2017 Biological Psychology

Writing Development Initiative Report

(WDI, PSY290H5)

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What did I do?

The Department of Psychology has identified that developing broad scientific literacy (reading and writing) skills are essential components of student success. We hold our students to high expectations in this regard as demonstrated by our curriculum expectation that all Psychology students engage in critical writing pieces in 3rd and 4th-year courses. Unfortunately, we have not taken a systematic approach to foster effective critical writing and scientific literacy skills before 3rd year. As a result, many students are not adequately prepared for rigorous writing assignments that are presented towards the end of their undergraduate education.

To better prepare our students for these writing challenges, I worked with the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC) to create a Writing Development Initiative (WDI) within in Psychology's 'Introduction to Physiological Psychology' (PSY290H5) course. This course is well suited for this initiative as it is a large enrollment course (400-500 students per year) and is a required course for all Psychology subject POSts. The key goals are to stimulate critical reading and communication skills in the nature of a 'scientific critique.' This is a very familiar style of writing assignment that is expected of students in year 3 of our program. My intention is to provide students with writing experiences that connect to their current knowledge and give them an opportunity to think critically about those pieces. My approach is to provide them with 'simplified' critique experiences by comparing neuroscience related claims made in popular media outlets (e.g. Huffington Post) to the actual research article that the assessment is based upon. Examples of such media headlines are "How to Prevent Stress from Shrinking Your Brain" (Greenberg, 2012), or "How Exercise Boosts Your Brain Power" (Asp, n.d). The nature of these headlines is intended to be 'catchy' and immediately connect with readers.

The development of this writing initiative was carried out using over two assignments. This enabled us to create clear and concise goals for each assignment and to provide formative feedback that students could learn from and apply to the second assignment. The two stages are as follows:

Stage 1 – *"Convincing you with science: The powerful persuasion of science in the media"*
Students were asked to read one of two selected media articles to develop a sense of how neuroscience claims are in popular media articles (topics listed above). They were then asked to write about the assignment in a classic "says/does" exercise. My intention is to help students evaluate the distinction between the 'content' of written work (what is being 'said') and the author's 'intentions' for presenting that content (what that piece 'does'). The goal of this exercise is to help students develop a sense of how 'science' is (1) used to leverage claims about what we commonly accept as 'facts,' and (2) to identify what research is being used by engaging in scientific search strategies. Students were asked to write a brief (<500 words) article that included a summary of the main premise of the article and identify four pieces of scientific evidence that were presented and how the author used these points to support their claim.

Stage 2 – *"A critical review of the science behind the media"*
Stage two was a critical/analytic assignment to compare and contrast a peer-reviewed journal article that directly addresses the popular media report presented in Stage 1. In their analysis, students were asked to identify the main research questions of the research article, how the experiment was performed, what was found, and what conclusion(s) the authors were able to make. In the critical contrast section, students reflected upon the claim of the media article (from Stage 1) in light of their analysis of the research findings. This assignment was intended to be between 1000-1250 words.

To support **student skill development**, students received;
1. 1hour of in-class instruction per assignment (**2 hours per term**):

Stage 1: I walked students through an example of a says/does exercise to highlight the distinction between both components. I described to student how to conduct a scientific search to identify the sources of research presented in the media article. I thoroughly reivewd concepts of APA formatting (students were exposed to this in Psy100H5) and highlighted assignment expectations for their written submission.

Stage 2: Reviewing a research article and understanding what researcher are 'saying' can be a major challenge for many students who are engaging in this process for the first time. I felt it was important to guide students early in this process to highlight what kind of information they should pay attention to in each section (introduction, methods, results, and conclusions) of the research paper. I also discussed with students how I wanted them to compare the research article to the media claims critically. They were instructed to focus on the media claim (e.g. 'stress is shrinking your brain') and highlight to what extent is this claim actually supported by the research they have just read.

