

information. Although an abundance of information is available, no common themes or overarching suggestions arise in the literature. Thus, the first aim of this article was to review the literature on teaching psychological writing as well as provide examples of psychology-specific writing assignments. We note how one teaches writing differs if the goal is for students write like a psychologist or advance their understanding of course material through writing. In this article, we consider aspects related to the first goal that students may struggle with.

Our second aim was to measure actual practices for teaching psychological writing in light of the suggestions in the literature. Despite the information available on how to teach writing, little is known about whether psychology instructors use these practices. Previous research has examined writing practices of primary school teachers (Cutler & Graham, 2008), college writing practices in general (Melzer, 2014), and faculty attitudes about writing in other majors (Masse & Popovich, 1998; Zhu, 2004), but no study has focused on undergraduate psychology instructors. To address this gap, we administered an online survey to a national sample of psychology instructors on teaching psychological writing. Our questions were based on the best practices that our literature review uncovered. The review of best practices and survey results together highlight areas where instructors excel and can improve in teaching psychological writing.

How to Teach Psychological Writing

One of the main qualities that distinguish psychological writing

with concrete examples of in-text citations, subheadings, scientific language, and other writing conventions. In order for students to benefit, instructors should preselect papers to ensure that they follow the current manual. However, it should be noted that previous research has not empirically examined (in the context of psychology courses) whether more reading leads to improved writing.

Soysa, Dunn, Dottolo, Burns-Glover, and Gurung (2013) suggested that when incorporating the above writing practices instructors should do so developmentally. Instead of using a one-size-fits-all approach for each course, instructors should have different goals for the different levels of courses and match their writing instruction to the course level. Specifically, instructors could give less writing instruction to students in introductory psychology and more writing instruction to students in later courses like physiological psychology. For instance, students may be first introduced to paraphrasing in introductory psychology and then be given extensive practice with paraphrasing in research methods. Similarly, students in later courses may be given more information on how to read psychological works than students in an introductory course. It is expected that this approach would enable students to build upon skills learned in earlier courses. However, Soysa et al. noted that although progressively increasing the complexity of writing instruction across courses makes intuitive sense, the benefits of this have not been empirically established.

Types of Psychology Writing Assignments

Once an instructor determines how to teach psychological writing and what should be emphasized, the next step is to create writing assignments. Instructors can create assignments that help students learn to write by practicing the skills discussed in the previous section. Instructors should take many factors into consideration when creating effective writing assignments. For one, instructors should communicate the requirements and central goal of an assignment in both written and verbal instructions to students (Goddard, 2003). Additionally, writing a paper in stages can lessen the perception of the amount of work involved (Goddard, 2003; Limke et al., 2011). Assignments can also be modified for use in class (instead of out of class), which has been shown to improve writing skill, retention, and comprehension (Drabick et al., 2007; Madinger & Brosamer,

psychological theory, and compared their findings to theoretical predictions. The fourth type of application assignment is a structured self-reflection in which students compare whether phenomenon discussed in textbooks matches their experiences. Depending on the goals of the ass

Eighty-five percent of the sample reported that their highest degree obtained was a doctor of philosophy. In order to partic-

to teach it than the other instructors. Respondents did not differ significantly in how much they enjoyed teaching writing across the three categories of classes, although it is notable that only 52.9% of the overall sample “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement that they enjoyed teaching writing.

Psychological Writing

Responses to statements about teaching psychological writing differed across the three categories of classes. In particular, introductory instructors were significantly less likely to provide instruction on APA style, require students to read the APA

Table 3. Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficients between P and C for 12 Items

S.	S.A.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.	A											
2.	R	.62***										
3.	R	.51***	.50***									
4.	R	.40**	.47**	.72***								
5.	R	.68***	.59***	.40**								
6.	R	.32*	.48***	.13	.17	.34*						
7.	R	.54***	.59***	.30*	.22	.53***	.37**					
8.	R	.49***	.63***	.36*	.29*	.46**	.47**	.50***				
9.	R	.55***	.69***	.48***	.42**	.55***	.45**	.57***	.77***			
10.	R	.38**	.45**	.31*	.21	.45**	.46**	.39**	.52***	.51***		
11.	R	.61***	.74***	.34*	.23	.54***	.46**	.86***	.64***	.67***	.40**	
12.	R	.15	.22	.01	-.05	.16	.38**	.29*	.30*	.26	.53***	.33*

