Assignment 1 Report Specification

Introduction

This assignment is essentially assignment 2 on a smaller scale. Its main aim is for you to practise the skills you need for assignment 2, and for you to get feedback from me on how well your work matches my criteria. In most cases, I hope that this will help you to improve upon your work in the main assignment, but in some rare cases it may confirm that you are already doing everything pretty much as I require.

For the general format of the report, please refer to this page: **Assignment 2 - report specification (https://universityofsussex.instructure.com/courses/31028/pages/assignment-2-report-specification-2)** and read it carefully. I'll add some comments on the differences between the two assignments below.

Word count

Apart from its much lower contribution to your final mark, the word count is the most obvious difference between this and your main assignment. The word count is 1000 words, not including the methods section, figure captions, bibliography and appendices. A couple of comments on this:

- 1000 words is just for your introduction, results and discussion sections. Depending on what project you choose to do, your actual word count could easily double this, as your methods section needs to be complete.
- I'm not very strict on the nominal word counts: I don't mind if you go over 1000 words, but will set 1300 as the maximum allowed - exceed this number, and you will be penalised.

Scale

Although you are very constrained by the word count, it is important that you submit a complete and well-rounded report. The mantra of making your writing "clear and concise" always applies, so think of this as an exercise in conciseness, but also recognise that you will necessarily review less literature, be able to discuss less points, etc. than usual - don't try to cram too much in. This means that every part of the report must be scaled down. It also means that the scale of your project should be carefully chosen: if it is too small or too simple, then you will not be able to do any interesting analysis on your results, but if it is too large or too complex, then you will not have space to properly analyse and discuss it. Of course the scale also matters to your time, which is precious and (for many of us) difficult to manage.

Topics

You can choose topics from here if you want to: **Assignment 2 Suggested Project Topics (https://universityofsussex.instructure.com/courses/31028/pages/assignment-2-suggested-project-topics)** but they are more suited to the scale of your main assignment. There are also some

suggestions for smaller projects here: **Assignment 1 Suggested Project Topics (https://universityofsussex.instructure.com/courses/31028/pages/assignment-1-suggested-project-topics)**

Methods

As always, I will expect your methods section to be complete. If you don't want to write a very long methods section, then you need to factor this into your project choice. For example, if you want to use a GA in your project this time then you might want to avoid using NEAT, as a very good description of its methods is a significant amount of work, and can easily run to a few pages.

Results and analyses

For this report, a (possibly small) *set* of results and one or two analyses, preferably quantitative, will be sufficient. I will reward the novelty, depth and insight of analysis as usual, but am not looking for quantity. Analyses can be directed either at explaining how systems work, or at testing them and showing the limits of their performance.

Bibliography and research

I always expect to see evidence of research in both literature reviews, methods and discussions. For this project, I will consider a list of 6 references to be sufficient, although it is fine to have more. These references should not all come from articles and books that I have provided or recommended. As few as possible (although this will very for some projects) should be websites: published works are preferred, especially peer-reviewed articles and books