2. Detailed written instruction was provided to students (See Appendix A and B). The amount and quality of written instruction was improved upon between fall and spring semesters (details provided below).

3. Student received WDI supported TA office hours (**6 hours per term**).
4. Instructor led office hours (**4 hours per term).**
5. Access to dedicated RGASC drop-in sessions (**4 hours per term**). This was in addition to the regular RGASC writing support services.

To support our **TA involvement** in this writing initiative, 3 teaching assistants each term received;
1. Intensive RGASC led Writing TA Training Program to support learning best practices of writing assessment to provide TA's with the skills necessary to asses student communication, demonstration of knowledge, and effective writing skills (**21 hours per term**).
2. 2 to 2.5 hours of dedicated TA training/benchmarking for both assignments (**13.5 hours per term**).
3. Dedicated grading time for two assignments (**117 hours per term**).

Both stages of this WDI initiative were carried out as planned during both the fall 2016 and spring 2017 session with some instructional modifications from one semester to the next. In particular, students noted in the fall term that they had felt that the written instructions could be improved upon. Specific examples of student comments provided in figure 1a, captures this sentiment. Students were also asked to complete a survey rating the quality of the assignment instructions they had received on a 5 point Likert scale (*1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree*). Students generally agreed that they were provided with clear instructions (Fig. 1b, n=170, mean = 3.5, median = 4). However a significant proportion of the class (38%) reported a response of "*Neither Agree or Disagree*" or worse. The nature of these responses highlighted a need to improve the quality of instructions provided to students. Fortunately, one of the distinct benefits teaching two sections of this course (once in the fall and spring terms) and can make corrective modifications to the assignments from one semester to the next.

To address these concerns, I substantially revised assignment instructions provided to students for the Spring 2017 term. After making changes, many students reported positive comments specifically highlighting the quality of instruction (Fig. 1c.) and survey responses reveal that 82% of students agreed, or strongly agreed that they had received clear assignment instructions (Fig. 1d, n=118, average = 4.1,

median = 4), with a much smaller proportion (18%) of the class reporting a response of "*Neither Agree or Disagree*" or worse.

Fall 2016

a. Fall 2016 - While working on the writing assignments, one aspect that I **dislike / do not enjoy** is

"being more clear in the instructions."

"Not really knowing what is expected of me. I've asked for clarification and even had Dr. Beston proofread my assignment. Although he said it was a great paper and after I modified the little details he had pointed out, I still got a 75% which is not "great".
"

"I dislike not having the rubric before the assignment."

"Sometimes instructions were vague, so I wasn't really confident while writing because I wasn't sure if what I was doing was correct or required."

"The assignment is somewhat confusing, and when I go on the discussion board, some of the explanations from classmates can be unexpected, leading to more confusion."

b. "I was provided with clear instructions for both assignments" (Fall, 2016)

Spring 2017

c. SPRING 2107 - While working on the writing assignments, one aspect that I **like / finding enjoyable** is;

"I was given clear instructions on what to do and what was expected from me was made clear,. This made the writing process smooth. "

"Making sense of a scientific journal step by step and creating a summary in my own words that flows well and is easier to understand (a better version)."

"That I have a lot of resources available to me so I can get help when I am stuck on a section of the assignment"

"What I really liked about writing theses assignments was that there was a lot of help provided to improve the paper the instructions were also very clear on what the assignment need it and all."

"Formatting and tailoring the paper to APA standards; organizing ideas accordingly, in order to present a visually beautiful layout"

"I enjoyed how in depth Dr. Beston broke down the assignment and went over what he expected from us."

