

Last Updated March 4, 2020



# DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

## Department Writing Plan

Compiled by

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Psychology Department Ad-Hoc Committee on Writing Across the Curriculum:

in consultation with Dr. Bryna Siegel Finer,

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Submitted to:

Dr. Lisa Newell, Department Chair

the Faculty of the Department of Psychology

Dr. Steven Hovan, Dean of the Kopchick College of Natural Sciences & Mathematics

Dr. Dawn Smith-Sherwood, Director of Liberal Studies

Dr. Lara Luetkehans, Provost

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## Summary

In creating their writing-enriched curriculum, Dr. Mark Palumbo served as the liaison between Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Psychology (PSYC). The groups used a template borrowed from the University of Minnesota<sup>1</sup> and adapted by Siegel Finer to thoroughly investigate where and how writing was already being taught in the PSYC curriculum and where and how writing could be added to the curriculum, in order to draft the Department Writing Plan (DWP) for the department instructors.

Siegel Finer came to the department three times – once in February 2018 for a “lunch and learn” session, and twice for more formal workshops in October and November 2018. Palumbo attended the two-day Liberal Studies Teaching Writing workshop in both May 2018 and 2019, where he and Siegel Finer met to work on the PSYC writing plan.

In August 2018, Drs. Palumbo, Newell, J. Perillo, and McHugh were approved by the department as the department ad-hoc WAC committee. The committee met on various occasions to discuss topics such as:

- Extracurricular writing activities
- Ways to communicate the value of writing to students
- Psi Chi topics and other departmental activities
- The Chair’s writing contest
- Developing a “best paper” award for a 290 paper or an honors thesis
- Ways to publish student papers or have them write something for the department (e.g., newsletter)
- Posting honors theses on website, maybe posting a list of dissertations
- Looking at implicit writing expectations (especially pertaining to writing professional email)

Department WAC committee members also accompanied Dr. Palumbo to meet with the WAC Director.

Course syllabi were used to collect information about assignments and faculty members were consulted when additional information was required. The department chair was frequently consulted, and drafts of the plan were presented and discussed at faculty meetings.

The department also developed a statement of “Department Commitment to Writing” to include on all syllabi for courses that will be a part of the writing-enriched curriculum. That statement is included on page 7 of this document.

At a meeting on March 4, 2020, the PSYC faculty voted to support the Department Writing Plan as described below in addition to the WAC Director’s recommendations for continuing program facilitation on pages 9 and 27 of this document. Faculty voted again in 2022 to accept the updated assessment results and revised recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Minnesota Writing Enriched Curriculum. 2013. <http://wec.umn.edu/Writingplans.html>

## **PSYCHOLOGY**

### **Department Writing Plan**

### **Rollout Fall 2020**

#### **Professional and Academic Genres in PSYC**

The field of Psychology requires clear and concise professional writing for interpersonal and technical communication. Psychological writing for interpersonal communication involves demonstrating the ability to compose clear, concise, and professional information for email messages, letters, proposals, resumes and curriculum vitae. Psychological technical writing includes writing to provide evidence-based arguments and discussions, summarize and critique existing works, provide appropriate feedback, describe existing psychological research, and develop, propose, and describe new research paths and findings.

Technical writing to provide evidence-based arguments and discussions, to review and critique existing works, and for research writing all require the ability to summarize and synthesize information from multiple existing works on the topic to produce a cohesive and convincing (evidence-based) argument for a position on an issue. Also, technical writing includes adherence to existing rules, established by the American Psychological Association (APA), governing appropriate writing format and intellectual property. Thus, technical writing requires demonstrating the ability to understand how to rephrase existing written information, the knowledge of when and how to properly quote existing sources, the understanding of what specific information requires a citation, and knowledge of how to properly provide that citation. Additionally, technical writing involves the ability to produce (and often, collaborate on) research proposals (including IRB applications, grant proposals), to interpret data, (i.e., to describe statistical relationships and results), and to produce professional manuscripts. All writing in Psychology should adhere to established APA conventions.

The IUP Department of Psychology is committed to helping students in improving their writing skills with the goal of being able to communicate as professionals in the field are required to do.

#### **Student Writing Skills and Abilities**

Graduates of the IUP Psychology programs should be able to write skillfully in all areas of professional interpersonal and technical writing described above. More specifically, Psychology graduates should be able to:

- produce written works that demonstrate clear and concise interpersonal communication (e.g., produce effective and professional email messages, notes, letters, resumes, curriculum vitae).

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- produce writing that demonstrates a mastery of the material and the ability to synthesize information from various sources to draw evidence-based conclusions,
- evaluate written works of peers and provide appropriate feedback,
- effectively arrange and self-edit text for adherence to established conventions for appropriate grammar, syntax, sentence structure, and paragraph structure, as well as adherence to established (APA) conventions for appropriate citation and document format, and
- produce writing for all phases of research, from proposals through final project production (e.g., Power Point presentation, poster presentation, and/or manuscript production), that adheres to accepted conventions in the field.

The faculty members of the IUP Department of Psychology are committed to facilitating a program that introduces, emphasizes, and reinforces these writing skills throughout our curriculum.

## Integration of Writing into Undergraduate Curriculum

Department faculty have participated in professional development training in writing-to-learn pedagogy<sup>2</sup> through writing workshops with the WAC director, participation in the end-of-year Liberal Studies writing workshop, and in full department faculty meetings that the WAC director has visited.

At the time that this proposal was developed, writing was integrated into the curriculum through assignments that were used for teaching and learning in twenty courses in the Psychology Department. Of these courses, twelve were either required in the Psychology major (including two four-credit lab courses) or were listed as a possible choice to fulfill a major subject area requirement; seven of the courses met the requirements for two additional electives; one course was required for the Psychology minor. All students must have completed the required courses and must have chosen at least two of the additional elective courses to fulfill departmental requirements for achieving a bachelor's degree.

Each writing assignment was designed by the course instructor. Therefore, the assignments that students received were determined by the specific instructor. [See Writing Outcomes Curriculum Map on page 11.]

