How to Find, Read, Summarize, and Evaluate a PsycINFO Article

This resource will describe the steps for finding a peer reviewed, scholarly article in PsycINFO, reading it, summarizing it, and then evaluating it.

1. Finding an article

First, you need to locate one peer reviewed, scholarly article from PsycINFO. Click here, or type http://slulibrary.saintleo.edu/PSY161biblio?p=2487676 into your browser, and then scroll down to the "How to Use PsychINFO" section at the bottom of the webpage to locate instructions on how to find these resources.

2. Reading the article

Once you have the article downloaded, consider incorporating the SQ3R method to help you read the article. You can also check out pages 97-99 in your Kuther textbook for more tips on reading an article.

    **Survey:** When you survey the article, you are glancing over the abstract and the topic headings to get a sense of what the article is about. The survey highlights main ideas and helps you understand why the author wrote the paper.

    **Question:** This step is more in-depth because now you need to consciously think about the headings. As you read through the headings, ask questions. For example if the heading states: "Gender Differences in Depression," you might ask, "Do females report depression more than males?" Or "Who seeks treatment more often?"

    **Read:** This refers to reading the article while trying to answer the questions you posed in the question step.

    **Recite:** This refers to trying to recite (or record) these answers without looking at the article.

    **Review:** This refers to reviewing your notes and applying what you have learned in class to what you read in the article.

3. Summarizing the article

As you write your summary, keep in mind that some psychology articles may include terminology that is unfamiliar or statistics that might be difficult to interpret. You will learn about interpreting statistics in future courses. However, it is important to be familiar with the sections of the paper so that you can summarize the key points because your summary should touch on key points from these four sections:

    **Introduction:** This section describes past research and the researcher's hypothesis.

    **Method:** This section includes three parts: participants, materials, and procedure. This section will tell you how many participants there were as well as demographic
information. This section also tells you have any surveys that were included and the
details of how the study was carried out.

**Results**: This section describes the statistics used to test the hypothesis. Don’t get too
worried about this section yet, but look for familiar terms. Reviewing graphs and tables
can be helpful too.

**Discussion**: This section tells the reader what researcher found, how it relates to past
research, any limitations of the study, and also offers ideas for future studies.

4. **Evaluating the article**

Once you have written the summary, it’s time to put on your critical thinking hat and evaluate the
article that you chose. The evaluation should include a discussion of both the strengths and
weaknesses of the study. For example, when identifying strengths, ask yourself these
questions:

- What did the researchers do well?
- Did they follow ethical guidelines?
- Did they cite several examples of past research to explain why they selected their
  hypothesis?
- Did they discuss limitations of their study as well as directions for future research?

When identifying weaknesses, ask yourself these questions:

- What could have the researchers done differently?
- Did they have a large enough sample size?
- Did they use appropriate measures to test their hypothesis?

These questions will get you started, but feel free to consider other examples of strengths and
weaknesses when evaluating the article.

5. **Conclusion**

You need to end your paper with a conclusion paragraph. This paragraph should connect the
summary to your evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses. This paragraph is also a great
opportunity for you to provide an idea for a future study that could be done on this topic.

Now you are ready to write your critical article summary. Be sure to contact your instructor if you
have any questions.