"I liked how the instructions were clear and easy to follow and the length of the paper wasn't too long"

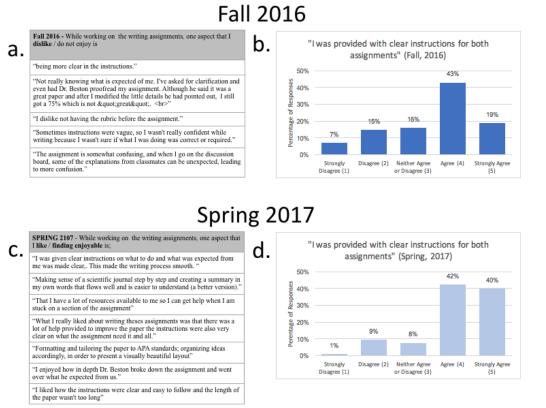d. "I was provided with clear instructions for both assignments" (Spring, 2017)

Figure 1. Student perception of instructions provided to support WDI supported writing assignments in during Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 term of Psy290. Feeback includes student comments (a. and c.) as well as survey responses to address the clarity of instructions provided.

In light of these changes, I have reported the objective and subjective project assessments assessments side-by-side to highlight the distinction that instructions made in the outcomes of this initiative.

How did it work?

To assess the writing initiatives outcomes, I used a variety of subjective and objectives assessments including; (1) student perceptions of the value of these assignments, (2) changes to student perception of writing efficacy measure at the beginning and end of the term, and (3) objective grading criteria in student rubric evaluations. Students were provided with 1% participation credit for completing these surveys to encourage participation. 170 students participated in the survey questions in the Fall 2016 term, and 118 students participated in the Spring 2017 term.

Student perceptions of 'value' in writing assignments

Students were asked to rate following three statements to assess their subjective beliefs about the benefit of the writing assignments in Psy290 on a 5 point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The mean responses of each question are presented below, and the distribution of responses is presented in Figure 2 (a.-c.) The survey responses indicate that the majority of students agree or strongly agree that Psy290 writing assignments have help to improved general writing abilities that will benefit them beyond the scope of my course.

"This course (Psy290) provided opportunities to develop critical reading/writing skills."
(mean Fall 2016 = 3.8, mean Spring 2017 = 4.0)

"I see value in Psy290 writing assignments as a part of my academic development."
(mean Fall 2016 = 4.0, mean Spring 2017 = 4.2)

"The writing experiences in Psy290 will benefit you in future writing assignments in other courses."
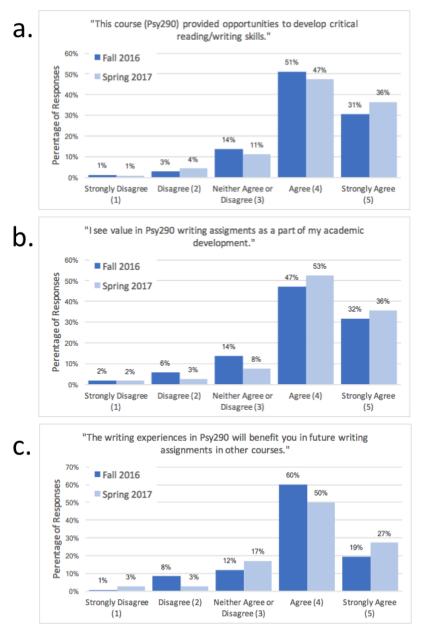(mean Fall 2016 = 3.9, mean Spring 2017 = 4.0)

Figure 2. Student survey responses to assess the value of Psy290 writing assignments. Dark blue bars represent the responses of students in the Fall 2016 term and light blue bars represent responses from students in the Spring 2017 term.

TA reports of common areas of improvement.
Objectively measuring student work is the most conceptually challenging component of this writing initiative. With the support of the teaching assistants, we decided to evaluate common rubric criteria that was used between both assignments and objectively assess and differences from Stage 1 to Stage 2. We identified three components of the rubrics that were suitable for our assessment.

1. *"Thinking and Investigating: evidence of effective integration and use of source material in work.":* In this component of the rubric, the intention is to assess a student's ability to draw upon, and make use of material presented in the media / research article.

