

Psychology & Health

Assignment Guidance: Essay

REMINDER: YOUR INPUT V OURS

LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

Allocation of teaching to deliver the module are:

Activity type	Hours	Percentage
Scheduled learning	20	10%
Independent learning	180	90%
Placement learning		
TOTAL	200	100%

ASSESSMENT

Essay: Using Leventhal's Common Sense Model of Self-Regulation, critically evaluate the extent to which beliefs about illness influence people's responses to illness.

Word count (or equivalent): 2,500 (+/- 10%)

Submission deadline: Tuesday 25th February 2020

Approaches to Essay

- To what extent does the SRM explain our cognitive, emotional and behavioural response to illness or the threat of illness?
- Using a range of empirical evidence, critically analyse the extent to which the SRM has contributed to:
 - Understanding/explaining a range of health behaviours in response to illness
 - Actually improving how people respond and cope with illness/threat of illness i.e., do interventions based on this model actually make a difference?
- Draw your critical essay together with a clear conclusion in relation to the current position of SRM re: how useful it is in relation to understanding people's emotional and coping responses to illness

Reminder: Module Learning Outcomes:

- 1. Critically reflect on the importance of theory-based research in health psychology.**
2. Identify a scientifically and ethically rigorous research proposal in the area of intervention development and evaluation.
- 3. Critique the significance of a range of theoretical and methodological issues associated with research and evaluation in health psychology.**
- 4. Present their work appropriately, within ethical and research frameworks, and with an understanding of requirements of critical thinking.**

Essay Guidance

- Clear understanding of evidence base re: SRM– empirical evidence!!not anecdote!
- Significant engagement with empirical articles and recent debate articles in relation to the role/value of SRM in understanding health behaviours
- Must include discussion of extent to which SRM can explain or predict individual differences in the response to illness or health threats

Essay Guidance

- Awareness of alternative models/theories – do these do a better job of explaining how people respond to illness/threat of illness
- Critical balanced discussion of the evidence for and against, supported by further reading/empirical references – awareness of key voices
- Synthesis of existing evidence base
- Balanced conclusion re: value of SRM

Writing a good essay at Masters level

1. evidence of adequate and appropriate background reading
2. a clear statement of aims and relevant selection of content
3. sensible planning and organization
4. evidence of systematic thought and argument
5. clarity of expression
6. careful presentation (e.g. accurate typing and proof-reading)
7. observation of conventions of academic discourse, including referencing
8. observation of length requirements

Importance of a good introduction

General Orientation

- General statements (especially on the importance of the topic)
- Background information
- Reference to recent developments / previous work (specialist literature)

Specific focus of your paper

Presenting a balanced academic argument

- In academic writing you are expected to present an 'even-handed' argument.
- Making a strong logical case to persuade your reader to accept your point is really only half the picture.
- Effective argumentation also involves
 - (1) anticipating possible objections to your reasons or evidence
 - (2) showing that you have considered those objections,
 - (3) using counter-arguments - the process known as refutation.

Hints and Tips: presenting academic arguments

Argument To show reasons:

Because (of) / as / since /

Given (the fact) that...

In the light of (the fact) that...

As is shown / implied / suggested by...

Due to / owing to

To show consequences and conclusions

If... then...

Therefore / so / consequently

As a result / consequence

Hence / Thus

For this (these) reason(s), we can say that...

This leads / points to This suggests

From this we can see / conclude / deduce that...

It can be assumed / inferred / argued that...

Hints and Tips: presenting academic arguments

Anticipating counter-arguments

- Opponents/Critics of this position (may, might, etc.) argue that...
- Another argument against X is ...
- It may be objected that..
- One possible objection is that...
- Several questions come to mind: ...
- One might ask/wonder whether...
- Certain objections must, of course, be considered: ...
- Smythson (1995) has recently argued against...on the ground(s) that...
- It is true that...

Refuting them

But.. On the other hand... However,... Nevertheless... This is merely... While this may be true in cases where..., it does not apply to... .. and to strengthen a refutation you can use 'surely': While this is valid for part-time staff, it surely does not apply in the case of full-time workers

Importance of a good conclusion

Conclusion – has two requirements:

- i. summarise your argument. This is your opportunity to draw together the threads of your argument and tell the reader what conclusions they should take away from your treatment of the literature. Don't simply tell us that you looked at x, y and z topics. Never introduce new substantive material in a conclusion.
- ii. reflect on the implications of your case, returning explicitly to the aims of your paper and the reasons for your interest in the theme. At this stage you are allowed to 'take off the blinkers' and comment on related but wider themes – be they practical or theoretical. Where appropriate you may finish a paper by pointing to areas which, on the basis of your paper, warrant future research.

General Tips

- Read the assignment proforma and the assessment criteria on Moodle – KNOW HOW YOU ARE GOING TO BE MARKED!
- Use Psychological sources – APA, BPS journals etc.,
- Follow APA referencing handbook – do not lose unnecessary marks
- Submit your draft in turnitin draft portal in good time to revise before final submission