In addition, the Psychology Department is in the process of implementing a newly revised curriculum, with the introduction of a new "First-year Experience" course entitled, Psychology Major: Curriculum and Careers (PSYC 100) for all incoming Psychology majors. The members of the department involved in developing this new curriculum are focused on implementing this writing across the curriculum initiative by incorporating a writing component into all classes thereby providing all Psychology Majors with opportunities to practice and develop professional writing skills. Additional courses will be introduced over

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<sup>2</sup> "What is Writing to Learn?" *Writing Across the Curriculum Clearinghouse*. Colorado State University. 2015. <http://wac.colostate.edu/intro/pop2d.cfm>

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the course of the following semesters until the entire new curriculum has been implemented. As more courses are introduced into the curriculum, each course will include writing activities to enhance student learning. Therefore, in the new curriculum, the existing requirement of two “writing intensive (W)” courses is eliminated.

Students in Psychology will be required to take Liberal Studies courses in writing, including English 101 and 202.

### **Demonstrating the Value of Writing Through Extracurricular Activities**

The Department has also launched an initial student writing contest to extend writing opportunities for Psychology students and emphasize the value of writing within the department. In this activity, students voluntarily submitted written papers on a specified topic. All students were invited to submit a paper as part of a competition for a “best paper” award. In its first iteration, the Chair of the Psychology Department contacted all Psychology majors via email with an invitation to submit a paper for a **Violence Awareness Essay Contest**. Students were invited to submit a paper addressing one of two essay options: Option 1: “What would your life be like if you woke up one day and there was no interpersonal violence?” Option 2: “What would your life be like if there was no interpersonal violence at IUP?” The contest was announced September 27, 2018, with the deadline for submissions of November 14, 2018 at 4:00pm. The winners were announced on Dec 7, 2018.

A total of ten (10) submissions were received; no information was collected about class standing. Winners were chosen by the Department Chair, who awarded one first prize of \$100 and three second prize winners who each received \$20. In addition, all ten of the students who submitted essays were given the opportunity to choose one of the following participation gifts: an NSM flash-drive, a Psychology Mug, or an NSM t-shirt. Finally, winning papers were posted on the Psychology Department’s social media pages (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram).

As we roll out our Department Writing Plan, the faculty have in mind other possibilities for demonstrating to students the value of writing through extracurricular activities. These include:

- the implementation of ongoing additional writing “contests” for all students at each class level (i.e., freshmen, sophomore, junior, senior). The Departmental WAC committee will assess papers to determine the recipient of the “best paper” or top-ranked paper(s) award/awards.
- asking students to submit articles/essays for publication in our newly developed Departmental Newsletter. The ongoing publication of this newsletter will provide information to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and anyone interested in keeping abreast of departmental developments. Certainly, all winning contest submissions, articles, essays, etc. submitted by our students could be incorporated into the Newsletter.

- posting all winning contest submissions, articles, essays, etc. submitted by our students to all Psychology Department social media pages (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram)
- reinforcing the importance of professional writing during departmental Colloquia and “Brown Bag” meetings, which are held throughout each academic semester. Invited guest speakers could be asked to discuss the importance of writing within their chosen careers in Psychology. We plan to ask all speakers (e.g., presenters, academic researchers, and alumni) who deliver invited presentations in our department to address how writing helps them achieve their career goals, to better inform our students of the importance of professional writing in the field of Psychology.
- further emphasizing writing in several ways during the department’s annual “Psychology Day” event. Now entering its fifth year, this Spring event highlights the department’s activities throughout each academic year. Open to IUP and the general public, this day-long event includes a combination of academic presentations, career discussions, alumni conversations, and presentations about community services and resources. Invited speakers present information from all areas related to the field of Psychology.
- We could ask speakers at Department and Psi Chi functions to discuss their experience(s) with professional writing and Power Point presentations.

## Communicating Writing Expectations to Students

1). To communicate writing expectations to students, we will include a statement to this effect in course syllabi as appropriate.

### **Syllabus Statement**

*The members of the Psychology Department faculty are committed to developing student writing throughout the curriculum. As part of this commitment, in this class, you will engage in writing activities and complete writing assignments, which are designed to improve your communication skills in the profession.*

2). In alignment with the IUP Writing Across the Curriculum initiative, we plan to add writing-to-learn and writing-to-communicate assignments in all undergraduate courses in the Psychology Major. All writing assignments will be developed to focus on specific desired writing abilities established by the Psychology Department.

3). Each individual instructor will continue to have the ability to determine the appropriate writing assignment(s) for their own specific course. Assignments will be designed with a specific purpose and will include a specific set of requirements related to the desired writing abilities established by the Psychology Department as listed above.

4). To introduce appropriate professional email correspondence, we will include an explanation in the syllabus of our new Psychology Major: Curriculum and Careers (PSYC 100) course for all Psychology majors (and any other course as desired/determined by the course instructor). The information in this Syllabus Statement\* entry will focus on the



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“Psychological writing for interpersonal communication” objective for our students. An optional template for appropriate email communication may be included in the Syllabus as well.

**\*Communication:** *IUP email is the only official form of communication used here at the University. Psychological writing for interpersonal communication involves demonstrating the ability to compose clear, concise, and professional email. All email messages to your professors should include: The appropriate email address, a relevant Subject, a professional greeting (e.g., Dear Dr. Smith,), an introduction of who you are and any relevant course and section information (as needed), a clear, concise message, an appropriate closing statement, and your name.*

**Email Message Template (Optional):**

To: Dr. B. Smith: (Automatically generated when you select the recipient)

From: (Your name/email address-automatically generated)

Subject: Question about PSYC \_\_Class. / Information about PSYC \_\_Class.

Hello Dr. Smith,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a student in your PSYC \_\_class, section \_\_\_\_. I am writing to inform you about /request additional information about \_\_\_\_\_.

(Add/include all relevant detailed information here.)

Please contact me about this request at your earliest convenience. /Thank you for your time.

