Assignment: Critical Review of Presentation Article

This assignment is due on the day of your presentation.

This assignment is the second component of your presentation grade. Your presentation should be a group effort. Your critical review should be an individual effort. This assignment requires you to critically evaluate an article addressing the (nature/nurture | aging) debate in the popular press. The best articles will have an interesting take on a contemporary (nature/nurture | aging) issue that incorporates recent scientific knowledge as well as public perception.

Learning Objectives:
To develop and support a sophisticated evaluation of a newspaper or news magazine article, and to communicate this evaluation to professionals and policy makers.

Target Audience:
College students who are interested in developing a critical understanding of the scientific and social debate surrounding the importance of (nature/nurture | aging) for human development.

Directions:
Read & comprehend a newspaper or news magazine article relating to the (1) nature or nurture of child development and (2) the social contexts of aging in America.

After selecting an appropriate article it will be your task to identify, explain, and justify the strengths and weaknesses of the research/writing in a 500 word essay. Here are some questions to consider: Does the article only present one side of the argument? How clear are the arguments, research procedures, and findings? What perspective is missing from this piece? Did the author get it right? What is your conclusion about the merits of the article; helpful, informative, or none of the above?

Organize your critical review.
Before you begin to write, review feedback on prior essays, and keep this feedback in mind while you compose this new essay. Be careful to avoid previous writing pitfalls. Plan your essay by using the conventional organizational scheme. In the first paragraph, summarize the central thesis and introduce readers to your evaluation of the article. End the introductory paragraph with a single sentence that summarizes your overall assessment of the research. This sentence is your central thesis. Each paragraph in the body of the essay should begin with a concise topic sentence that clearly identifies either a specific strength or weakness of the article or the research presented in the article. The rest of the paragraph should explain this assertion and justify it with evidence. Finish the essay with a conclusion that reflects on the implications of your overall assessment without merely repeating your central thesis. Make sure you clearly identify the (nature/nurture | aging) debate being discussed in the article.

Evaluation Criteria
The professor will use a five-point scale ranging from (1) poor to (5) excellent to evaluate how well the essay accomplishes each of the following elements:

Content
- Author correctly identifies the central thesis of the article.
- Author accurately summarizes the study/research.
- Author evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the perspective taken in the article.
- Author supports each assertion with clear explanation and evidence.
- Author presents only relevant illustrations or data; all information proves a point.
- Author critically reflects on her/his own perspective; author does not merely voice emotions.
- Author uses appropriate tone and word choice for intended audience.
- Author offers an informative & interesting title.

**Organizational Structure**
- The essay has a clear introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Author clearly presents the central thesis of her/his assessment in the opening paragraph.
- Each paragraph has a clear topic sentence and focuses on a single, albeit sometimes complex, idea.
- Each paragraph furthers the central thesis as advanced in the introduction.
- Paragraphs are about the right length.
- Sentences are grammatically sound.
- Sentences are not superfluous; sentences have direct relevance to the paragraph.
- Author followed all technical instructions (e.g., margins, font, length, location of name).