragraph--and listed in reference section).
____ 5 5. The citations and reference section are in APA format.

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IV. APA STYLE REFERENCE FORMAT

The American Psychological Association format for reference citations is different from what you may have learned in your English composition class. It is the format that we use for all psychology papers. Here, we give credit to our sources both in the text of the paper, and as a list at the end of the paper. The citations in the text of the paper should match the ones at the end of the paper. Only cite references that you have actually used in writing the paper.

Follow these formats exactly. Pay attention to punctuation, capitalization, use of the first initial of the name, etc. You may use the citations in your textbook as a guide. I have listed some examples below.

**Citations**: You must give credit to the people who have written the articles you use in the body of the paper. To do so, in psychology we use reference citations in the text of the paper.

1. **Citation appearing as part of a sentence**:

   --Here, note that only the last names are used in the text, and that the date the article was written is in parentheses.

2. **Citation entirely in parentheses**:

   Lithium carbonate increases the anorectic's intake of fatty foods and thus produces weight gain (Gross, Evert, Goldberg, Nee, & Kaye, 1980).
   --Here again, only the last names are used. The authors’ names and the date the article was written are in parentheses. Also note the use of the ampersand (&) when the citation is in parentheses.

3. **Multiple citations in parentheses**:

   Research has also indicated that a clinician's assessment of a particular person is generally not improved by the use of projective assessment techniques (Golden, 1964; Soskin, 1959).
   --Two authors found similar results. You list their names in the same set of parentheses, in alphabetical order.

4. **Secondary source citations**:

   What if you read about an article in a book, and you want to cite it even if you have not read the article? This form of information is called a secondary source citation. I expect that in your paper you will mostly describe the articles you have read, rather than using secondary source citations. If you find you need to use one, however, you would use the following format:

   Researchers found that positive parenting makes an important difference in the cognitive development of children (Jones, 1982; as cited in Smith, 1999).
   --Here Smith is the book you have read; Jones is the study they describe. At the end of the paper, in the reference section, you will only list sources you have actually read--so the Smith book is cited.
5. Quotations:

You must ALWAYS use a page number AND publication date with a quote. Quotes that are not stand alone separate paragraphs must have quotation marks, or they will be considered plagiarized sentences.

-A quote less than four sentences is embedded in the regular text of the paper. You should include the authors of the article, date, and page number of the quote. You must use page numbers, even with electronic sources.

Curriculum based assessment is “a procedure for determining the instructional needs of students based on the student’s ongoing performance in existing course content” (Gickling & Thompson, 1985, p. 206). Curriculum based assessment has many advantages over other forms of assessment.

-A quote greater than four sentences is indented five spaces on each side, and stands as a separate paragraph.

That 3-and 4-year olds are as competent in dealing with numbers as they have proved to be came as a surprise to many of us. Even more surprising is recent evidence suggesting that infants are sensitive to the dimension of number and may even—more mind-boggling still--spontaneously engage in some sort of nonverbal ‘counting’ activity when presented with sets of two to four stimuli (Flavell, Miller, & Miller, 1993, p.221).

-For electronic sources, if a page number is not provided, use paragraph numbers in place of page numbers.

As Myers (2000, para 5) aptly phrased it, “positive emotions are a means to live a better life.”

If there are headings in the document and neither page nor paragraph numbers, cite the heading of the section in which the quote is contained.

“The current system of managed care and treated is limited in its vision” (Beutler, 2000, Conclusion section).

References: Include a list of these citations, in full reference format, at the end of your paper. The format for references is different for a popular article, a research journal article, and a book.

-A journal article with a digital object identifier (DOI) in the reference if one is assigned. The DOI is found, for example, if you are searching for articles through PsychInfo.


-If no DOI is attached to the article, and you retrieve it online, use the home page URL for the journal:

-A journal article with no DOI available:


Popular articles are not acceptable sources in the paper. However, for completeness, here is the information for referring to a popular article. For a popular article, you need much of the same information for this citation, except that you also need the month and day of publication, and you do not need the volume number. The format is slightly different.

-A popular article:


-A book written by one author:


--Note that the place of publication and the publisher is included here, and the title is in lower case letters and italicized.

-In an edited book, a different author(s) writes each chapter. The person at beginning of the reference is the author of the chapter you used for your paper. The name in the middle is the editor of the book.


--Note that you would need the author(s) of the chapter, the editor(s) of the book, and the page numbers of the chapter as well.

For additional information, go to the APA website at [http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html](http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html)

REFERENCES


Sample PsychInfo Record

First, you will need to take from this record the authors names, year published, title of article, title of journal, volume number and page numbers. Make sure you follow APA format in citing this information.

Stereotype threat and inflexible perseverance in problem solving.
Carr, Priyanka B.; Steele, Claude M.

Abstract (This paragraph is a summary of the article to see if it is relevant. You will need to read the entire article to include it in your paper).

1. The present research examines whether women burdened by stereotype threat, a threat of confirming negative ingroup stereotypes (Steele, C. M., & Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69(5), 797–811), are less able to abandon old strategies and employ newer, more efficient ones when conditions change. In two studies, stereotype threat was found to increase inflexible perseverance: women made to believe they were taking a diagnostic math/spatial ability test, compared to those not threatened by stereotypes, were more likely to use previously successful but presently inefficient or incorrect strategies. In Study 1, participants under stereotype threat also suppressed relevant stereotypes to the greatest degree, and their inflexible perseverance was predicted by the degree to which they suppressed these stereotypes. Implications for test performance and potential decision-making effects of stereotype threat are discussed. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2009 APA, all rights reserved)