Building a Confident and Smooth Transition to APA-Style Writing Workshop Series

Presented by:

Eva Chan and Amy Nguyen

Agenda

Introduction

Eva Chan, M.A.

EOP Transfer Connect Developer & Lead, Student Success Advisor

- Masters of Arts (M.A), Counseling & Student Personnel, San José State University

- Bachelor of Arts (B.A), Social Science, San José State University

- 4 Years at 4 Community Colleges (A.A); 5 Years at SJSU (B.A. & M.A.); 10 Years+ at SJSU as a Professional Staff

Our Vision & Goals Behind Developing This Workshop Series

The topic(s) of each workshop are designed to help students:

- Develop the techniques for writing in APA format

- Feel confident in transitioning to APA-style writing

- Prepare for coursework and research that require APA formatting

- Become a more versatile writer for advancement opportunities even if your major/coursework does not require APA formatting

Introduction

Amy Nguyen, Ed.D.

• ADT in Psychology from Evergreen Valley College (EVC)

• B.A in Psychology and minor in Anthropology from University of California, Merced

• M.A in Psychology with a concentration in Research and Experimental Psychology from SJSU

• Ed.D in Educational Leadership

Why did I want to provide this workshop series?

● Former transfer student (lack of APA preparation in CC; each CC differs in introducing APA-style writing to students)

● Teach 100W to psychology/behavioral science majo**rs**

○ Students feel intimidated/afraid to make mistakes due to prior experiences
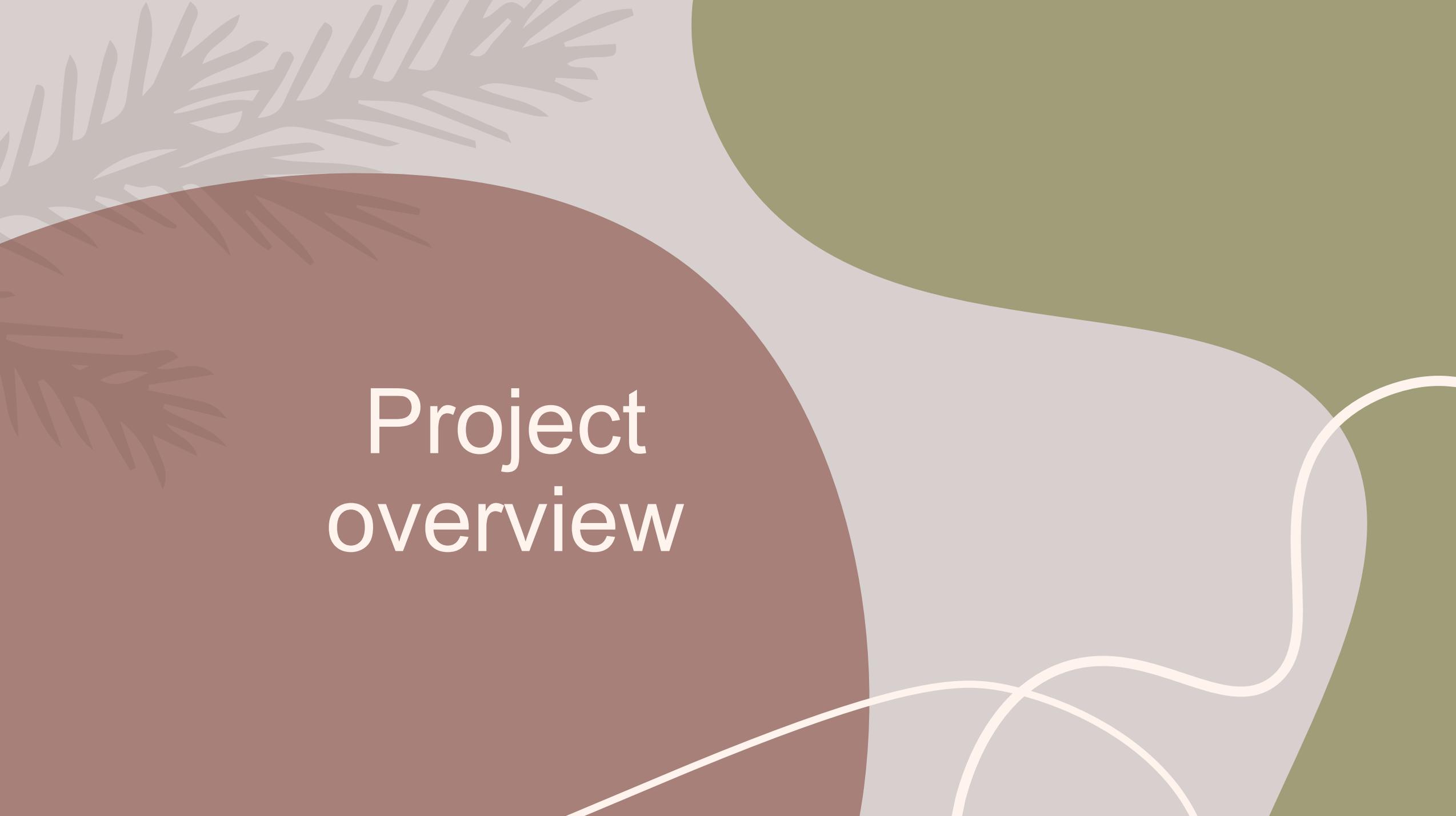
Project overview