2. *"Communication: Informative expression (content) and organization of written work."* This component of the rubric was to assess the presentation of information provided. I stressed to my TA's the important of distinguishing 'what is presented' (thinking and investigation strategies) relative to 'how' information is being communicated.

3. *"Presentation: Demonstrates understanding of APA formatting.":* I feel that is important for students practice working within APA formatting guidelines because students are expected to use this is 3rd and 4th year Psychology courses. By giving students experience now, I can better prepare them for other courses in our program.

Students were assessed in each category using an 8-point scale. Only data from the Spring 2017 term is presented in this report as our rubric assessments changed from the Fall 2016 term. Figure X highlights improvements in TA ratings of '*Thinking and Investigating'* from Stage 1 (mean = 5.15) to Stage 2 (mean = 5.85). Similarly, student familiarity and effective use of '*APA formatting'* increased from Stage 1 (mean = 5.7) to Stage 2 (mean = 6.4). There were no objective reports of improvement in the communication category (mean 5.1 and 5 for Stage 1 and 2 respectively).
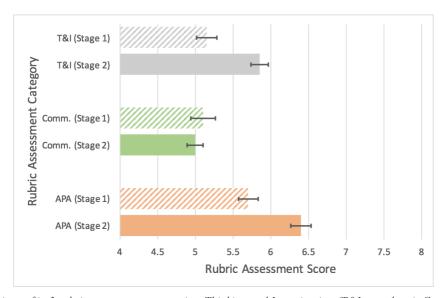

Figure 3. Comparison of in 3 rubric assessment categories; Thinking and Investigating (T&I, grey bars), Communication (Comm., green bars) and Presentation (APA, orange) included in both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the writing initiative.

Student Perceptions of Writerly Self-Efficacy
To further assess student perceptions of outcomes, I proposed to survey students and the beginning and end of the term to identify changes in students sense of efficacy as a writer. To do so, I used an empirical Post-Secondary Writerly Self-Efficacy Survey (PSWSES) to assess changes in a student's cognitive

beliefs that they are capable of writing effectively (Schmidt and Alexander, 2012). The PSWSES is a twenty-question survey using a 7 point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 = Agree, 7 =Strongly Agree). Students were asked to complete the PSWSES during the first and two weeks of the course (pre-assessment) and again during the last two weeks of the class (post-assessment). The average score of the pre- and post-PSWSES assessments remain unchanged with an approximate average score of 103 (out of 140) on both pre -and post- assessments (Fig. 4a.). Looking at individual differences reveals a high degree of correlation between Pre- and Post-Assessment PSWSES scores (Fig. 4b., r=0.63), indicating little change in student perception, rather than a high degree of variability in responses. Finally, the average individual difference of PSWSES score was -3 points in the Fall 2016 term and +1 in the Spring 2017 term (Fig. 4c.). In summary, the PSWSES revealed little to no differences in a student's overall sense of writing efficacy.
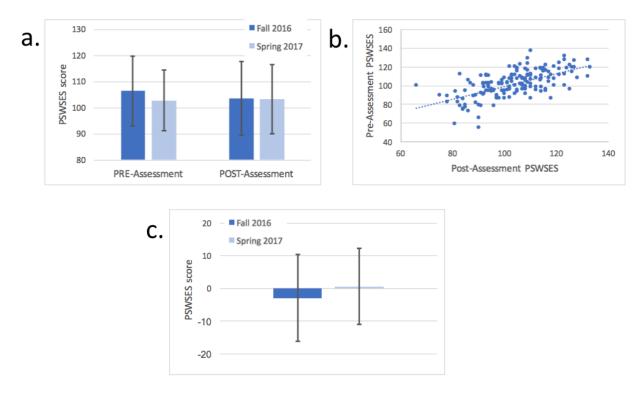

Figure 4. Assessment of student perception of writing skills using the Post-Secondary Writerly Self-Efficacy Survey (PSWSES). (a) Assessment of the average PSWSES scores pre- and post-assessment. (b) Student correlation between pre- and post-assessments reveal a reasonable amount of consistency in student responses. (c) The average difference score between pre- and post assessments.

