

Psychology Department Writing Plan

To determine which courses within the psychology Department are best suited to be designated as Writing Emphasis Courses, we first discussed the qualities that are valued in written communication within our discipline. We considered the opportunities to build and practice writing skills through experiences and assignments currently used in each of the courses in our department. This document identifies the qualities of writing valued within our discipline, the types of skills associated with those values, and the types of assignments that give students the opportunity to build and refine those skills.

Values

Consistent with the values of our discipline, the psychology department at Coe values the following qualities in written communication:

- Accuracy and precision
- Backing an argument with evidence
- Critical analysis
- Clarity, coherence, and conciseness
- Organization
- Accuracy in APA style and citation

Skill Development

To develop skills associated with the qualities listed above, the following are examples of activities used in our classes to give students practice in improving their writing:

- Translations of numerical information to text
- Creating graphs and tables
- Creating surveys and other measures
- Synthesizing information across sources
- Critiquing poor examples
- Editing another's work
- In-class workshops
- Multiple opportunities to complete the same type of writing assignment
- Feedback and revision

Assignments

The following are examples of the types of texts that students commonly read, critique, and create through assignments in our classes:

- Academic research reports and proposals
- Professional reports and proposals
- Visual presentations (e.g., PowerPoint and research posters)
- Professional documents (e.g., CVs/Resumes, cover letters, memos, e-mails)
- Lab reports
- Case studies
- Critical article analyses
- Abstracts
- Annotated bibliographies
- Op-Eds

Courses

Most of the courses in the department that require student writing use the types of activities listed above under the “skill development” heading to help students build their writing skills. While the types of assignments listed above under the “assignments” heading occur in many of the classes offered by our department, the following four courses offer the experiences appropriate for a Writing Emphasis Course:

- PSY-200 Research Methods
 - Opportunities for skill development in this course include activities and assignments such as translations of numerical information to text, creating graphs and tables, creating surveys and the creation of professional research reports.
- PSY-295 Applied Contemporary Psychology
 - Opportunities for skill development in this course include activities and assignments such as the creation of professional documents and the creation of visual presentations.
- PSY-464 Seminar in Psychology
 - Opportunities for skill development in this course include activities and assignments such as synthesizing information across sources, critical article analyses, creation of academic research reports & proposals, and creation of visual presentations.
- PSY-490L Memory and Cognition Laboratory

- Opportunities for skill development in this course include activities and assignments such as translations of numerical information to text, creating graphs and tables, synthesizing information across sources, lab reports, and academic research reports.