Project Overview

Four-part APA workshop series (1 hour per workshop)

- Workshop 1: In-text citations
- Workshop 2: Reference citations
- Workshop 3: Avoiding plagiarism/paraphrasing
- Workshop 4: Primary vs. secondary sources

Attendance across all workshops: 63 transfer students
- Transfers from varying community colleges
  - EVC, Deanza, Chabot, Berkeley, SF, San Mateo, Gavilan to name a few

- Students from varying majors
  - Business, Psychology, Sociology, Computer Science, Social Justice, Pre-Nursing

Project Overview (cont.)

For each workshop, a pre- and post- survey was given to attendees

Survey questions included:

- **Closed-ended questions**: On a scale from 1-5 (1 = Very low, 5 = Very high):

  - "What is your current level of confidence in using APA-style writing correctly for your courses?" (**Q1 - pre-test**)
  - "After attending the workshop, what is your level of confidence in using APA-style writing correctly for your courses?" (**Q2 - post-test**)

- **Open-ended question**:

  - "Which aspect(s) of this workshop do you find most beneficial?

Project Overview (cont.)

- **Data analysis**

  - Comparing mean scores on Q1 in pre-test to mean scores on Q2 in post-test

    - Paired-samples t-test

  - Identify common themes that emerged across open-ended responses

Findings

Findings

- A total of 52 complete responses (pre- and post-) across all four workshops

- A paired-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the workshops on students' confidence in writing in APA formatting.

  - There was a significant increase in confidence ratings from the pre-test (M = 2.55, SD = 1.12) to the post-test (M = 3.85, SD = .84), t(52) = -9.951, p < .001 (two-tailed).

  - The eta squared statistic (.66) indicated a large effect size

Workshop 1: In-text citations

- How to correctly use in-text citations

  - Parenthetical compared to narrative

    in-text citations

  - Different ways to cite in-text based on

    number of authors

- Kahoot! to apply and reinforce

  concepts mentioned

What is the correct **parenthetical citation** for this reference citation: Nguyen, M. (2021). Boba. *Journal of Boba*, *1*, 1-3

▲ Nguyen (2021)

◆ Nguyen et al. (2021)

● (Nguyen, 2021) ✓

■ (Nguyen et al., 2021)

Workshop 1: In-text citations (Findings)

"Which aspect(s) of this workshop do you find most beneficial?"

- Some noteworthy responses from attendees:

    - "detailed examples of parenthetical and narrative citation"

    - "Thank you for this. As a transfer student, I knew nothing about the APA expectations of writing and its nice to see that i'm really not alone."