What have I learned?

As with any teaching experience, I have come to appreciate the difficulty of creating a learning experience that is valued by all. As I review the survey results and student comments I feel that overall the project was positively perceived by most students. As evident by comments below, I feel that students enjoyed reading about topics that were contextually relevant to my course (See Table 1), and they appreciated the nature of the analysis/critique that is created in this two stage assignment (See Table 2). In this sense, I feel that am helping students to develop their sense of to evaluate and present an informed response to a claim (from media or otherwise). I also feel that these two assignments provide students

with much-needed experience in writing and critical thinking that will benefit them in other courses. Objectively, we do see evidence that students are improving their Thinking and Investigation strategies and more effectively incorporating APA formatting in their assignments. I am learning that the nature of changing perceptions of writerly efficacy (as measured by the PSWSES) likely require much more writing experience than what I am providing in my course. Students would probably benefit from connected writing experiences across a broader range of academic experiences.

Table 1: Examples of student comments pertaining to the nature of the topics

It wasn't about topics and material that would never come in handy in life. It was relevant, fun and useful in life. Not like algebra.
I enjoy reading the articles. They give rise to questioning information and inspiring a curiosity to find out more about the topics
The research aspect was very interesting! I enjoyed reading the media articles and in comparison understanding the research and scientific journals behind it
The content of the articles is very interesting
The chosen articles are very interesting to read as they cover interesting topics. Also, the skill of criticizing media claims by looking at the research that stands behind them is a very useful skill to cultivate that has many practical applications in our daily lives.

Table 2: Examples of student comments pertaining to the comparison of media and research

I enjoy being able to identify aspects of media claims in the literature. In this age of information that we live in with so much conflicting information it is a unique experience to go diretly to the source of widely accepted information.
The aspect I found enjoyable was doing a literature search for whether the current state of the literature supports or refutes the media claim that stress is shrinking the brain. I actually surprised myself by finding out that the evidence is not as clear cut as the media piece made it out to be and there is not really a strong consensus on whether stress definitely shrinks the brain.
I like the idea what we are able to critique the media, and call out when they are using incorrect information or not.
I thought it was interesting how the facts presented in the media article were contorted versions of the study
Being able to compare media claims to the actual research. It made me realize that we should not believe everything the media tells us.

What would I change?

With the support of the WDI, I am interested in running this project again with some further modification to stage 1 of the assignment. Some students did comment that the Stage 1 "Says/Does" assignment felt too prescribed, repetitive, and did not lend itself well to a 500-word essay. I would like to keep the same goal of the assignment, but to construct it much more in the form of a 'question/answer' task to guide students through a more defined exploration of the media article and the evidence used to support the arguments being made. I would also like to improve the quality of feedback that students received. As my experienced TA's become more familiar with the course and the assignments, I would like to dedicate an additional time to develop templates and examples of feedback that students will

appreciate and find beneficial in developing their critical reading/writing skills. To this end, I would like to work with our RGASC experts to identify potential improvements that can be made to our method of feedback and to capture student perceptions on the perceived benefit of this feedback. Finally, the PSWSES measures do not appear to capture changes in writing efficacy that are taking place, and I would like to explore other means to assess writing efficacy (e.g. Teachers Self-Efficacy Writing Scale) I believe these changes will help improve the quality of student experience in this writing initiative.

References

Asp, K. (n.d.). *How Exercise Boosts Your Brainpower*. *ACTIVE.com*. From
        http://www.active.com/fitness/articles/how-exercise-boosts-your-brainpower

Greenberg, M. (2012). *How to Prevent Stress from Shrinking Your Brain*. *Psychology Today*. From
        https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-mindful-self-express/201208/how-prevent-stress-
        shrinking-your-brain

Schmidt, K.M., & Alexander, J.E. (2012). The Empirical Development of an Instrument to Measure
        Writerly Self-Efficacy in Writing Centers. *The Journal of Writing Assessment*, 5(1), 1-7.