Note. APA = A... P... A...
 *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 4. Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficients between P and C for 12 Items

S.	S.A.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.	A											
2.	R	.45***										
3.	R	.33**	.59***									
4.	R	.43***	.48***	.69***								
5.	R	.57***	.69***	.34**	.46***							
6.	R	.39**	.15	.06	.29*	.30*						
7.	R	.43***	.47***	.28*	.34**	.47***	.14					
8.	R	.45***	.23	.20	.23	.32**	.12	.52***				
9.	R	.30*	.12	.16	.16	.11	.13	.34**	.43***			
10.	R	.41**	.47***	.20	.29*	.44***	.20	.37**	.51***	.24		
11.	R	.43***	.47***	.25*	.35**	.48***	.11	.54***	.41**	.23	.48***	
12.	R	.58***	.32*	.20	.14	.25*	.24*	.39**	.25*	.12	.15	.34**

Note. APA = A... P... A...
 *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 5. Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficients between M and C for 12 Items

S.	S.A.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.	A											
2.	R	.30										
3.	R	.51**	.20									
4.	R	.42*	.25	.51**								
5.	R	.38*	.65***	.22	.30							
6.	R	.34	.32	.37	.34	.44*						
7.	R	.28	.51**	.26	.21	.41*	.26					
8.	R	.46*	.43*	.16	.25	.50***	.32	.18				
9.	R	.29	.48*	.13	.12	.73***	.35	.39*	.49**			
10.	R	.06	.20	.04	.21	.42*	.18	.22	.39*	.39*		
11.	R	.40*	.37	.27	.11	.43*	.27	.24	.58**	.37	.17	
12.	R	.24	.32	.18	-.09	.56**	.46*	.38	.15	.33	.17	.45*

Note. APA = A... P... A...
 *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

(see Table 4, Lines 8–12). However, for methods instructors, only two of the correlations were significant (see Table 5, Lines 8–12). The number of assignments given in a course was not significantly correlated with the amount of time devoted to writing instruction, $p = .52$.

What Instructors Do

The primary purpose of the study was to shed light on psychological writing instruction of undergraduates. We found it encouraging that many instructors devote valuable class time to teaching psychological writing and they incorporate various best practices. Additionally, we found that the more time instructors reported spending on writing, the more likely they were to use these best practices. Students' writing is likely to show growth and improvement when writing instruction is infused in their courses (Fallahi et al., 2006; Luttrell et al., 2010), thus providing students with the tools necessary to produce effective writing.

Analyzing instructors' responses within each course category revealed several significant differences between courses. These findings indicate that instructors do not use a one-size-fits-all approach to writing instruction, instead they tailor writing instruction to each course category. For instance, introductory instructors incorporate few best practices in their classes, especially when compared to topics and methods instructors. One possible explanation for this finding is that introductory instructors may consider their role as familiarizing students with many psychology areas and psychological writing is one of those areas. They might view themselves as laying a foundation of knowledge upon which later courses will

provide more instruction to build students' writing ability. This explanation corresponds to the finding that fewer introductory instructors believed it is their responsibility to teach writing. Additionally, they may be reluctant to teach psychological writing to the many nonpsychology students who enroll in the course to fulfill a general education requirement.

Our analyses showed that, in contrast to introductory instructors, topics instructors utilize more of the best practices, suggesting that writing instruction escalates in complexity from introductory to topics courses. This escalation may arise because topics instructors felt more responsible for teaching writing than introductory instructors. Topics instructors may want to move students beyond a primer in psychological writing and therefore include a more nuanced and in-depth discussion about psychological writing into their classes than do introductory instructors. However, our analyses show that not all topics instructors provide the same amount of instruction. Correlational analyses suggested that those who did spend time teaching writing did use the best practices, but those who spent less time teaching writing did not use the best practices when they did teach it. Some topics instructors may provide less writing instruction because they assign few or no papers; that

whole (rather than one instructor's course). Finally, future research could study the role played by instructor-provided feedback in students' writing.

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This study is a step toward understanding undergraduate psychological writing instruction. Based on the findings, we conclude that much of the information on teaching psychological writing is utilized. Additionally, we found that instructors seem to incorporate a developmental approach to writing instruction across courses. Furthermore, we found that instructors are attempting to push students toward higher order cognitive skills (i.e., critical thinking and application skills) in their assignments and that many instructors employ a variety of assign-

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