Thank you, /Respectfully,

Jane/John Doe

5). Additionally, at the discretion of the instructor, practice email (Writing to Learn) assignments may be included in the course(s). These assignments could include student-to-student and/or student-to-instructor practice email messages. This type of assignment would draw attention to the Syllabus language related to professional email communication and reinforce that information.

All changes from the current curriculum will be related to the desired writing abilities established by the Psychology Department and will be assessed in Psychology classes on an ongoing basis. Indicators may include successful writing of professional email messages and/or improvement in proper use of professional language and language structure in all written assignments.

Additionally, specific abilities will be assessed during the students’ senior year in conjunction with our new “Senior Seminar” course (see Appendix A below).

## Implementation and Assessment of Department Writing Plan

The WAC Director recommends the following action items for continuing program facilitation:

- Elect at least one faculty member to continue to be the WAC/PSYC liaison (this should count as department Service)
- Provide all newly hired faculty a copy of the DWP, and recommend they attend a minimum of two WAC workshops or the May 2-day writing workshop for Liberal Studies faculty
- All faculty should add “Department Commitment to Writing” statement to syllabi as appropriate
- Department should continue to collect samples of senior writing every two years and analyze results with WAC Director
- Through faculty development seminars with WAC director, workshop attendance, and writing-enriched curriculum, attempt to move/maintain assessment results to target 75%
- Add areas for the teaching and assessment of writing as goals on department and faculty five-year review documents
- Continue to update the writing outcomes curriculum map as courses are added, removed, and revised in the PSYC curriculum (and communicate these changes to the WAC Director)

The WAC Committee will incorporate these recommendations into the description of department Plan Implementation Procedures.

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### Psychology Department Implementation Procedures

**Important Note: The adoption of this Department Writing Plan (DWP) implies that we, the faculty of the Psychology Department, agree to be aware of our own thinking about how we approach writing activities in our courses. More specifically, as “experienced” writers, we will be reflecting on the assumptions that we make about the writing levels of our students, and we will be working on modeling professional writing and communicating clear standards for writing, being mindful of avoiding those assumptions.**

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For the initial implementation of the Department Writing Plan (DWP), the members of the Psychology Department will:

- Elect at least one faculty member to continue to be the WAC/PSYC liaison, as per the recommendation of the WAC Director (see page 9 of the document)
- Agree to communicate our commitment to writing to students by including the relevant statement in our course syllabi as described on pages 7-8 of this document
- Include written assignments in our courses, at a level appropriate to the course, which will be designed to provide instruction and or practice in the desired student writing skills, as identified by the Department.

- Through faculty development seminars with WAC director, workshop attendance, and writing-enriched curriculum, attempt to move/maintain assessment results to target 75%+ (i.e., at least 75% of our students will meet or exceed expectations, in the writing outcomes assessed by the rubric, p. 25), as established by the WAC director.
- Provide all newly hired faculty a copy of the DWP and recommend attendance at a minimum of two WAC workshops or the May 2-day writing workshop for Liberal Studies faculty as per the recommendation of the WAC Director (see page 9 of the document).
- Continue to collect samples of senior writing every two years and analyze results with WAC Director.
- Add areas for the teaching and assessment of writing as goals on department and faculty five-year review documents
- Continue to update the writing outcomes curriculum map as courses are added, removed, and revised in the PSYC curriculum (and communicate these changes to the WAC director).

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For ongoing development and implementation of the DWP, the members of the WAC Committee will focus also on the incorporation of the final recommendations of the WAC Director into our procedures (see pages 27-28). To this end, the members of the WAC Committee will engage in continuing collaboration with the WAC Director, members of the Department UCC, and the members of the Department Faculty to:

- Develop a “true holistic score” as an additional criterion on the assessment rubric.
- Develop a list of courses to identify specifically where desired writing outcomes could be “introduced” and later “reinforced” as an integral part of the preparation for future focus on “mastery” of writing outcomes.
- Establish faculty development seminars and/or workshops to provide detailed discussion regarding information relative to:
  - accepted APA format in writing and citations.
  - “writing to learn” vs. “writing to communicate” approaches.
- Establish departmental discussions related to specific student writing skills:
  - the possible differences that may exist between the student’s ability to write well grammatically and the ability to compose accurate and integrative arguments/discussions.
  - the possible teaching activities that may be related to the skills stated above.
  - the possible identification of courses in which these skills could be taught and assessed.
  - the possible “messages” that we may be sending to students by differentially focusing on the importance of these writing skills.

## Writing Outcomes Curriculum Map

### **The Writing Outcomes Curriculum Map demonstrates:**

- Conscious effort on the part of department faculty at placing core disciplinary genres at appropriate levels of the curriculum, scaffolding and reinforcing the writing skills necessary for students to succeed in writing those genres (For example: 100-level courses focus on writing that allows students to enhance their understanding of course content; 200-level courses introduce and reinforce appropriate communication in science by focusing on accepted writing style (APA); 300-level courses include writing that enhances the students' ability to apply their knowledge through appropriate written communication while reinforcing course content; and 400-level courses focus on the ability to analyze research and experience and emphasize acceptable communication format).
- Thoughtful integration of writing-to-learn activities in most courses in the curriculum (For example: 100-level courses include short answer questions to enhance students' understanding of course content; 200-level classes include writing projects to introduce & reinforce students' knowledge of acceptable (APA) writing format; 300-level classes include written projects that reinforce students' knowledge of some of the difficulties and issues related with 'real-world' written communication; & 400-level classes include writing projects that reinforce students' knowledge of research analysis and communication).
- Balanced measures for assessing writing as process and product, that is, writing is graded for demonstrating mastery of course content as well as improvement of writing skills over time (For example: Classes use writing to assess students' knowledge of course content. In addition, classes use written projects to introduce, reinforce, and emphasize proper scientific APA writing style and format.).

The following “Curriculum Map” lists writing activities that were identified during the process of developing this proposal. Some courses are listed (by course number) more than once, to reflect different sections of the same course taught by different instructors. This “Map” is not intended to be all-inclusive (i.e., it does not identify all writing activities included in all Psychology courses). Further, it is not intended as a list of writing activities that must be included in any course. Rather, it is intended to serve as a reflection of the writing activities that have been used in Psychology courses and as a guide for possible course writing activities.