Assignment 1
Convincing you with Science: The powerful Persuasion of science in the media

We are presented with ideas or arguments 'all-the-time' by friends, teachers, textbooks, and of course…, the media. These sources are trying to convince you of something, and it's up to you to decide if you agree with it (or not)!

We are going to dive into some neuroscience related media articles: These topics provide 'accessible' and interesting entry points to each topic.

The goal of this assignment is to explore common interpretations of neuroscience research. As a part of critical reading, It is important for you to summarize *what* an argument is 'saying' and *how* they are presenting evidence to support these claims. There are also broader goals of this assignment that are also transferable to other course contexts, including;

- writing a summary of evidence used to support the main premises of an argument.
- your ability to identify research and the original sources of information.
- your use of APA formatting (this will be essential in 3rd year PSY courses!).

1.   **Choose one** of the following media articles (see selections below).

How to Prevent Stress from Shrinking Your Brain
https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-mindful-self-express/201208/how-prevent-stress-shrinking-your-brain

-or-

How Exercise Boosts Your Brainpower
http://www.active.com/fitness/articles/how-exercise-boosts-your-brainpower

2.   **Identify 4 key pieces of scientific evidence** in the article that you have chosen**.** Each article uses more than one published neuroscience research experiment to support their claim.

3.   **Write** a brief summary of the article (**2-page MAXIMUM**) that:

   • **States** the main premise of the article.
   • **Summarizes / Highlights** 4 pieces of evidence (i.e., research studies) that are being used to support the main premise (e.g. stress is shrinking your brain). What is each piece of evidence 'saying' and 'doing'.
   • **Integrates** findings together to identify how it contributes to the main premise of the article.
   • **Identifies the ORIGINAL source of research articles** for the 4 pieces of evidence that you summarized above. This will require you to use clues in the media article (e.g. who the researcher is, where they are from, what their research is about, what did they find, …etc.) to then look for this research article.
   • provide a **statement of justification** as why you have identified each article as the original source of information. Place these justifications in your **APA formatted reference section**, beneath each reference. This is known as an '**annotated**' reference section.

   *(note: title pages and references are **not** counted towards word/page limits)*

I encourage you to seek writing support during **writing drop-in session** at the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre. Our writing experts can support how you structure **ideas**, **communicate** clearly, and **present knowledge** in an effective way. For specific availability throughout the week, please visit: https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/drop-in-appointments.

Monday 11am -2pm
Wednesday 11am-2pm
Thursday 1pm-4pm

4. **Format assignment using APA style guidelines:**

   • Font: **12-point,** Times (or similar), double spaced

- Remember**:** Always be **precise, and goal oriented** in your writing.

- **A title page**. Use the instructions for creating your title page from the following link: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/. Please see the written and visual descriptions provided.

- Include a **page header and page number** (also known as the "running head") at the top of every page. https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

- Insert page numbers flush right at top of page (all pages).

- Type "TITLE OF YOUR PAPER" in the header flush left using all capital letters (all pages). The running head is a shortened version of your paper's title and cannot exceed 50 characters including spacing and punctuation.

- Use the following instructions to help guide your creation of in-text citations (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/

- Use the following instructions to create your **reference list:**
- Basic Rules: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/05/
- single / multiple authors: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/06/
- Journal Article: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/07/
- On-line 'Non-periodical' report: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/10/

   Please note:
- Your reference section should be '**annotated**' to include a statement of why you believe this is the original source of information described in the media article.

- You **do not** need to include an **abstract** as a part of your report.

5. **Submit** your paper**.**
   Please read carefully as this will help ease the grading process and reduce confusions.

