

PSYC 301 LAB, WEEK 8 AND 9

RESEARCH PROPOSAL:

Introduction

Learning Goals

1. Introduction: What is it? and How to do it?
2. Format & APA-style in-text citations
3. Keys to successful introduction

Part 1. Introduction: What is it? and How to do it?

Introductions are challenging

- You have a research question (RQ) or hypothesis, and you're trying to craft a story that *leads the reader* to your RQ or hypothesis
- Like any good story, you need a convincing narrative as to why your study matters. You are *making an argument* for your study.
- There are multiple stories that you could tell, and you have to ***pick one and craft it***

Introduction accomplishes these 4 specific goals

- I. Define or Identify the general topic, issue, or area of concern.
- II. Review the literature
- III. Summarize
- IV. State your hypothesis

Start broad and
narrow it down to your
specific research
question



I. Define or Identify the general topic, issue, or area of concern

- Make the case why the topic matters using social, cultural, demographic, epidemiological data
- Discuss scientific consensus around the topic & any conflicts:
 - Theory – do researchers differ in how they define it?
 - Methodology – do researchers differ in how they study it?
 - Evidence – do researchers differ in what they find?
 - Conclusions – do researchers differ in what they conclude from the data?

Suggestions for your first paragraph

- The task of your opening paragraph is **to appeal to readers and to animate** them to read on.
 - Ask a *rhetorical question* that inspires readers to consider what they think about a certain issue.
 - Mention an *everyday experience* that readers can relate to and that makes the relevance of your topic apparent.
 - Use an *analogy* or *metaphor* to address general principles.
 - Mention an *interesting fact* that captures the interest of the reader.
 - Give some *historical facts* to place the problem in context.
 - Point out the *lack of previous research* to highlight the importance of your work.

Example: First paragraph (big picture)

With the advent of technological advances, music is more ubiquitous now than at any point in history (e.g., Schwartz & Fouts, 2003). In 2013, it was reported that 58% of American adults owned a smartphone and that 48% of cell phone users regularly used their cell phone to listen to music (Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Spring Tracking Survey, 2013). Indeed, the average American citizen listens to more than five hours of music (both intentional or otherwise) per day (e.g., Levitin, 2006; McCormick, 2009) and spends more money on music than they do on prescription drugs (Huron, 2001). Not surprisingly, psychologists have investigated a number of questions regarding music's effects on health and cognitive functioning.

Example: First paragraph (big picture)

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, anxiety disorders are among the most prevalent mental disorders in America. More specifically, 18.1% of the adult population suffers from some anxiety disorder over a 12-month period of time, with the average age of onset being 11 years old. Additionally, 22.8% of Americans will suffer from an anxiety disorder at some point in their lives (“Any Anxiety Disorder Among Adults,” n.d.). Though the psychological community has come far in terms of treatment strategies, a large percent of the population does not demonstrate significant symptom reduction when treated with current protocols (Riskind, Rector, & Taylor, 2012). Such facts beckon additional methods of treating anxiety, which can only be derived from strenuously tested psychological models. Not only that, but it is important for the psychological community to gather as much knowledge about how factors like anxiety impact our cognitive functioning so that we may reach a more well-rounded understanding of human cognition at large

Example: Introducing a theory or construct

- Frost et al. (1990) also developed a multi-dimensional model of perfectionism, which addresses not only the different types of perfectionism, but also the origins. These include: excessive concern over making mistakes, high personal standards, high parental expectations, high parental criticism, doubts about actions, and preference for order and organization. Both Hewitt & Flett (1991a) and Frost et al. (1990) have developed assessment measures to examine their models. Across the various types of maladaptive perfectionism, research suggests that excessive concern over mistakes, high parental expectations, high parental criticism, and doubting about actions, have a particularly strong relationship with depression (Beiling, Israeli, & Antony, 2004).
- Students are also being punished for less serious offenses as part of the zero-tolerance movement. Zero-tolerance was a movement that began in the Reagan era in an attempt to stop drug issues in schools (Skiba, 2000). Unfortunately, zero-tolerance means students are suspended for minor incidents without giving them the resources they may need to correct their behavior (Gregory et al., 2010). Another idea that affected “in-school policing” is the Broken Windows Theory. The Broken Windows theory hypothesizes smaller actions of discord in a neighborhood cause citizens to believe they are at higher risk for more serious crimes (Ren, Zhao, & He, 2019). This theory is translated into the school system similarly to the zero-tolerance policies.

