Positive psychology L4   Ho.2

"Wiki critique": homework exercise before session 2

I am using the term 'wiki' for the document students on this course will be creating (in groups); and have created in past years. It is now slightly inappropriate, but comes from using Moodle's "wiki" feature which lets students create or post a document which other students may read but not edit.

 Aims:
1. To read many student wikis from previous years in order to familiarise yourself with them AND to develop informed opinions about what kinds of format were more or less useful to you as a student reader.
2. To help decide as a group if you accept my suggested topic, or what alternative topic you will propose.

Download a wiki-critique form from the web page, and fill it in for several past student wiki pages to ensure you engage with aim 1 properly. Bring the completed forms with you to session 2.

Your group is allocated a provisional topic, but that is only a starting point so that the whole class does not start in the same place and end up doing the same thing. If you come up with a new topic not on the list that is OK (if it is part of PosPsy). If you take a past topic but reduce its scope, that may be very sensible (previous years have often used groups of about 6, this year you have groups of about 3).

Next week (session 2) I will ask each group to give me their provisional choice of topic in writing; and we must decide on topic allocation then i.e. avoid any serious duplications of topics, though without being fussy about topics which are somewhat related.

The aim of getting you each to critique past students' work is:
To get you used to thinking about what readers actually do and don't like when "consuming" such documents. You have to learn a new mode of writing, quite different from the essays and CRs you are used to. Experiencing what it is to be a reader of them; and what features you welcome, what you don't is a rapid method for helping you shift your ideas and habits on this. Think about what is, and isn't, helping you as you read quickly to get an introductory idea about this particular topic in PosPsy.

This is a method of fast-tracking you on a new writing style, as opposed to having you all do several, learning from mistakes you make on earlier ones. I also remember vividly when doing my own PhD, when I read many others of very variable writing quality, how much it made me think about what was best practice to imitate (obviously, I had never written anything as long as a PhD myself before), and what was terrible practice to avoid.

Ideally (but don't worry if you have already done plenty by the time you see this elaboration of my instructions):

• You will look at many, but actually write out comments on the "Form for critiquing wiki pages" for several.

• You will look not only at ones you think are the best, but also at some which you don't have any prior interest in.

• You will start at last year's set (2015 moodle), and start at the topic with the same group number (not the same actual topic) as this year e.g. if you are in group 14 this year, then start at 2015's group 14 which wrote about Addiction. The point of this is so that not everyone looks at the same few wikis.

- Look at more than one, and probably it is good if you look at several different years.

- Discuss the main criticisms you make with people in your own group. (If you haven't had time to discuss them before the session, we may be able to do some of that in class, depending on time.)

- Discuss what was particularly good as well as bad. Discussion helps sharpen up your views further. It is useful in different ways both when two of you have both critiqued the same wiki, and when you discuss different wikis. Also, it is a good idea if your group creates a short list of dos and donts you want to apply to your own wiki when the time comes.

To repeat: these detailed instructions are late: don't worry if they are too late for you.