Course #	Course Title	Writing Activities	Purpose: Introduce, Reinforce, Emphasize (Why they complete the assignment)	Resources: Texts students read/use to prepare for the assignment
100 Level				
101	General Psychology	Short answer questions on each exam	Access depth of knowledge of material covered	Textbook, Non-text reading, Research article
		Class Paper	Apply knowledge from non-text reading, information covered in class and Research article	
200-Level				
280	Psychological Inquiry	Two essay questions on each textbook chapter	Reinforce relevant information	Textbook
290	Research Design And Analysis I	Lab assignments	Introduce and reinforce writing in APA style; communicating research	Textbook, APA publication manual; published research peer-reviewed journal articles; practice problems and answer key; walkthrough guides; example write-ups; example sections; handouts
		Short answer questions on exams	Reinforce and emphasize writing in APA style; communicating research	
		In-class research design activities	Introduce research design; reinforce concepts regarding threats to validity, etc.	
		Class research paper - drafts of each section	Introduce and reinforce writing in APA style; communicating research	
		Final class research paper	Writing to Communicate (WTC)	
290	Research Design And Analysis I	Lab assignments	Introduce and reinforce communicating in science	Textbook, APA publication manual, example write-ups, published journal
		Short answer questions on exams	Communicate content mastery	

		Paper drafts	Introduce and reinforce communicating in science, APA style	articles, prior drafts with instructor feedback
		Final paper	Writing to communicate	
290	Research Design And Analysis I	Lab assignments/ homework/ extra credit opportunities	Introduce and reinforce writing in APA style; communicating research	Instructor's template, textbook, class PowerPoint lectures; APA writing style websites
		2 research summaries of published papers (1st draft, no grade but my feedback, 2nd final draft is graded, in each case)	Introduce the flow of a psychological paper; APA writing style	
		Class research paper, presentation	Introduce and reinforce writing in APA style; communicating research	
290	Research Design And Analysis I	Lab assignments	Introduce and reinforce research writing and writing in APA style; communicating research, practice interpretation of statistical findings	Textbook, APA publication manual; published research peer-reviewed journal articles; practice problems and answer key; study guides w/ example short answer questions; example write-ups, instructor-generated handouts, discussions with peer group; example sections; handouts, writing center
		Short answer questions on exams	Reinforce and emphasize writing in APA style; communicating research; reinforce conceptual understanding of statistics	
		In-class research design activities	Introduce research design; reinforce concepts such as ivs and dvs, threats to validity, etc.	
		Class research paper, including drafts of each section	Introduce and reinforce research writing and writing in APA style; communicating research	
		Article review	Introduce how to summarize research methodology and results from published research	
291	Research Design and Analysis II	Lab assignments	Reinforce and emphasize writing in APA style; communicating research	Textbook, APA publication manual; published research peer-reviewed journal articles
		Short answer questions on exams	Reinforce and emphasize writing in APA style; communicating research	
		In-class research design activities	Introduce research design; reinforce concepts regarding threats to validity, etc.	
		Final class research paper	WTC	
291	Research Design and Analysis II	Lab assignments	Introduce and reinforce communicating in science	Textbook, completed lab

		Short answer questions on exams	Communicate content mastery	assignments, APA publication manual, example write-ups, published journal articles, PowerPoint slides
		Final paper	Writing to communicate	
		Research proposal presentation	Writing to communicate	
300-level				
310	Developmental Psychology	1-2 page assignment; topic: alcohol use while pregnant	Reinforce material; application of material	Textbook; additional reading: Albom, M. (2007). <i>Tuesdays with Morrie: an old man, a young man, and life's greatest lesson.</i> New York, NY: Broadway Books.
		1-2 page assignment; topic: classifying their temperament as an infant		
		1-2 page assignment; topic: selecting a children's toy and discussing whether it is masculine, feminine or neutral		
		1-2 page assignment; topic: completing a quiz that matches personality traits to career options		
		3-4 page reaction paper: students are asked to discuss how Morrie's experience at the end of his life compares or contrasts to the material in the textbook.		
310	Developmental Psychology	Analysis of moral dilemma	Apply the theoretical stages to actual responses (reinforce)	Textbook, articles reviewing opposing sides of controversial topics across development, additional class reading (liberal studies text); class notes; class handouts
		Analyze an attachment assessment	Apply the theory to real parent-child interactions (reinforce)	
		Post discussions and responses to controversial topics in development	Analyze opposing arguments and synthesize a position based on evidence (introduce)	
		Design a research study	Apply the concepts of research design and research methods (reinforce)	
310	Developmental Psychology	Concept paper	Emphasize course content (define & apply major class concepts)	Class notes; class handouts, lecture summaries
		Attachment assessment: identify & explain specific attachment pattern(s)	Emphasize course content (apply major class concepts)	

		Adolescent issues assessment: identify, analyze, & explain a specific adolescent experience relative to Erickson's theory of identity formation/development	Emphasize course content (apply major class concepts)	
		(student's) personal development assessment	Emphasize course content (define & apply major class concepts)	
310	Developmental Psychology	Analysis of developmental concepts that occur in brief in-class activities	Reinforce theoretical concepts or developmental stages as they apply to contrived scenarios or personal examples	Textbook
	(online sections only)	3 3-4 page papers	Apply theory and concepts to hypothetical parent-child interactions (reinforce)	
	(online sections only)	Post discussions and responses to topics in development	Think about opinions on controversial topics, to apply course material to actual research studies, to put information into context (emphasize)	
311	Child Development	Analysis of moral dilemma	Apply the theoretical stages to actual responses (reinforce)	Textbook, articles reviewing opposing sides of controversial topics across development
		Analyze an attachment assessment	Apply the theory to real parent-child interactions (reinforce)	
		Post discussions and responses to controversial topics in development	Analyze opposing arguments and synthesize a position based on evidence (introduce?)	
		Answer questions about a virtual child's development	Apply developmental concepts to virtual reality	
		Design a research study	Apply the concepts of research design and research methods (reinforce)	
312	Adult Development & Aging	Weekly homework assignments	Reinforce reading of textbook material and apply information to personal experiences	Textbook, distributed outlines, published research peer-reviewed journal articles, APA manual, writing center
		Final course paper (about 8 pages)	Increase depth of knowledge in a specific area of adult development and aging, reinforce and emphasize writing in APA style; communicating research	
		Essay questions on exam	Communicate content mastery, apply course content	



