



Integration of Information Literacy & Writing in the Disciplines
An Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant

Application to Create New or Revise Existing Courses

Name of faculty of record for this course: Abigail Kerr

Year of tenure-track appointment 2012 Department Psychology

Name of library faculty partner: Stephanie Davis-Kahl

Grant sought for:

Substantially revised course (provide course number and name):

New Course (provide proposed course name and course level):

Psychology 321: Brain Injury and Recovery (CC action requested 9/4/12)

Please include the course information detailed on the grant proposal announcement with this cover sheet and send as a PDF file to Mary Ann Bushman, mbushman@iwu.edu.

Deadlines:

- April 6, 2012 for Fall 2012 course revisions
 September 15, 2012 for Spring 2013 course revisions
 September 15, 2012 for Spring 2013 new course proposals (requires CC review)

Signature *Abigail Kerr* Date 9/10/12

(Teaching faculty member)

Signature *Stephanie Davis-Kahl* Date 9/10/12

(Library faculty member)

Signature *Joe Williams* Date 9/10/12

(Department Chair)

Mellon Grant: New Course Proposal
Course Title: Psychology 321 Brain Injury and Recovery

Proposal Title: Introduction of Psychology 321 to Emphasize Writing for the Discipline and Information Literacy

Faculty: Abigail Kerr, Department of Psychology, & Stephanie Davis-Kahl, Ames Library

Overview

We, Abigail and Stephanie, propose to work together in the creation of a new writing intensive course that will emphasize the process of writing and research in the sciences, specifically for the discipline of Psychology. “Brain Injury and Recovery” will focus on the mechanisms of behavioral recovery following central nervous system insult. The course is designed for upper-level students who have completed both Behavioral Neuroscience (Psychology 213) and Research Methods in Psychology (Psychology 300; the core research/writing methodology course for the psychology), and will include the *Writing Intensive* flag.

Rationale

In order to promote more significant learning experiences in the classroom, it is our intention to develop “Brain Injury and Recovery” as a Writing Intensive (WI) course with an emphasis on information literacy and a specific focus on research and writing for the sciences. To that end, students will (1) write critical reaction papers to course readings, (2) receive formal instruction focusing on the vocabulary, research techniques and search tools related to neuroscience, (3) review and reflect on research skills and strategies during individual meetings with library faculty, (4) write an APA style literature review of a self-selected topic of interest, (5) workshop their professional writing with both the writing center and the instructor of record, and (6) write self-reflective reaction papers concerning their research and writing processes to be included in a learning portfolio. *This grant will support a collaborative effort between both faculty members to integrate a structured and explicit information literacy component into the curriculum that is specific to the skills required for research and writing in the sciences.*

We believe that psychology is an ideal discipline for a course of this nature. The Psychology department curriculum provides students with exposure to both the social aspects and science aspects of the field, and this course will provide an excellent avenue for building skills and awareness of science-focused writing conventions and research strategies. In addition, the literature of psychology spans a variety of sources from popular news media to scholarly articles. Neuroscience, and particularly the specialty of brain injury and recovery, is no exception. Information concerning brain injury can be found in sources from blogs to pop-culture magazines, consumer health publications and websites, news magazines, and beyond. The pervasiveness of the topic offers students the unique opportunity to evaluate scientific claims and reflect on the impact of psychology across a variety of publication types and settings.

This course will also assist students in moving from a general, novice approach to research and writing to a more specialized approach. In Gateway courses, the hope is that students will learn general research skills to carry with them into future courses as a basis for discipline-specific research and writing skills. Within the Psychology department, the course Research Methods (Psychology 300) provides students with assignments and research instruction that gives them a firm, but still general, foundation in research resources and APA-style writing. The addition of “Brain Injury and Recovery,” with its explicit focus on information literacy and writing for psychology as a science, will introduce students to more nuanced research practices and writing

styles. Students will learn to research, evaluate and write specifically for the more biologically focused sciences, using new databases and engaging with a different type of vocabulary and literature than that with which they are familiar, allowing them to become specialists in their information literacy and writing skills.

