

Independent Project

Writing your conclusion

This workshop will address:

- How you know when to stop searching the literature
- Metaphors for writing your literature review
- What a conclusion is and how to go about writing this part of your literature review
- Editing and proof reading

Writing your conclusion.....

- Conclusions are often the most difficult part of an essay to write, and many writers feel that they have nothing left to say, having written the earlier sections.
- A writer needs to keep in mind that the conclusion is often what a reader remembers.
- Your conclusion should be the best, most meaningful, part of your literature review.

A conclusion
should.....

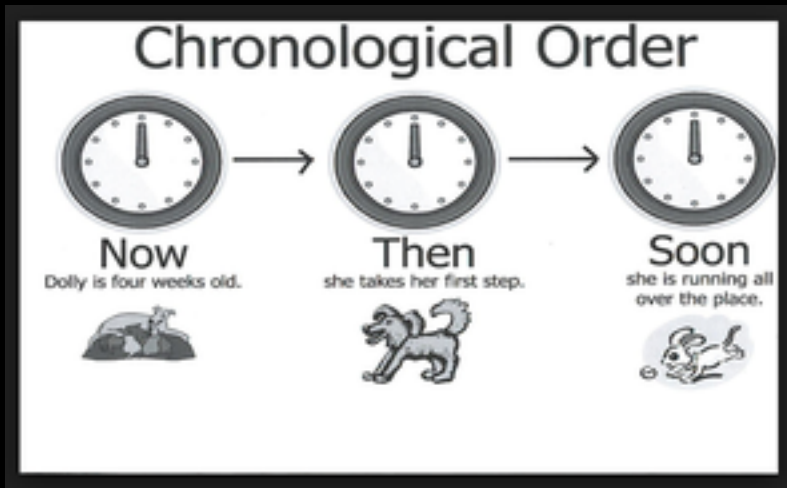
- Stress the importance of your topic question!
- Give the literature review a sense of completeness
- Leave a final impression on the reader

Digging into the literature:



- The literature search is an evolving process in which the researcher is “digging” into the literature by uncovering additional literature

Chronological or thematic literature reviews



Theme

The central message

- What the author wants you to learn or know.
- A broad idea about life.
- Usually not stated. Must be inferred.

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The diagram illustrates the concept of theme. It features a large blue bottle with a yellow label. The label contains the word 'Theme' in a large, bold, blue font. Below the word 'Theme' is the phrase 'The central message' in a smaller, bold, blue font. Below this phrase is a list of three bullet points: 'What the author wants you to learn or know.', 'A broad idea about life.', and 'Usually not stated. Must be inferred.' The entire content is enclosed in a blue rectangular border. At the bottom of the border, there is a small line of text: 'Created by Rachel Lynette Copyright ©2012 all rights reserved' followed by a URL: 'http://www.rachel-lynette.com'.

Note the **significance** of the research.....

-**This literature review shows that counselling needs to be re-considered in the light of the significant case made for Government Regulation**

- 
- Having shown where gaps exist in X, it would be useful to ...
 - In order to establish X more convincingly, research on Y should ...

Provide ideas and recommendations for future research....

Mention
implications
for
practice.....

It is clear from this
research that
practical concerns
of ...

A specific need for
X has been
demonstrated by
Y ...

Answer the question "So What?"

- **Show** your readers why this literature review was important. Show them that your literature review was meaningful and useful.
- **Synthesise**, don't summarize. Don't simply repeat things that were in your previous sections. They have read it. Show them how the points you made and the support and examples you used were not random, but fit together.
- **Feed forward**, Give your reader something to think about, perhaps a way to use, or build upon, your literature review in the future. If your introduction went from general to specific, you could make your conclusion go from specific to general.
- **Create a new meaning**, You don't have to give new information to create a new meaning. By demonstrating *how your ideas work together*, you can create a new picture. Often the sum of the paper is worth more than its parts.

A strategy for writing your conclusion....

- Echoing the introduction: Echoing your introduction can be a good strategy if it is used to bring the reader full-circle. How?

So...what should a conclusion do?????????

1. It summarises [synthesises] the literature review
2. It shows you have done what you set out to do
3. It gives the reader a sense of completion
4. It leaves the reader remembering your main point

BUT....THAT
SOUNDS KIND
OF LIKE THE
INTRODUCTION!

- SO, WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH & THE CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH?
- WHAT ABOUT THE BIT IN THE MIDDLE?

What is the
difference
between the
Introduction and
the
Conclusion.....

The
introduction
begins with a
general
approach to
the topic and
then moves
toward the
more specific
aspect(s) of it

The ***conclusion***
begins with
the more
specific
aspect(s) and
moves toward
the general
topic of your
literature
review

What main point did your question relate to.....

- Did you make that point? Or not.....
- Summarise it in your conclusion
- You can use the introductory paragraph as a guide to your conclusion
- This will help you come full circle and give your reader a sense of completion
- Have you done what you said you would do?



Useful Metaphors: A Barrister

- Think of organising a literature review as a barrister would present a case to a jury.
- The way a barrister organises evidence is crucial to how well the jury understands the argument and moves from one piece of evidence to the next.
- Obviously a barrister chooses which piece of evidence to present first, and chooses the next piece of evidence based on the previous evidence and what the jury needs to understand to evaluate the next piece.
- This repeats until the barrister has presented all the essential and necessary evidence to understand the situation at hand.
- As the barrister presenting your case, you need to organise and structure the evidence for your argument so that the jury knows how you think of your evidence. Likewise, in the literature review, the categories and concepts or themes you use to organize your evidence help the reader evaluate your argument.