313	Non-Normative Development In Adulthood	Weekly homework assignments	Reinforce reading of textbook material and apply information to personal experiences	Textbook, distributed outlines, class PowerPoint lectures, previous homework assignments (sample discussion questions)
		Course project (PowerPoint lecture, discussion questions about lecture and about article)	Communicate clearly using PowerPoint; to write clear questions for class discussion	
		Essay questions on exam	Communicate content mastery, apply course content	
314	Child & Adolescent Psychopathology	4-5 page review paper: review research on a risk factor for child psychopathology.	Reinforce material; application of material	3 peer-reviewed journal articles; textbook; additional reading: <i>child and adolescent psychopathology: a casebook</i> (4th edition).
		4-5 page case history paper: construct a case history focusing on one of the disorders discussed in class	Reinforce material; application of material	
		3 short answer exams	Reinforce material; application of material	
315	Experimental Developmental Psychology	Analysis of moral dilemma	Apply the theoretical stages to actual responses (reinforce)	Textbook, articles reviewing opposing sides of controversial topics across development, empirical and theoretical peer-reviewed journal articles
		Analyze an attachment assessment	Apply the theory to real parent-child interactions (reinforce)	
		Post discussions and responses to controversial topics in development	Analyze opposing arguments and synthesize a position based on evidence (introduce?)	
		Answer questions about a virtual child's development	Apply developmental concepts to virtual reality	
		Write a research proposal	Expand knowledge of a selected topic and reinforce understanding of research methods and data analysis	
		Design a research study	Apply the concepts of research design and research methods (reinforce)	
321	Abnormal Psychology	1-2 page assignment: apply course material on a particular diagnosis, ptsd, a case study of an individual with that diagnosis	Reinforce material; application of material	Textbook; additional reading: <i>case studies in abnormal</i>

		1-2 page assignment apply course material on a particular diagnosis, bulimia, to a case study of an individual with that diagnosis.	Reinforce material; application of material	<i>psychology (2nd edition).</i>
		1-2 page assignment: apply course material on a particular diagnosis, depression, to a case study of an individual with that diagnosis.	Reinforce material; application of material	
		1-2 page assignment: apply course material on a particular diagnosis, depression, borderline personality disorder to a case study of an individual with that diagnosis.	Reinforce material; application of material	
321	Abnormal Psychology	Clinical vignette paper	Apply understanding of etiology, criteria, causes, and treatment of mental disorders to a representative field case	Textbook, class PowerPoint slides, student lecture notes, example handout
		Short answer questions on exams	Communicate content mastery	
		Group diagnostic exercises	Reinforce understanding of course material	
		Sleep log	Articulate lessons learned from tracking sleep & restfulness	
330	Social Psychology	Journal assignment	Reinforce application of social psychological concepts to students' everyday lives	Textbook, example entries, practice problems
		Short answer questions on exams	Reinforce and emphasize application of course concepts to real-world situations	
		In-class activities	Reinforce application of social psychological concepts across situations and experiences	
330	Social Psychology	Short essay (1600 words minimum)	Reflect on the liberal studies additional reading/book (e.g., survival skills in disasters; how to practice happiness)	Book, textbook
	Online sections	20 forum (at least 100 words each) posts	Reflect on the class content (textbook, lectures) as applied to students' life experiences	
341	Conditioning And Learning	Essay exams	Reinforce relevant information	Textbook

		Lab reports	Introduce and reinforce relevant information	
350	Physiological Psychology	Lab assignments	Reinforce material covered in class, introduce new material	Textbook, book chapter, review of research literature
		Short answer questions on each exam	Access depth of knowledge of material covered	
		Case study/research paper	Reinforce class material, introduce new material in research literature, apply course material to develop research study	
350	Physiological Psychology	Synesthesia writing to think exercise	(introduce) students briefly write thoughts prior to discussing thought questions in class	Assigned popular press reading, textbook, internet sources, scholarly scientific articles, lab assignment, lecture slides
		Genetic technology writing to think exercise	(introduce) students briefly write thoughts prior to discussing thought questions in class.	
		Neuroscience methods assignment	(introduce, reinforce) students write a 2-4-page paper describing an assigned neuroscience research method and describe three examples of how the method has been used to understand the brain behavior relationship.	
		Animal use in behavioral neuroscience research	(introduce, reinforce, emphasize) students write a 3-5-page paper making an argument in support of or in opposition to using animals in behavioral neuroscience research.	
		Case study assignment	(introduce, reinforce, emphasize) students write a 12-20-page paper in which they describe a neurology case from a popular press source, do a literature review related to the relevant neurological condition, and propose a study to increase the body of knowledge related to the disorder or condition.	
		Lab reports (4)	(introduce, reinforce, emphasize) students write answers to questions related to four different laboratory exercises	
		Essays on exams	Communicate content knowledge	