II. Review the literature

- Start broad, end narrow
- Group similar types of studies based on:
 - topic – what they studied
 - type – how they studied it
 - findings – what they found
- Provide **umbrella or topic sentences** at the beginning of the paragraph or sections
 - don't lead with “These researchers did this thing in this year”)

II. Review the literature

- Only review an individual article in detail if it is very relevant to your current study
 - every article doesn't need its own paragraph
- Otherwise, do not review each article in detail; pull out important elements:
 - Tell how these studies are all alike, why are you grouping them together?
- Provide “so what?” summary sentences throughout. *These studies suggest that X,Y,Z. The evidence underscores... Taken together, ...*

II. Review the literature

- At least 10 citations are required
- Do NOT use media articles, dissertations, theses or unpublished works
- Focus on empirical peer-reviewed journal articles
- Literature review articles and meta-analyses *may* be ok for background/laying the groundwork about a topic

Example: detailed review of relevant study with a “so what?” sentence

In Riskind, Williams, Gessner, Chrosniak, and Cortina's study (2000), the LMS was investigated as a danger schema which was hypothesized to alter the perception of threats. The *Looming Maladaptive Style Questionnaire (LMSQ)*, a scale that Riskind developed to quantify one's LMS, was utilized by the group to examine LMS as a danger schema through the use of explicit and implicit memory tasks. In the explicit memory task, participants were asked to participate in free recall of stimuli that were positive, threatening, or neutral. In the implicit memory task, participants were given a word stem completion task, where the participants completed the stems more often with threatening words. As hypothesized, high scores on the *LMSQ* predicted greater word completion and recall of threatening stimuli, corresponding to effects in implicit and explicit memory processing. Such evidence supports the idea that the LMS construct taps into anxiety-related elements of threat schema processing. The conclusions that 1) LMS and explicit memory are linked and that 2) the LMS functions as a danger schema for threatening stimuli will both be vital assumptions for our current effort .

Example: High-level review of similar research with varied findings

Current findings suggest that listening to music that one likes yields reliable improvements to both health (e.g., Cassileth, Vickers, & Magill, 2003; Siedlecki & Good, 2006) and cognitive functioning (e.g., Rickard, Toukhsati, & Field, 2005), with the latter explained by an increase in one's arousal and mood (e.g., Chabris et al., 1999; Nantais & Schellenberg, 1999; Schellenberg, 2005; Schellenberg & Hallam, 2005). However, it is important to note that the studies that have explained these cognitive benefits in terms of the arousal and mood hypothesis required participants to listen to music *prior* to performing the task (e.g., Hallam, Price, & Katsarou, 2002; Rauscher, Shaw, & Ky, 1993; Sarkamo et al., 2008; Thompson, Schellenberg, & Husain, 2001; Wallace, 1994), which may contrast with most people's experience. That is, most people listen to music at the same time as, rather than prior to, performing a task (e.g., listening to music while doing homework).

Example: What NOT to do

- In 1976, researchers, Dr. Adam Smith and Dr. Wanda Green at Harvard University in Boston published a paper in the Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition with 20 patients at the Boston Veteran's administration who had amnesia.
- What is wrong with this?
 - Too many details to waste space in an article.
- How can we fix this and be brief but thorough giving enough information?
 - Smith and Green (1976) investigated implicit and explicit memory performance in amnesia patients using a free recall task and a semantic priming task. Results showed..... These findings suggest.....
- We want to be thorough enough to give the reader clear information about the study but not all the unnecessary details.

III. Summarize

- Summarize the major contributions of the articles you have reviewed (typical ranges = 2 sentences – 2 paragraphs)
- Point out gaps, or inconsistencies and/or limitations in the previous research.
- Explain how your study is **the next logical step**
 - **how will your study fill a gap, help clarify inconsistencies?**

Example: summarizing research

Literature on the Looming Vulnerability Model (LVM) of anxiety has thus far been directed at establishing the credibility of the model by examining the ways in which those high in Looming Maladaptive Style (LMS) differ from those low in LMS with reference to various cognitive phenomena. These include auditory perception, illusory correlation, and explicit memory functioning. False memory research has been largely anchored in lexical stimuli, though some work has been done to offer supporting evidence for the validity of false memory in pictorial stimuli. Though literature on the LVM and false memory is generally well-established, the two concepts have never been integrated. The present experiment will aim to remedy this by using background theory regarding the LVM to predict false memory for individuals differing in levels of LMS. By doing so, this study will add to our understanding of anxiety as well as human memory processing.

IV. State research questions or hypothesis(es)

- Often first discuss research questions (general interrogative statements)
- This section logically follows from and builds on reasons for your study
- Related to gaps or inconsistencies or expansions of the area of research
- Briefly describe how you will conduct your study.
- State your hypothesis (your directional predictions, based on theory)

Example

Thus, the current study has two primary goals. The first goal is to examine the association between individual differences in fear of fat and weight stigmatizing attitudes. The second goal is to examine the impact of race as a moderator of this relationship. Our hypotheses are as follows. First, we hypothesize that there is a positive relationship between fear of fat and weight stigmatizing attitudes; as scores on the Goldfarb Fear of Fat scale increase, scores on the Anti-fat Attitudes Scale and the Attitudes Towards Obese Persons scale will also increase. Second, we hypothesize that African American participants will score the lowest out of any of the participants on both fear of fat measure and measures of weight stigmatizing attitudes. We also hypothesize that Caucasian participants will exhibit the highest scores on these measures. As the data on weight stigma and fear of fat in other ethnic groups in the U. S. is inconsistent, we do not make specific hypotheses about these groups. Finally, we hypothesize that the relationship between fear of fat and weight stigma will be moderated by Caucasian ethnicity, such that participants who identify as Caucasian will have the strongest relationship between fear of fat and weight stigma.

