

## COMP90044 Research Methods

### Assignment B: Research Paper Comparison (Coursework Students)

*Due:* 11:59pm, 31 August 2018

*Mark component:* 20% of assessment

*Method of submission:* Electronic copy via the LMS. Note that submissions will be processed using Turnitin. Any assignment submitted late will incur a penalty of 0.5 marks for every day or part of a day that it remains not submitted (both week days and week ends).

#### Task

1. Choose two research papers from recent refereed conferences; the two papers should be on the same topic. These papers should be from the area you chose for your literature review and could be papers that were used in the review, if you wish. (If you have supervisor, ask them to help you identify papers that have significant, clear failings, but which could be improved with further work.)
2. After making your choice, for your chosen papers, write rough notes *for your own use* that answer the following questions.
  - (a) What are the researchers trying to discover?
  - (b) Why is the research important or useful?
  - (c) What methods were used (e.g., measures taken)?
  - (d) What were the results?
  - (e) Do the two papers arrive at complementary, the same, or conflicting conclusions?
  - (f) Is one paper a better piece of research than the other?
  - (g) Are the works appropriately linked to previous literature?

The answers should be substantially your own writing, not quotes, paraphrases, or illustrations from the paper.

Discuss any failings or shortcomings of the methods used to support the findings. Justify your opinions as carefully as you can. As part of the answers to these questions you should briefly summarize the proposed method and the results achieved.

3. Based on your rough notes, write a comparative review of the papers, arguing which paper is a better piece of science. Take care to discuss all of the major problems in the papers. Expect to address aspects such as:
  - Motivation – how well is the research justified? Does either make a better case?
  - Method – is either paper more rigorous than the other? If so, how?

- Results – does either paper make a more significant discovery?
- Clarity – how do the papers compare in terms of ease of reading?

Expect to write 800–1300 words for the review. Make use of resources about reviewing: lecture notes, the chapter on refereeing in the textbook, and guidelines you might discover on the web.

4. By the due date above, submit through the LMS your review. Make sure that you mention at the start of the review the full bibliographic details of the paper being reviewed.
5. In completing this assignment, you are required to adhere to the University's standards regarding academic honesty and you must avoid plagiarism. Further information about what is expected can be found at <http://academichonesty.unimelb.edu.au/plagiarism.html>