		Case study presentation	(introduce, reinforce, emphasize) students prepare and present a presentation related to the content of their case study assignment above	
350 (for teamwork minor)	Physiological Psychology	Synesthesia writing to think exercise	(introduce) students briefly write thoughts prior to discussing thought questions in class	Assigned popular press reading, textbook, internet sources, scholarly scientific articles, lecture slides
		Genetic technology writing to think exercise	(introduce) students briefly write thoughts prior to discussing thought questions in class.	
		Neuroscience methods assignment	(introduce, reinforce) students write a 2-4-page paper describing an assigned neuroscience research method and describe three examples of how the method has been used to understand the brain behavior relationship.	
		Serotonin in human behavior/disorders	(introduce, reinforce) teams of students compose and present a two-page report on the role played by the neurotransmitter serotonin in an assigned human behavior or disorder.	
		Serotonin and invertebrate behavior	(introduce, reinforce) teams of students compose and present a two-page report on the role played by various types of serotonin receptors in an assigned behavior/disorder.	
		Serotonin receptor types in human behavior/disorders	(introduce, reinforce) teams of students compose and present a two-page report on the role played by the neurotransmitter serotonin in the behavior of invertebrates	
		Lab reports (4)	(introduce, reinforce, emphasize) students write answers to questions related to four different laboratory exercises	
		Essays on exams	Communicate content knowledge	
		Poster preparation and presentation	(introduce, reinforce, emphasize) teams of students prepare and present a poster documenting the results of a in-class neuropharmacology study examining the role played by various serotonin	

			receptor types in roach behavior.	
		Fact sheet	(introduce, reinforce, emphasize) teams of students prepare and present a fact sheet (2 pages) relating their findings from the above roach pharmacology study to teams of pharmacology students from the biology department.	
374	Stress & Coping	Weekly journals (at least 300 words each) to reflect on current events that happened in their lives focus on the most negative and most positive).	Integrate concepts discussed in class. To make the material personally relevant.	Explanation in syllabus, lecture about psychological benefits of journaling, textbook
		10 forum (at least 100 words each) posts	Reflect on the class content (textbook, lectures) as applied to students' life experiences	
378	Psychology Of Death And Dying	Weekly homework assignments	Reinforce reading of textbook material and apply information to personal experiences	Textbook, example obituaries, example eulogies, google, distributed outlines
		Final course paper (about 12-15 pages)	Emphasize importance of end-of-life preparation and to reflect on how one is living life right now	
		Essay questions on exam	Communicate content mastery, apply course content	
388	Forensic Psychology	Case studies	Emphasize application of course concepts to real-world cases; introduce professional writing across different scenarios	Textbook, example reports
		In-class activities	Introduce application of course concepts to problems; reinforce using writing as a tool to think critically	

		Essay exams	Reinforce and emphasize application of course concepts to understanding of criminal justice system	
388	Forensic Psychology	Forum posts	Writing to communicate, opportunity to apply course material to a current socio-legal issue	Textbook, posted news articles, published academic journal articles
		In-class reflection assignments	Writing to learn	
390	Industrial - Organizational Psychology	Written chapter review questions	Reinforce relevant information	Textbook
		Writing a task analysis for a given task.	Introduce the task analysis process	
		"	Emphasize the difficulty of the process.	
400-level				
410	Historical Trends In Psychology	Create a research paper on an historical figure in psychology	WTC	Published historical articles, books, textbook, APA publication manual (6th ed.), presentation research
		Introductory paragraph		
		Background		
		Contributions & developments		
		Historical & contemporary significance		
		Conclusion paragraph		
		Reference list		
		Final paper		
		Presentation paper summary	Provide class with an overview of the contents of the presentation (wtc)	
493	Practicum In Psychology	Write biweekly logs	Identify research or theory that supports their practical experiences and summarize in a coherent fashion	Sample logs, previous research methods courses, APA style manual
		Reflective paper	Analyze their practicum experiences and identify how they've shaped the student's personal and professional goals	

## Appendix A – Senior Writing Samples Assessment

### Protocol

For the 2021-2022 process, 43 final papers were collected from two groups of Senior Psychology Majors: 1) Those who complete critical thinking papers for the “Senior Seminar” course, and 2) those who completed critical thinking papers for the Senior-level “Psychology Honors Seminar course. These final submissions were assessed by the Chair of the WAC Committee, Dr. Palumbo, using the existing WAC rubric. The final Assessment tallies were then submitted to Dr, Siegel Finer, the Director of the Writing Across the Curriculum project.

For an initial (pilot) assessment, the committee collected 24 completed critical thinking reaction papers from current Senior Writing-Intensive courses after the instructors had completed grading them (this number represents a convenience sample). The Committee used the assessment rubric below to provide an initial assessment of students’ writing in areas based on desired skills and abilities described above in this DWP. This initial assessment will help to guide our focus for future assessment as well as possible ongoing revisions to our DWP. [Note: For the initial (pilot) assessment, we addressed all criteria listed in the rubric, even though they may or may not have been included in the original instructions to students for each assignment. For future assignments, members of the WAC committee will work with department faculty to include rubric criteria in assignment instructions.]

Ongoing assessment will be completed by the Departmental WAC Committee, with the initial assessment being completed at the first implementation of the Senior Seminar in Psychology course (PYC 460), which will be implemented in the Psychology Department’s newly revised curriculum, and every two years thereafter. The Committee will collect and assess a sample of graded final papers from the Senior Seminar course to determine the level of students’ progress to departmental goals.

The members of the WAC Committee will collect random graded papers from the course instructor at the end of the semester. The papers will be distributed to members of the committee, such that each paper will be scored by at least 2 members of the Committee, according to the assessment rubric listed below. Thus, each committee member will score several of the papers. This process will allow us to examine inter-rater reliability (agreement) during the process as well. Results will be aggregated by the WAC director, displayed in tables in Appendix B, and distributed/reported to the department.

The following statement will be added to the syllabus in the Senior Seminar in Psychology course every semester it is taught:

*In this course, your writing could be used to evaluate the success of the Psychology Department in our endeavor to help students develop professional writing abilities. Random samples of these papers will be collected and used for analysis. All*

*information will be kept strictly confidential. No individual scores or information will be identified. Only aggregate scores will be reported. Your course grade will not be affected in any way.*

The following section lists an example of a possible approach to implementing the final assignment for the Senior Seminar Course. Note: This is only intended as an example. Future approaches/assignments may or may not be similar, depending on the Course Instructor.