While the skills obtained in Psychology 321 will be beneficial for students' success in the course, it is our goal that these efforts will extend beyond this classroom and benefit students across their curriculum as well as beyond Wesleyan's walls. By increasing the psychology students' arsenal beyond PsycINFO and Google-oriented strategies, this course will give students a more well-rounded experience of research and writing in the discipline that may apply to other fields of study, especially those that intersect with behavioral neuroscience. Further, with a broader research and writing repertoire, our students will be better prepared for career experiences in which they must assess and consolidate ideas across a variety of specialties.

Course Plan

Course content will be generated by Abigail as the instructor of record. Class discussions will be based on original journal articles. In addition, each student will present and lead the class discussion on a chapter from the text, "Cerebral Reorganization of Function After Brain Damage." Students will select the topics for their literature review from the chapter they present to the class, and all relevant library assignments will be specifically tailored to each student's topic. As mentioned previously, the major learning activities that are relevant to the current proposal are: (1) library instruction and individual conferencing with Stephanie, (2) self-reflective reaction papers to assigned information literacy projects (including library instruction, conferences with both faculty members, and the research/writing process), (3) the maintenance of a learning portfolio, (4) critical summaries of assigned journal articles, and (5) a critical review of the literature.

The primary focus of our collaboration will be to find and implement ways to explicitly incorporate information literacy goals into the course from the beginning of its development. We will use previously established information literacy outcomes for the field of psychology (developed by Stephanie and Linda Kunce) in our efforts, and we will share assignments, learning outcomes and assessment results with our departments. Specific assignments and the information literacy goals (both of the Psychology department and the institution) they address are summarized below.

Assessment

We will assess the efficacy of our efforts to meaningfully integrate information literacy skills and writing for the discipline into the course curriculum through several exercises. First, we will conduct pretests to assess student information literacy prior to our efforts. We will also use the content of student reaction papers and the learning portfolio to determine the value and impact of various activities, including library instruction, individual conferences with Stephanie and Abigail, and use of the writing center. Finally, we will conduct a posttest and include questions on student evaluations completed at the end of the semester that directly assess our efforts. Samples of the questions students will be asked on evaluations include: (1) How did this course impact your information literacy skills? Explain; (2) Did you find the library instruction in this course to be helpful? Explain; and (3) Did you find the various opportunities you were given for individual conferencing to be helpful to your research/writing process? Explain. The results of these assessments will be compiled and reviewed by both faculty members. Summaries of these findings will be shared with our respective departments and the general faculty as appropriate.

Summary of Course Activities and How They Meet Information Literacy Standards

Course Activity	Student Learning Outcome related to Information Literacy and Scholarly Writing in Psychology	IWU Information literacy Outcome for Writing Intensive Courses
<p>Students will write critical reviews of assigned literature intended to represent a wide body of literature on brain injury and recovery of function, including sources from pop culture media. As part of their reviews, students will be asked to evaluate the evidence underlying claims made within these sources.</p>	<p><i>Outcome 1:</i> The student understands the traditional flow of scholarly communication and the variety of resulting sources <i>Outcome 5:</i> The student critically incorporates selected information into the scholarly written work to develop a body of evidence</p>	<p><i>Outcome 3:</i> Students demonstrate critical thinking and sound reasoning in their writing through the integration of credible, authoritative sources</p>
<p>Students will participate in a library workshop. The library faculty will provide search strategies and tools specific to the course. Students will write a 2-3 page reaction paper regarding the experience.</p>	<p><i>Outcome 2:</i> The student understands strengths and limitations of sources for assessing information</p>	<p><i>Outcome 2:</i> Students locate, evaluate and synthesize diverse information resources in order to develop a body of evidence that supports the project's purpose</p>
<p>Students will select and refine a topic for their literature review through an initial search through the sources. Students will write a short reaction paper in which they will be asked to demonstrate familiarity with the vocabulary, research tools, and library services available.</p>	<p><i>Outcome 2:</i> The student understands strengths and limitations of sources for assessing information <i>Outcome 3:</i> The student demonstrates competence at each stage of the information gathering process</p>	<p><i>Outcome 1:</i> Students value research as a discovery process that requires both creativity and persistence</p>
<p>Students will conference with both faculty members individually regarding the progress of their research as well as their writing.</p>	<p><i>Outcome 2:</i> The student understands strengths and limitations of sources for accessing information <i>Outcome 3:</i> The student demonstrates competence at each stage of the information gathering process</p>	<p><i>Outcome 2:</i> Students locate, evaluate and synthesize diverse information resources in order to develop a body of evidence that supports the project's purpose</p>