- **Name** Your files**:**
- PLEASE name files using the first 3 letters of your last name and the last 3 digits of your student ID. For example, if I were to hand in an assignment, I would name my assignment "**Bes233**" as **Bes**ton is my last name and **233** is the last 3 digits of my undergrad student ID! I don't mind if you add anything after that, like "**Bes233 Assignment1.pdf**.

- Following this procedure will streamline the process of grading your papers.

- **Where / When to submit** Your files**:**
OPTIONAL SUBMISSION - You can earn Course Engagement Credit (CEC, 2%) by peer reviewing the work of 2 other students. To participate in this process, you MUST upload a copy of your work to PeerScholar (link found in assignment folder) **by MONDAY January 16th at 9am**. You will then be assigned to review two other pieces of work and you will be given until Tuesday at 5pm to complete your reviews.

MANDATORY SUBMISSION - Your assignment should be **uploaded to PORTAL** This process works in conjunction with Turnitin.com and makes the process of submitting assignments a little easier. **Due: January 20th at 9am**

6. Assignment **Assessment.**

Assignment be assessed on the following criteria:

1.   How well key research is **identified** in the media article.
2.   A demonstration of **understanding and effective use of** the content / evidence presented.
3.   How evidence **contributes** to the main premise presented in the article.
4.   Clear expression of **content.**
5.   Appropriate use of **APA formatting** throughout.

Items will be assessed using an 8-point scale of your ability to demonstrate these elements.

Do NOT exceed the 2-page limit. Our Teaching Assistants will be instructed to stop reading beyond the two-page limit and to provide a comment that they have done so.

<u>Assignment 2</u>
A critical review of the science behind the media

<u>Objectives</u>

In this assignment, you will build upon select one of the media articles that were used in the 'Neuroscience and the Media' (Assignment 1) and discover whether or not that headline is supported by findings presented in published research.

In this assignment, you will **develop**:
*   Your ability to read and understand scientific literature.
*   A sense of how you convey research findings from a paper.
*   Your ability to use evidence to draw a critical (either positively, or negatively) comparison between two sources of information.

Choose from one of the following two articles that were previously sourced from the media articles in Assignment 2. You may select from the same, or different topic that what you wrote in assignment 2.

Used in: **<u>How to Prevent Stress from Shrinking Your Brain</u>**
Gurvits, T., Shenton, M., Hokama, H., Ohta, H., Lasko, N., & Gilbertson, M. et al. (1996). Magnetic resonance imaging study of hippocampal volume in chronic, combat-related posttraumatic stress disorder. *Biological Psychiatry*, *40*(11), 1091-1099. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/s0006-3223(96)00229-6

Used in: **<u>How Exercise Boosts Your Brain Power</u>**
BUE-ESTES, C., WILLER, B., BURTON, H., LEDDY, J., WILDING, G., & HORVATH, P. (2008). SHORT-TERM EXERCISE TO EXHAUSTION AND ITS EFFECTS ON COGNITIVE FUNCTION IN YOUNG WOMEN 1. *Perceptual And Motor Skills*, *107*(3), 933-945. http://dx.doi.org/10.2466/pms.107.3.933-945

PDFs of both articles will be posted on Portal along with these instructions.

<u>Expectations of your paper.</u>

Part I (~1 paragraph)
In the first part of the assignment, briefly **introduce** the media claim and **identify which source of scientific literature** that you will be working with.

Part II (roughly 2-3 pages)
Briefly summarize the primary research article that you selected– **Do not use direct quotations**. What we are looking for (and what you'll be marked on) is how well you seem to <u>understand</u> what each article is saying.
• What were the researchers **investigating**?
• Were there any **hypotheses**/predictions (If no hypothesis/prediction is clearly stated – what, in your opinion, is the research question?)
• Describe the **methodological** approach used?
• What was **found**? Be descriptive and demonstrate an understanding of key results identified in the paper and the implication of these findings.
• What **conclusions** were made?