Example: Students respond to the following prompt:

Semester Paper (100 pts) The purpose of the individual research paper is to allow you to consider a specific research issue or question in psychology in more depth and to address our current and evolving understanding of that question as well as to consider the future directions and implications of this issue. Your paper should have several parts including:

- 1) An introduction to your topic/question with a brief description of its significance. Provide appropriate background to discuss and analyze your issue/question. For example, your question might be what do we know about the genetic risk of developing schizophrenia? In this section you might discuss what schizophrenia is, how common it is and its impact on people's lives. You should also clarify terms to meaningfully analyze the question, such as what is meant by genetic risk and identify it as one of many risk factors for developing the disease (1-2 pages).
- 2) Next, discuss the literature related to addressing your question. This should include a review of the body of literature focusing on your topic. I would like you to highlight two research articles you believe are most salient to addressing your topic/question. For these papers be sure to describe their purpose, methods, findings, and significance. Finally, I would like you to draw your own conclusion about the extent to which our current understanding of the topic successfully answers or addresses your topic. It is my hope that this will represent a process of discovery for you about something that interests you but that you may have been somewhat naive about before. For example, in looking at the genetic basis of schizophrenia, you might review research using family, twin, adoption, and chromosomal/gene allele frequency studies, but you might detail one adoption study and one gene study because you find the methods to be particularly strong and the results to be very insightful (3-5 pages).
- 3) Finally, relate your question to the core question. Discuss the implications for what we know about the current state of the science addressing your issue/question and where do you see future research and directions of your topic going? For example, can you conclude that nobody will develop schizophrenia unless they have a genetic predisposition, as some have suggested, and might we see people trying to eradicate schizophrenia in the future with gene therapies? (1-3 pages).
- 4) Please end your paper with a list of references. Reference lists shall adhere to the format recommended by the American Psychological Association (APA) for citations and bibliographic style. If you are unfamiliar with APA citation style, you can find many examples online.
- 5) As we will consult several times regarding your paper, at the end of your paper please compose a "Revision Letter" to be submitted with the final version of the Thesis Paper. This one-page, double-spaced document will address how you



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addressed my suggestions for improving the final submission of your paper.

There are many potential paper topics and I urge you to consider choosing a topic as soon as possible. One suggestion for finding a topic is to expand on a topic that we touched on in class. Alternatively, you could look through an introductory psychology text or consider how psychology intersects with your major, a topic you learned about in another course or an area that you may wish to pursue in a future job or graduate school. Please do not hesitate to come see me to discuss your paper topic or paper at any time. Your paper topic must be approved before you proceed.

In addition, I also suggest you narrow the focus of your topic so that you can adequately discuss and compare specific research studies on your topic. Many topics in psychological research possess very large bodies of literature; narrowing your focus will be important. Your papers are to be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins and 12 pt. font. As a general guideline your paper should be 6-10 pages.

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## Rubric

	<b>Below Expectations (1)</b>	<b>Emerging (2)</b>	<b>Meets Expectations (3)</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations (4)</b>
Concepts applied appropriately; terminology	Does not use any concepts from the field of Psychology  Most terms used inaccurately or haphazardly; / does not use any terminology from the discipline	Might mention a concept, but is somewhat inaccurate about its application; / may not attempt application at all  A noticeable/ distracting amount of inaccurately used terminology	Demonstrates understanding of concepts; concepts are appropriate to project; may attempt application and get close  Uses most terms appropriately; but may miss a few key terms that could be useful for clearer expression	Demonstrates clear understanding of concepts and can apply to a thesis; chooses the right concept for the thesis  Demonstrates fluency with terminology of the discipline
Synthesis (Integration and use of source information)	Does not integrate information  Communicates information from sources in a fragmented or inappropriate manner (misquoted, out of context) so the intended purpose is not achieved	May attempt to integrate with vague or unrelated information  Communicates and organizes information from sources although not fully synthesized so the intended purpose is not fully achieved	Integrates information from a few sources; May relate some not-relevant sources.  Communicates, organizes and synthesizes information from sources so the intended purpose is achieved	Effectively integrates information from several sources  Communicates, organizes and synthesizes information from sources to fully achieve a specific purpose, with clarity and depth
Using Information Ethically (signal phrases, paraphrasing, quoting, in-text citations)	Lacks awareness of appropriate use strategies (citations, paraphrasing, etc.) for published, confidential and/or proprietary information	Demonstrates some facility with appropriate use strategies (citations, paraphrasing, etc.) for published, confidential and/or proprietary information	Adheres to standards of appropriate use strategies (citations, paraphrasing, etc.) for published, confidential and/or proprietary information	Demonstrates a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/or proprietary information and use the most appropriate use strategies
Evidence-based Conclusions	Does not draw evidence-based conclusions; / Does not include conclusions	Attempts to draw conclusions that are not related to source evidence.	Draws some conclusions from supporting evidence	Effectively draws evidence-based conclusions from sources
APA Citation style	Several errors in APA Citation format	Some errors in APA Citation format	Includes a few citation lapses	Consistent citation format in text and reference list.
APA Format overall	Several (more than 5) errors in APA format	Some (1-5) errors in APA format	Minor format errors; Includes a few citation lapses	Consistent format throughout document.
Grammar and mechanics (sentence structure, syntax, punctuation, clarity)	Errors consistently impede meaning	Some errors that are noticeably distracting	Minor errors that do not impede meaning or clarity	Consistent, correct, clear sentences throughout

## Appendix B – Writing Assessment Results, Fall 2019

**Areas in which student writing is ABOVE standard: 75%+(i.e., at least 75% of students “meet/exceed” the standard)**

**Evidence-based Conclusions:**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2021-2022 N=43	86% = <b>86%</b> / 0 (37/0)	14% = 9% / 5% (4/2)
2019-2020 N=24	71% = 17%/54% (4/13)	29% = 25%/4% (6/1)

**Concepts Applied Appropriately/Terminology:**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2021-2022 N=43	100% = <b>98%</b> / 2% (42/1)	0% = 0% / 0% (0/0)
2019-2020 N=24	71% = 17%/54% (4/13)	29% = 29%/0% (7/0)

**Synthesis:**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2021-2022 N=43	88% = <b>81%</b> / 7% (35/3)	11% = 11% / 0% (5/0)
2019-2020 N=24	63% = 13%/50% (3/12)	37% = 33%/4% (8/1)