Workshop 2: Reference citations

- How to correctly use reference citations
  - Different reference citations for source type
- Differences between Works Cited/Bibliography from MLA and References list for APA
- Kahoot! to apply and reinforce concepts mentioned

This reference citation is for what type of source?

Bologna, C. (2019, October 31). *Why some people with anxiety love watching horror movies.* HuffPost. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/anxiety-love-watching-horror-movies_l_5d277587e4b02a5a5d57b59e

▲ Book 〇

◆ Journal article 〇

● Website ✓

■ Edited chapter in a book 〇

Workshop 2: Reference citations (Findings)

"Which aspect(s) of this workshop do you find most beneficial?"

- Some noteworthy responses from attendees:

    - "live demonstrations on how to include hanging indent"

    - "different citations for different sources"

    - "learning difference between MLA and APA"

    - "I found the Kahoot beneficial"

Workshop 3: Primary vs. secondary sources

- Discussed differences between primary and secondary sources
- Identified common mistakes students make when looking for primary and peer-reviewed sources
- Tips on how to identify empirical studies compared to literature reviews
- Kahoot! to apply and reinforce concepts mentioned

Spot the difference based on Article Abstracts

Article A

Abstract

Background/Objectives: The widespread phenomenon of "brain rot", named the Oxford Word of the Year 2024, refers to the cognitive decline and mental exhaustion experienced by individuals, particularly adolescents and young adults, due to excessive exposure to low-quality online materials, especially on social media. The present study is exploratory and interpretative in nature, aiming to investigate the phenomenon of "brain rot", with a focus on its key pillars, psychological factors, digital behaviors, and the cognitive impact resulting from the overconsumption of low-quality digital content. **Methods**: This study employs a rapid review approach, examining research published between 2023 and 2024 across PubMed, Google Scholar, PsycINFO, Scopus, and Web of Science. It explores the causes and effects of brain rot, focusing on the overuse of social media, video games, and other digital platforms. **Results**: The findings reveal that brain rot leads to emotional desensitization, cognitive overload, and a negative self-concept. It is associated with negative behaviors, such as doomscrolling, zombie scrolling, and social media addiction, all linked to psychological distress, anxiety, and depression. These factors impair executive functioning skills, including memory, planning, and decision-making. The pervasive nature of digital media, driven by dopamine-driven feedback loops, exacerbates these effects. **Conclusions**: The study concludes by offering strategies to prevent brain rot, such as controlling screen time, curating digital content, and engaging in non-digital activities. Given the increasing prevalence of digital engagement, it is essential to explore a variety of strategies, including mindful technology use, to support cognitive health and emotional well-being. The results can guide various stakeholders—policymakers, practitioners, researchers, educators, and parents or caregivers—in addressing the pervasive impact of brain rot and promoting a balanced approach to technology use that fosters cognitive resilience among adolescents and young adults.

Article B

Abstract

In 2024, Oxford University Press made 'brain rot' – a piece of teenage slang found primarily on the popular video sharing application TikTok – its *word of the year*. This announcement was received by a public discourse of media panic wherein 'brain rot' was understood primarily as a threat to young people's mental and physical wellbeing. This article seeks to challenge this discourse, building on the participatory approach to children's media scholarship to argue instead that 'brain rot' constitutes a complex, and historically situated, *genre of participation*. Drawing on empirical data from seven TikTok workshops with 16- and 17-year-olds in Oslo, 'brain rot' is conceptualised as a collection of related practices that (1) are childish or unserious, (2) provide no cognitive or developmental benefit, and (3) are deliberately non-productive. In this way, it can be understood as a *decompression-driven* genre of participation whereby young people actively resist the pressures of productivity and self-optimisation.

Workshop 3: Primary vs. secondary sources (Findings)

"Which aspect(s) of this workshop do you find most beneficial?"