Part III (~1 page)
Critically evaluate the media claim <u>in the context</u> of the scientific article that you have just summarized.
• Does this research support the claim made in the media article?
• What are the key pieces of evidence that do, or do not support it?
• If the evidence doesn't support the claim, is there another experiment that might be conducted to validate this claim? ...and in that same breath, has any other research been done on this area that might support the claim (or refute it?).

<u>Formatting Instructions</u>
• **Format assignment using APA style:**
• 5 pages maximum

• Font: **12-point,** Times (or similar), double spaced

• Remember: Always be precise, and goal oriented in your writing.

• **Include a title page**. Use the instructions for creating your title page from the following link: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/. Please see the written and visual descriptions provided.

• Include a **page header and page number** (also known as the "running head") at the top of every page. https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
•   Insert page numbers <u>flush right at top of page (all pages).</u>
•   Type "TITLE OF YOUR PAPER" in the header <u>flush left </u>using all capital letters (all pages). The running head is a shortened version of your paper's title and cannot exceed 50 characters including spacing and punctuation.

• **In-text citations and reference list**.
•   Use the following instructions to help guide your creation of <u>in-text citations</u> (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/

- •   Use the following instructions to create your **reference list:**
- •   Basic Rules: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/05/
- •   single / multiple authors: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/06/
- •   Journal Article: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/07/
- •   On-line 'Non-periodical' report: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/10/

Submission Instructions

Please read carefully as this will help ease the grading process and reduce confusions.

- • **Due**: March 17th at 5pm.

- • **Name** Your files:

- •   PLEASE name files using the first 3 letters of your last name and the last 3 digits of your student ID. For example, if I were to hand in an assignment, I would name my assignment "**Bes233**" as **Bes**ton is my last name and **233** is the last 3 digits of my undergrad student ID! I don't mind if you add anything after that, like "**Bes233 Assignment1.pdf**".

- • **Where to submit** Your files:

MANDATORY SUBMISSION - Your assignment should be **uploaded to PORTAL** This process works in conjunction with Turnitin.com and makes the process of submitting assignments a little easier.

OPTIONAL SUBMISSION - You can earn Course Engagement Credit (CEC, 2%) by peer reviewing the work of two other students BEFORE THE DUE DATE. To participate in this process, you MUST upload a copy of your work to PeerScholar (link found in assignment folder) by **Monday, March 13th at 9am**. You will then be assigned to review two other pieces of work and you will be given until until **Tuesday the 14th at 9am** to complete your reviews. Only students that have completed both peer reviews will receive credit.

<div align="center">Writing support</div>

All are encouraged to seek writing support at the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre during **writing drop-in sessions.** Our writing experts can support how you structure **ideas**, **communicate** clearly, and **present knowledge** effectively.

Specific access *for Psy290 Students will be scheduled on March 13-16th, 2017. Times to be updated soon.*

General drop-in hours *throughout the week, please visit: https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/drop-in-appointments.*

<div align="center">Assessment</div>

Assignment be assessed on the following criteria:
(Items will be assessed using an 8 point scale of your ability to demonstrate these elements.)

Part I –The Introduction:
- How well is the media claim introduced and linked to the primary research article?

Part II – Summary of Research Article
- Does the student introduce the **rationale** and **hypothesis** of the main research article?
- Is there a clear explanation of **how** the research was conducted.
- Does the student accurately convey the **main research findings**.

Part III –Critical Evaluation of Media Claim
- Does the student **compare** the media statement in light of the research article findings. Comment.
6. Does the student demonstrate a meaningful attempt to **reflect** / **evaluate** the claims in the media article.

Style
7. Clear communication and organization of written work.
1. Evidence of effective integration and use of source material.
2. Appropriate use of **APA formatting** throughout.

    Do NOT exceed the page limit. Our Teaching Assistants will be instructed to stop reading beyond the page limit and to provide a comment that they have done so.