

## My Virtual Life (MVL) Case Study Guidelines

**Assignment Overview:** You will complete the MyVirtualLife (MVL) simulation and write three case study reports in which you document, analyze, and reflect on your virtual experiences, making connections with content we are learning about in our course. Think of your case study report as a piece of writing that you use to participate in a discourse community of readers and writers with a special interest in lifespan psychology, such as psychologists, health care professionals, and students learning about lifespan psychology. Here is an overview of the knowledge you will need for this assignment to participate successfully and confidently in our discourse community this semester:

*Genre Knowledge (What you will write):* A case study is a method of investigation used by psychologists to gain a deeper and richer understanding of development by closely examining a single case. Your report will examine the case of your virtual experience. You will use the writing prompts I have provided as a guide for conducting a case study about your MVL experiences. You will submit your report in three parts, each focusing on a different period of development: (I) Infancy, Toddlerhood, and the Preschool Years, (II) Middle Childhood and Adolescence, and (III) Adulthood (see below for specific due dates for each report). You will list each writing prompt before responding to it, and responses should be approximately one to two paragraphs in length.

*Subject Matter Knowledge (What you will write about):* To answer the writing prompts thoroughly, you will need a good grasp of the details of your virtual life, which means you will need to complete the MVL simulation. Before you begin writing, read the prompts and review the simulation looking for specific examples in the simulation that apply to each prompt, paying attention to your and your child's behavior, the choices you make, and the various professional reports received from teachers, developmental psychologists, and doctors. You will also need a good grasp of terminology and concepts from our textbook (Feldman, 2015) because you will apply two developmental concepts in each response.

*Rhetorical Knowledge (Who you will write for):* Case study reports are good learning tools for students because they illustrate psychological theories and concepts. In fact, you will notice that the author of our textbook uses a case study at the beginning and ending of each chapter to help illustrate the important concepts he describes in the chapter. Your job with this assignment is to develop new case studies for the author of our textbook with the goal of helping future students understand the course content. Because your report will be used as a teaching tool, it is important to explain all developmental constructs in such a way that someone with only limited knowledge of developmental psychology could understand. Additionally, your audience will need enough details about your virtual life so that they can clearly visualize the situations and behaviors you are describing, as they will have little knowledge of your virtual experiences.

*Writing Process Knowledge (How you will write):* The writing prompts require you to find and relate specific examples in the simulation that fit with two developmental concepts we are learning about in our course. You will need to be able to accurately paraphrase these concepts and document the source of your knowledge. You will also need to effectively present claims (also called thesis statements), support your claims with evidence from the simulation, and explain how the evidence is a good example of the claim you are making.

To ensure you have a good grasp of the writing task, you will complete a pre-writing activity for each report. The pre-writing activity ensures that you not only know what is expected, but also provides opportunities for you to identify specific examples from the MVL simulation and concepts and theories from the textbook. The pre-writing activity will be due approximately 1 week prior to the report due date. .