- Some noteworthy responses from attendees:
  - "Learning differences between primary and secondary sources"
    - "When we looked at the two abstracts"
      - "real examples"
      - "keywords to look for"
  - "Kahoot! knowledge that was learned will be applied in a memory game!"
    - "was a fun way to remember the information we were presented"
    - "it solidified what we learned"

Workshop 4: Avoiding plagiarism/paraphrasing

- Discussed common mistakes students make when paraphrasing

  - Committing "unintentional plagiarism"

- Tips on how to paraphrase and use direct quotes correctly and as needed

- Kahoot!

  - Identifying examples of plagiarism / paraphrasing

    - **True or false**: It is considered plagiarism if you copy someone else's exact words without quotation marks while giving them credit

Workshop 4: Avoiding plagiarism (Findings)

"Which aspect(s) of this workshop do you find most beneficial?"

Some noteworthy responses from attendees:

- "Paraphrasing"

- "Preventing plagiarism"

- "Differences in quoting between MLA and APA"

- "The Kahoot was informationally fun too!"

  - "because it was interactive"

  - "helped solidify understanding"

- "...knowing that it is still plagiarism even when you use your own work submitted previously was something we really need to know!"

Concluding Remarks

Eva's takeaways (cont.)

Aside from the pre- and post-responses, the workshop series received 108 counts of additional responses from EOP students who attended the live workshops and/or watched the recorded videos.

- Workshop 1: In-text citations (30)

- Workshop 2: Reference citations (22)

- Workshop 3: Avoiding plagiarism/paraphrasing (24)

- Workshop 4: Primary vs. secondary sources (32)

Eva's takeaways (cont.)

Some noteworthy feedback from students :

- "Seeing the examples and the type of work I need to submit is quite helpful for someone entering their first year at SJSU."
- "I liked that they went at a good pace and explained everything thoroughly."
- "I feel more confident now using the APA format."
- "Before attending this workshop, I was unsure as how to apply APA writing format because I was never truly taught it."
- "...this workshop not only educated me on APA requirements, but other different tools and resources"
- "I have never used APA before. This event introduced it for me and I believe I could apply it into all the classes I am taking."

Eva's takeaways

- Shifting from MLA or from other writing formats to APA writing immediately after arriving at SJSU can be a stressful experience for incoming transfer students while they also need to acclimate to various aspects of a 4-year institution.

- Some transfer students who did very well in writing assignments at community colleges start losing their academic confidence upon transitioning to write in APA format for class projects, especially when they compare the grades they receive at SJSU with the grades they previously received at community colleges.

- Breaking down the core components of APA writing and focusing on each component during each workshop of the series helped transfer students learn, ask questions, and practice more effectively.

Amy's takeaways

- Transfer students may take 100W in the first semester they start at SJSU
  - When attendees were asked
    - **"On a scale from 1-5 (1 = Very low, 5= Very high), what was your level of preparation for writing in APA format before transferring to SJSU?"**
      - Approximately 72% of attendees responded "low" to "very low"

- Introduction to APA writing needs to happen sooner (whether at CC or at SJSU)
  - Introducing APA concepts when applicable to course content to help students' exposure to APA formatting early on before writing courses like 100W
    - Reading and writing research reports (PSYC 18)
    - Presenting results of data analysis in APA (STAT 115)

Amy's takeaways (cont.)

- Students liked being given examples and demonstrations on how to apply APA rules/concepts
  - Having interactive lessons where students have low-risk activities to help them practice what they learned
- Students may encounter APA for the first time in your courses and feel lost
  - May have already encountered courses where APA was required without a real understanding of how to do it
    - Bad experiences (e.g., unintentional plagiarism, failing a class) = fear of APA writing
      - Students may ask ChatGPT/AI in desperation of plagiarizing works (without realizing they are still plagiarizing)
        - Student response noted, "it might be useful to have a future workshop on how to ethically and correctly use ChatGPT for class"
- Humanizing our students
  - understanding how students feel and have it be out of their control

Q/A

Thank you for joining us! Any questions?

Feel free to contact us via email:

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