**Using Information Ethically:**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2021-2022 N=43	93% = <b>88%</b> / 5% (38/2)	7% = 5% / 2% (2/1)
2019-2020 N=24	46% = 8%/38% (2/9)	55% = <b>42%</b> /13% (10/3)

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**Areas in which student writing is MEETING standard: 68-74% (i.e., between 68% and 74% of students “meet/exceed” the standard)**

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**Areas in which student writing is BELOW standard: (i.e., 67% and below DO NOT “meet/exceed” the standard):**

**APA Citation Style:**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2021-2022 N=43	58% = 16% / <b>42%</b> (7/18)	42% = 23% / 19% = 10/8
2019-2020 N=24	17% = 0%/17% (0/4)	83% = 29%/54% (7/13)

**Overall APA Formatting:**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2021-2022 N=43	23% = 0% / 23% (0/10)	77% = 28% / <b>49%</b> (12/21)
2019-2020 N=24	54% = 4%/50% (1/12)	46% = 42%/4% (10/1)

**Grammar and Mechanics:**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2021-2022 N=43	70% = <b>51%</b> / 19% (22/8)	30% = 21% / 9% (9/4)
2019-2020 N=24	46% = 13%/33% (3/8)	54% = <b>46%</b> /8% (11/2)

**Analysis of Assessment Results and Recommendations from the WAC Director**

**2021-2022**

The psychology department should be commended for their biennial assessment. First, they increased participation by nearly doubling their sample size. Second, student writing improved in *every* criteria.

Student still continue to struggle with surface-level skills, as described below in the prior summary. These structural and formatting skills are necessary for clear communication in psychology, and thus the importance of strengthening students' skills in these areas cannot be devalued.

Thus, my two recommendations are the same as two years ago:

- While certainly all faculty in PSYC have expertise in the *use* of APA format, a faculty member in the psychology department should facilitate professional development for all instructors in the *pedagogy* of APA format (the Writing Center director or WAC director could also assist in this). The faculty should also use the course outcomes map in this document to consider ways, over the next two years, to better scaffold APA skills into their courses so that students begin with an introduction in some classes, and then those skills are reinforced continually (and expectations for mastery are higher) in their other classes.
- Discuss the “rhetorical/structural” divide: this divide refers to evidence that some writers have impressive ideas and strong grasp of course content but struggle with sentence-structure, grammar, mechanics, and formatting, while other writers can compose flawless sentences that are masterfully formatted but demonstrate inaccurate arguments, misunderstandings of material, or simply don’t say much. The PSYC assessment data shows that instructors might benefit from some conversation (among themselves or with the WAC director) that considers how they are teaching students to express their ideas both rhetorically and structurally. Sometimes rhetorical and structural skills require separate teaching activities; sometimes they should be taught simultaneously. The department should discuss how these are taught, in which courses, how they are assessed in individual courses, and the messages that are sent to students about the value of each in the discipline (e.g., when one department instructor takes points off for APA format but another doesn’t, students are confused about how important APA format really is).

### 2019-2020

It appears that seniors in PSYC are struggling in almost all of the criteria developed in the department rubric. Closer examination, however, reveals that students are meeting expectations in two of the more important rhetorical (as opposed to surface-level or structural) concepts defined by the department: drawing evidence-based conclusions and appropriately applying concepts and terminology. So, while students might be struggling with format and at the sentence level, **they are meeting expectations for demonstrating critical thinking about the disciplinary content through writing**. Students are also demonstrating some proficiency in the third rhetorical concept, synthesis, where 63% are meeting or exceeding department standards.

Areas in which student writing is below expectations (up to 67% are not meeting expectations) are, primarily, structural issues – grammar, sentence structure, and APA formatting. In particular, writing is evidencing struggle in APA citation format (83% emerging/below) and ethical use of source information (55% emerging/below), which includes signal phrases, quotations, and paraphrasing (in some cases this could be inaccurate use of APA formatting, sometimes referred to as “unintentional plagiarism”; in others it could be unethical use of source information). As described elsewhere in this document, these structural and formatting skills are necessary for clear communication in

psychology, and thus the importance of strengthening students' skills in these areas cannot be devalued.

The PSYC department is completing a full-scale curriculum revision. Thus, this is an excellent time to consider ways to scaffold writing pedagogy that will help students strengthen the skills and abilities they need as they graduate. Specific recommendations are as follows:

- Add a true holistic score as another criterion on the rubric (not an average of all the criteria scores). A true holistic score (a score based on an overall impression of the full piece of writing) can allow for comparisons to individual criterion and often allows a more reliable picture of students' strengths and struggles. It also allows for department faculty to identify their values more specifically (for instance, when high holistic scores align strongly with certain criteria, it is usually because those criteria signal stronger writing)
- While certainly all faculty in PSYC have expertise in the *use* of APA format, a faculty member in the psychology department should facilitate professional development for all instructors in the *pedagogy* of APA format (the Writing Center director or WAC director could also assist in this). The faculty should also use the course outcomes map in this document to consider ways, over the next two years, to better scaffold APA skills into their courses so that students begin with an introduction in some classes, and then those skills are reinforced continually (and expectations for mastery are higher) in their other classes.
- Discuss the "rhetorical/structural" divide: this divide refers to evidence that some writers have impressive ideas and strong grasp of course content but struggle with sentence-structure, grammar, mechanics, and formatting, while other writers can compose flawless sentences that are masterfully formatted but demonstrate inaccurate arguments, misunderstandings of material, or simply don't say much. The PSYC assessment data shows that instructors might benefit from some conversation (among themselves or with the WAC director) that considers how they are teaching students to express their ideas both rhetorically and structurally. Sometimes rhetorical and structural skills require separate teaching activities; sometimes they should be taught simultaneously. The department should discuss how these are taught, in which courses, how they are assessed in individual courses, and the messages that are sent to students about the value of each in the discipline (e.g., when one department instructor takes points off for APA format but another doesn't, students are confused about how important APA format really is).