Part 2. Format & APA style in-text citations

Format

- 12 point font
- Times New Roman
- Double spaced
- 1-inch margins
- Include separate References page with all citations in alphabetical order

You MUST cite your sources!

- Include an in-text citation when you refer to, summarize, paraphrase, or quote from another source.
- For every in-text citation in your paper, there must be a corresponding entry in your reference list.
- <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/citations/basic-principles/author-date>

In text citations

As part of a sentence:

Chen, Foo, and Goodwin (2012) define climate of authenticity as “the perceived acceptance of, and respect for, unit members’ expressing felt emotions when interacting with coworkers” (p. 3).

- Note: if it’s a direct quote, include the page number

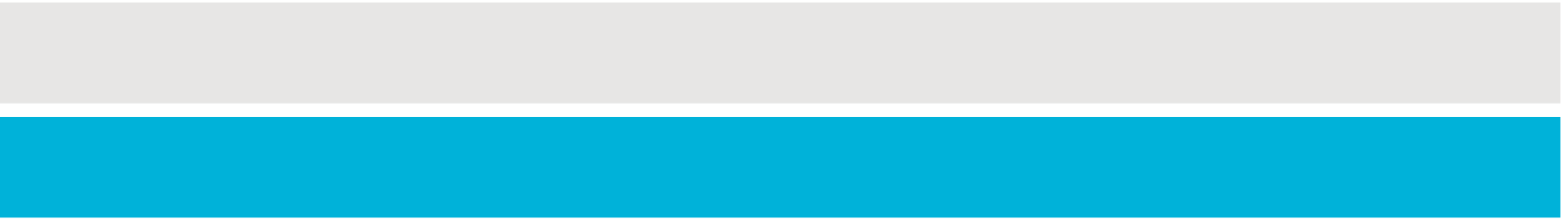
In text citations

If multiple sources, separate with semi-colon

A few researchers in the linguistics field have developed training programs designed to improve native speakers' ability to understand accented speech (Derwing et al., 2002; Thomas, 2004).

If more than five authors, use “first author’s last name, et al., Year” rather than listing out all authors

APA citations are fun (Gonzalez et al., 2012).

The slide concludes with two solid horizontal bars at the bottom: a light gray bar on top and a bright blue bar on the bottom.

Part 3. Keys to successful introduction.

Key to Successful Introduction

- FIRST PARAGRAPH
 - Don't start with a throw-away statements (e.g. Emotions are important)
 - Use ideas: rhetorical questions, statistics, broad applicability
 - **Rope reader in
- LOGICAL STRUCTURE
 - Use a topic sentence (we should be able to read the first sentence of each paragraph and get the gist)
 - Don't start your paragraphs with authors
 - Use transitions before switching to a new topic

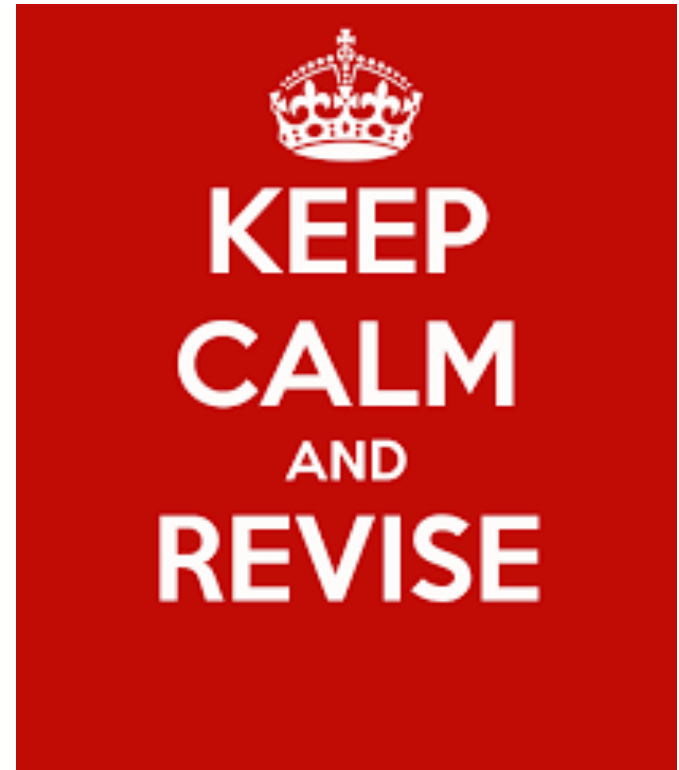
Key to Successful Introduction

- **WRITING STYLE**

- Minimal first person
- Formal language
- Define terms (don't assume reader knows what you're talking about)
- Should be readable to anyone, not just experts
- No run-ons

- **REVISE**

- Write a summary of each paragraph to check logical flow
- Grammar, sentence structure, logic



Key to Successful Introduction

- Revise again.
- Give it to someone else to read and comment
- Then...
Revise/edit once more.



Additional Resources

- Morling text
 - Sample paper, pages 525-539
- Sample paper from this class
- Sample
- Research Project Resources Folder on Blackboard
 - Writing tutorials
 - Video on Introduction
 - Links to outside resources on writing introductions