PY202, Sleep and Dreams

Improving Sleep 1: Tracking Your Sleep

Most of us don’t get enough sleep. The best way to improve this situation is to understand what your sleep patterns are truly like. That means tracking them. Your assignment is to:

1. Track your nightly sleep for 7 days using the provided **Sleep Diary** file. Don’t worry about the listed days (Friday to Sunday)… just make sure it is 7 consecutive days.
   1. IMPORTANT NOTE: Pay attention to the directions on how to record your bedtime and wake times. In order to calculate averages, you must follow the directions precisely. They’re provided with the **Sleep Diary.**
2. Pick three of those days and measure your sleepiness at various times according to the **Sleepiness Scale** page.
3. For each recorded day, keep a brief journal where you write what you did that day. Note anything that you think may impact your sleep that night. This doesn’t have to be fancy or long – a bulleted list will work.
4. List your top good and bad habits from that 7 day period.
5. Using material from the class so far (and bringing in any outside material you deem appropriate), create a behavioral action plan to maximize what you already do well and change what you’re doing badly. Write out a detailed plan.
6. Execute this plan for at least 3 days.
7. Collect data to see if your plan has helped. Some examples include using the Sleepiness Scale already mentioned (good), to seeing if your reaction time on standard cognitive tests (like the psychomotor vigilance test) has significantly changed (better). You can find several free versions of such tests online.

Treat the actual paper you write like a lab report, using [APA style and citation guidelines](http://www.apastyle.org/):

1. Introduction: Why is sleep important? Especially for you and your age group? Give me some solid background here about basic sleep health. End this section with your thesis statement, outlining what you intend to do based on this knowledge, and your hypothesis, which states what you think will happen when you implement your plan.
2. Method: Outline what you did, why and how you did it. Include the details of your initial data collection, the formation of your individual improvement plan, and the details of your follow-up data collection to see if your improvement plan worked.
   1. Make sure to show me that you know why your good habits are good and why your bad habits are bad. Be detailed here.
      1. For example, there are several grade levels of telling me why drinking coffee right before you go to bed is bad, from (A-level), explaining the actual neurophysiologic mechanism of caffeine to (F-level), just saying that it makes it hard to sleep. Tell me WHY.
3. Results: Tell me what happened, using numbers. Show me what happened, using figures, charts and graphs.
4. Discussion: How did it go? Why? What could you have done differently? What will you do from this point forward?

These are basic guidelines. Don’t just think of this as a paper. Think of it as a chance to improve your life! Then tell me about it.

The final product should be a minimum of 5 pages and no more than 10, using Times New Roman 12-point font, double-spaced.

Good luck and sleep well!