Other
metaphors:
“funnelling in”



Other metaphors: Concertina

- Concertina
(narrowing and
enlarging your
search, like a
concertina
windbag)



Other metaphors: A lens

- A 'lens' (to focus)



How do you
know when to
stop
searching?

- One common rule of thumb is that the search is near completion when new articles only introduce familiar arguments, methodologies, findings, authors, and studies (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005) .

How do you
know when to
stop
searching?

- If, when reading a new paper, you “get the feeling that ‘I’ve seen this (or something similar to it) before’” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 82), it may suggest that the literature search is near completion.

How do you know when to stop searching?

- The end of the search can also be indicated when no new citations are discovered and articles cited in newly discovered literature have already been reviewed.

How do you know when to stop searching?

- In sum, as Webster and Watson (2002) observed: “You can gauge that your review is nearing completion when you are not finding new concepts in your article set” (p. 16).

Some tips for writing a good conclusion..

- The concluding paragraph is not the place to introduce new information or make more points about the topic.

Emphasise importance

- After writing your topic sentence, ask yourself: "So what? Why is that important?"
- Your next sentence should explain why. Then ask yourself again: "So what? Why is that important?"

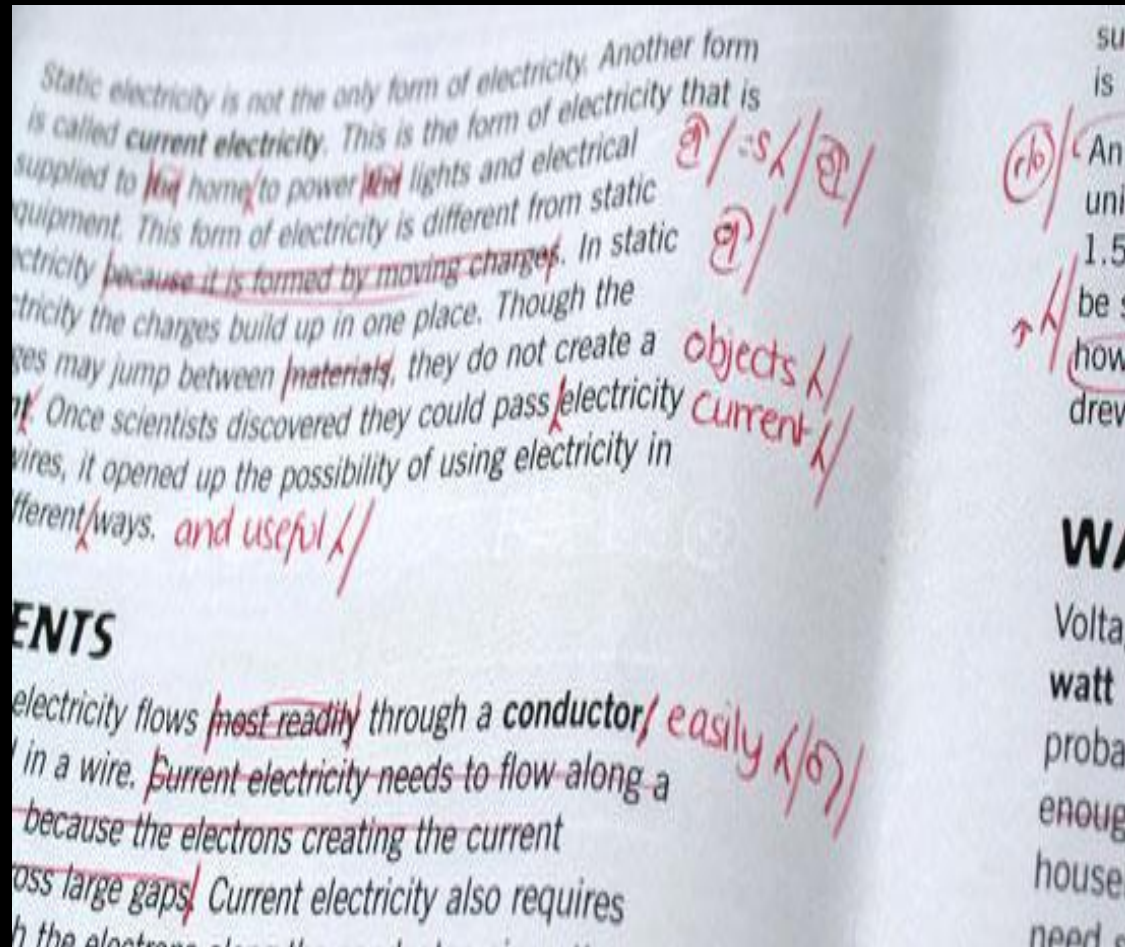
Like this.....

- "Education is very important in society."
"So what? Why is it important?"
- "It gives all citizens an equal start."
"So what? Why is that important?"

Check out transition links on Moodle

- In this essay, I have critically explored how ...

What do we do once we have finished writing our conclusion?



- Editing and proof reading

This workshop has addressed.....

- How you know when to stop searching the literature
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Any questions.....



References

- Leedy, P. D., & ORMROD, J. E. (2005). Practical Research Planning and Design (5th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Webster, J., & Watson, R. T. (2002). Analyzing the past to prepare for the future: Writing a literature review. MIS Quarterly, 26(2), 13-23