

Writing an Introduction

SHSS5069
Semester 1 - Week 8

When to write the introduction...

- **Introduction**
- Although this is the first piece of writing the reader comes to, it is often best to leave its preparation to last.
- Until this point, you will not be absolutely sure what you are introducing.
- The introduction has two main roles:
 - to expand the material summarised in the abstract (if applicable), and
 - to signpost the content of the rest of the study.

- In practice, you will find that you need to be certain about what you have done and what you have found in order to write the Introduction.
- The best time to write it will be after you have written, or at least drafted, the report sections (this does not apply to a proposal!).

Introduction to Introductions...

- The aim is to move the reader from what is known about an area to what is UNKNOWN .
- Or...To move the reader from general to specific information (Foote, 2006).
- An introduction will end with the research question.
- Foote (2006) considers a scientific article's introduction as being as important as making a good impression in a job application.
- If you read an article or lab report you expect the author to clearly present the information and develop the experimental aims and objectives.

Purpose:

- The introduction is used to serve the purpose of justification (Hopkins et al., 2009).
- Required to justify your research question – generate a rationale for your question.
- Justify the use of a particular group of participants / research design / methods
- The introduction must reflect the specific question being investigated.
- Avoid going off topic – easy to do!

Structure

Introduction:

- **Start:** More general information to set the scene.
Definitions and general concepts
- **Middle:** Development of a specific rationale
- **End:** Specific aims

Guidelines:

- All introductions require you to have read widely and to have reviewed the literature to some extent.
- Introduce any key terms or concepts. E.g. Physical literacy / contextual interference
- Follow this with a general ‘introductory’ paragraph and become more specific as the introduction develops.
- Ends with the aims of the study.

Task:

- For the introduction examples below (locate one using UWTSD databases) **or** for a research article that you have access to...
1. *Does anxiety affect climbing performance? Comparing top-rope and lead climbing.*
 2. *Primary School Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences of Children Learning Outdoors*
 3. *Hydration and the effect of carbohydrate drinks on performance*
 4. *A comparison study of the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Scheme and whether it has an effect on nutritional knowledge and behaviours in year 5 and 6 pupils from two schools.*
 5. *A Study of Exercise Environment on Psychological Health Outcomes*
 6. *Plyometric or weight training, which is the most effective method to improve acceleration?*

Task:

- For each paragraph make a note of the key point being described (one or two words only).
- Paragraph 1
- Paragraph 2
- Paragraph 3
- Paragraph 4 etc.

Task continued...

- Answer the following questions...
- 1. Is there a logical flow of information?
- 2. How do the key points you have noted compare with the title of the project and aims?

Have they identified...

- 3. Why is it important that they have done this study?
- 4. What did you know beforehand?
- 5. What is the new aspect to be investigated?

What is the difference between an introduction and a literature review (larger projects – e.g. Dissertation)?

- **Introduction:**
- Overview of the area to set the scene for the the study ad its importance.

Followed by...

- **Literature Review:**
- Detailed review of previous research, identifying a gap in the literature.
- **Aims and hypotheses:** (hypotheses - if applicable)

Introduction and rationale for proposed study

(utilising relevant and appropriate literature)

What resources should you be using?

Where have you got your question from?

This **MUST** have come from the research – NOT the other way around!

Rationale

- Is it clear why your project needs to be carried out?
- Is it evident why it is important / will add to current research?
- Who will the results of each study be useful for?
- Can you think of anyone else who has not been considered that the results may be useful for? Make a note of these people.

Task:

- In small groups:
- Briefly introduce your research question...
- Discuss your rationale for your study...
- Why is this worthy of study?...evidence for this?
- Make notes of the key reasons why this is important.