Course Activity	Student Learning Outcome related to Information Literacy and Scholarly Writing in Psychology	IWU Information literacy Outcome for Writing Intensive Courses
<p>Students will collect a specified number of resources of various types (e.g., empirical articles, web resources, literature review) using a range of search strategies and resources (e.g., MEDLINE, Science Citation Index, Google/Google Scholar). Students will develop an annotated bibliography based on source collection and will write a reflective reaction paper about the variety of sources and strategies for inclusion in their learning portfolio.</p>	<p><i>Outcome 1:</i> The student understands the traditional flow of scholarly communication and the variety of resulting sources</p>	<p><i>Outcome 1:</i> Students value research as a discovery process that requires both creativity and persistence</p> <p><i>Outcome 2:</i> Students locate, evaluate and synthesize diverse information resources in order to develop a body of evidence that supports the project's purpose.</p> <p><i>Outcome 4:</i> Students utilize systems of documentation and acknowledgement in order to use information in an appropriate legal and ethical manner</p>
<p>Students will compose a critical review of the literature on their selected topic using APA format. There will be multiple opportunities for drafts and revision. The review will require students to obtain, process, and integrate a variety of primary source materials into a concise and coherent document.</p>	<p><i>Outcome 4:</i> The student demonstrates competence at each stage of the writing process.</p> <p><i>Outcome 5:</i> The student critically incorporates selected information into the scholarly written work to develop a body of evidence.</p> <p><i>Outcome 6:</i> The student follows APA style and other conventions for scholarly writing in psychology</p>	<p><i>Outcome 3:</i> Students demonstrate critical thinking and sound reasoning in their writing through the integration of credible, authoritative sources</p> <p><i>Outcome 4:</i> Students utilize systems of documentation and acknowledgement in order to use information in an appropriate legal and ethical manner</p>
<p>Students will participate in at least one editing session at the writing center to get independent feedback on their writing process.</p>	<p><i>Outcome 4:</i> The student demonstrates competence at each stage of the writing process</p>	<p><i>Outcome 4:</i> Students utilize systems of documentation and acknowledgement in order to use information in an appropriate legal and ethical manner</p>

Course Activity	Student Learning Outcome related to Information Literacy and Scholarly Writing in Psychology	IWU Information literacy Outcome for Writing Intensive Courses
<p>Students will compile a learning portfolio whereby they document their research and writing process through self-reflective essays and assignments throughout semester. The primary component of the learning portfolio will be a 3-4 page essay in which the students summarize the process of researching and writing the literature review as a whole and address the value of that process toward the general course goals.</p>	<p><i>Outcome 4:</i> The student demonstrates competence at each stage of the writing process</p> <p><i>Outcome 7:</i> The student employs effective general writing conventions</p>	<p><i>Outcome 3:</i> Students demonstrate critical thinking and sound reasoning in their writing through the integration of credible, authoritative sources</p>
<p>Students will give brief (10-15 minute) presentations on their literature reviews to the class. This will require students to practice the skill of communicating the results of their research to their peer community.</p>	<p><i>Outcome 3:</i> The student demonstrates competence at each stage of the information gathering process</p>	<p><i>Outcome 2:</i> Students locate, evaluate and synthesize diverse information resources in order to develop a body of evidence that supports the project's purpose</p>