HuWi English 1:
Reading Empirical Research Articles in Psychology and Education

Course Description:

The course will teach students reading strategies to understand and use Psychology and Education research articles in English in their studies. The course will help students efficiently identify articles that are relevant to their purpose, they will learn various ways to approach the article overall and they will learn how to use various reading strategies, working with each section of a journal article in turn, to understand and extract the information that they need. This will be done by, at first, demonstrations and controlled practice with teacher selected research articles from renowned journals in the fields of Psychology and Education before leading to group and individual practice with student selected articles.

Course Overview:

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Assessment:

Presentation/Discussion (40%): Students will present to the class a summary and critical analysis of an assigned Journal Article. Students will be expected to demonstrate their ability to use the reading strategies learnt in the course in order to facilitate their understanding of the article.

Assignment (20%): Students will produce a summarizing research poster from a selected research article. Students are expected to be able to understand the article and select the most important information from the article in order to give a concise summary of its background, aims method, results and findings.

Exam: (40%): Students will answer questions about research article extracts to demonstrate their comprehension of the texts.
Week 1 – Finding the right article – Titles and Abstracts

Content / Skills:
- Introduction to course - overview/concept
- Finding the right article
- Predicting article content from titles
- Matching titles to abstracts
- Other issues - who are the authors/institution, what is the journal (specialist/general/peer reviewed etc.)

Articles used:
The placebo is powerful: Estimating placebo effects in medicine and psychotherapy from randomized clinical trials
“Maybe I Made Up the Whole Thing”: Placebos and Patients’ Experiences in a Randomized Controlled Trial
Formulaic sequences and perceived oral proficiency: putting a Lexical Approach to the test
Exploring measures and perceptions of fluency in the speech of second language learners.
Cognitive therapy versus exposure and applied relaxation in social phobia: A randomized controlled trial.
In a Nervous Voice: Acoustic Analysis and Perception of Anxiety in Social Phobics’ Speech

Week 2 – How to approach a paper

Content/Skills:
- The sections of an empirical paper
- Matching section headings to descriptions of sections
- Putting sections in order (IMRAD – Introduction, Method, Results and Discussion)
- Brief outline of what to expect in each section
- Class discusses the best order to look at each section depending on purpose of reading the paper i.e. background reading or analyzing research

Video:
How to read academic research

Week 3 – Why is this important? - Introductions

Content/Skills:
- This class focusses on the introduction and the important questions this section of the article should answer: What questions does the paper address?; Why is this important?; What important/relevant work has been done on this before?; What gap in knowledge does this research fill?
- Work in pairs or small groups students practice skills of predicting, skimming and note taking on different introductions in order to find the papers answers to the above questions. Groups then report back to the class with their answers.
- Feedback collected from students on progression of course
Articles:
*Why Are Manhole Covers Round? A Laboratory Study of Reactions to Puzzle Interviews*
*The Color of Odors*
*Neuroimaging self-esteem: a fMRI study of individual differences in women*

**Week 4 – What have other people said? – Literature Reviews**

**Content/Skills:**
- Students practice skimming the Literature review and then list the previous research mentioned.
- Students take notes on the findings for each cited study under the following headings: Findings; Conclusions; Limitations.
- Students then paraphrase the mentioned research based on their notes.
- Students will be encouraged to find the titles of the research in the bibliography and then search for the abstracts online in order to check the paper has been reported accurately.

Articles:
*Exploring measures and perceptions of fluency in the speech of second language learners*

**Week 5 – How was it done? - Methods**

**Content/Skills:**
- In this lesson students are encouraged to take an objective, critical look at the methodology section. This is done by having the students consider only the Method section to consider if the method used is the best way to answer the research questions
- Students scan the method section to identify: variables (dependent and independent); subjects (number of groups); intervention; control group; statistical techniques used; methods used to eliminate other variables
- Students question the method asking: does this method answer the research questions; could any other method have been used; are there any limitations to the method; were there any possible confounding variables?

Articles:
*Blinking During and After Lying*
*Beer Goggles: Blood Alcohol Concentration in Relation to Attractiveness Ratings for Unfamiliar Opposite Sex Faces in Naturalistic Settings*

**Week 6 – What did they find? - Results**

**Content/Skills:**
- This lesson focusses on how Results sections are presented in academic papers
- Class discusses how graphs and tables help the understanding of the results
- Activity: Students are given a results section (using the same articles from the previous week) without any tables and must create tables and graphs to show their understanding of the results
- Students prepare a summary of the results and evaluate the quality of the evidence produced in the study
Articles:
*Blinking During and After Lying*
*Beer Goggles: Blood Alcohol Concentration in Relation to Attractiveness Ratings for Unfamiliar Opposite Sex Faces in Naturalistic Settings*

**Week 7 – What does it mean? - Discussions**

Content/Skills:
- Students scan and take notes on the conclusion section of an assigned journal article to answer the following questions: What are the main conclusions of the paper?; What evidence supports those conclusions?; Do the data actually support the conclusions?; What is the quality of the evidence?; Did the authors do what they set out to do?; Are the methods they used sound?; Are their arguments fluid and logical?; What assumptions did they make?; What are the broader implications of the findings?.

Articles:
*Complete anonymity compromises the accuracy of self-reports*

**Week 8 – What does it mean? 2 - Discussions**

Content/Skills:
- Students work on a paper of their choosing to answer the questions from week 7

Articles:
Student selected material

**Week 9 – In a nutshell - Conclusions**

Content/Skills:
- Students work with a conclusion, matching summarized ideas in the conclusion to the parts in the body of the text from which these ideas came.
- Students take this list of ideas to produce a mind map of the paper as a whole.

Articles:
Student selected material

**Week 10 – In a nutshell 2 - Conclusions**

Content/Skills:
- Students (pairs or small groups) work with a conclusion (together with other parts of the paper) to prepare a Research Poster for the paper. This work is to be completed for the assignment assessment item.

Articles:
Student selected material

**Week 11 – Putting it all together**

- Teacher will lead students through an example analysis of a journal article demonstrating and reinforcing reading strategies learnt throughout the course and preparing students for the presentation/discussion assessment item
Weeks 12 – 14 - Student Analyses

- Students select journal articles from their areas of study and present them to the class. These presentations count as part of the assessment of the course. Question and Answer sessions will follow each presentation.

Week 15 – Summary of course

- The content of the course is reviewed
- Feedback on the presentations is given
- Feedback from the students on the course itself is collected