Assignment #1

Thinking Critically About a Media article concerning pregnancy or birth

Due: February 6, 2009 during class time

Please address all of the issues described below in essay format with an introduction and conclusion. Your essay should be 4 - 5 pages, type written, double spaced and thoroughly proofread. Spelling, grammar and proper format will all be considered toward your grade. Make sure to put all information in your own words or quote where necessary with proper citations, using APA format (see library website for more information).

The last 10 or so years have seen a growing media interest in pregnancy and birth. First-person accounts of births, as well as news features on all aspects of the birth process, regularly appear in newspapers, in magazines, and on television. In 1998, the birth of a baby was “broadcast” on the Internet.

For this assignment you are to find a recent article on pregnancy or birth from the popular media (newspaper or magazine). Please read the article and think critically about the information in it. Where did the information come from? Who wrote the article and what are their credentials? What scientific information is the article based on? Think critically about all aspects of the article and the advice it gives. Is the advice based in science?

In your essay include the title, author (if given), and source (magazine, newspaper) of the article and attach a copy of it. Provide a thorough summary of the article in your essay, write as though the reader has not read the article.

Make sure and include the following information in your essay as well as critical aspects of your own analysis, discussed above:

1. Who is the article written for (for example, women in general, pregnant women, husbands, the public at large)?

2. What can you tell about the author of the article? For example, what are his or her credentials? His or her biases?

3. What experts, authorities, or studies are quoted or referenced in the article?

4. In what ways, if any, does the article seek to increase understanding of birth/the birth process?

5. Is the reader urged to take any specific actions? If so, what are they?

6. Does the article discuss matters that seem to be controversial? What are they?