University of Hull

Faculty Of Health & Social Care

Survey research critique – Writing up an argument

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Structure of the session

- Presentation of a research critique in writing
- Ways to convey one's own understanding with adequate depth and breadth
- Ways to include critical analysis in arguments to display intellectual rigour
- Laws and rules to academic writing

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Structure of presentation

- Introduction
- Main Arguments
- Conclusion
- References
- Appendices
- Tables

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Structure of presentation

- Introduction
- Main Arguments
- Conclusion

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Structure

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Findings
  - Number of papers
  - Characteristics of papers
- Discussions
- Conclusion

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Main arguments

≈80%

- **Methodology**
  - **Specify the research questions which guide the search**
  - **Search strategy**
- **Findings –**
  - **Results of the search**
  - **critical analysis of the methodologies/methods and findings**

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Methodology – Search strategy

- Search engines
- Key words
- Boolean searches

Rationalise your choices

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria

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Findings – result of search:
numbers of papers

One hundred papers which focused on.....were included for the review.

The other 45 papers which....had....were therefore excluded in the review.

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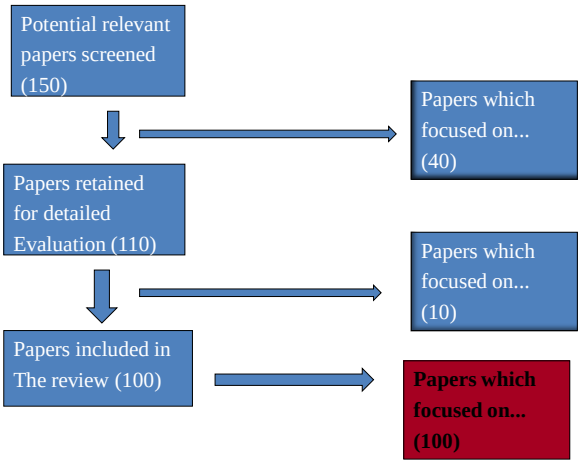
Findings – result of search:
numbers of papers

A quorom statement of flow diagram



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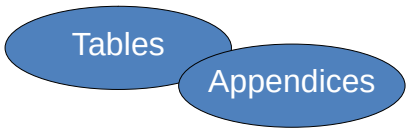
Findings – Characteristics of papers

- Summary of existing work on the topic
- Critical evaluation of previous work
- Some general and specific conclusion about work done to date on the topic



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Discussions

a) Establish, describe identify the existing problem, or consider solutions that already tried

b) Show relevance of the problem/clarify confusing areas

c) Explain the consequences if nothing is done

d) Consider possible alternatives and consider its benefits

e) Outline an approach to tackle the problem (tie this with conclusion)

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Managing materials and ideas

- Convey adequate breadth and depth
- Display intellectual rigour

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Conclusion

≈10%

- Highlight the main findings
- Reinforce the main arguments
- Briefly address the strengths and limitations of the critique
- Make recommendations (realistic & practical)

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Introduction

≈10%

- Set the background of your work
- Provide rationale for selecting the papers for critique
- Explain the aims and purpose for the critique
- Explain how the contents are organised to tell a story coherently

Clear systematic direct

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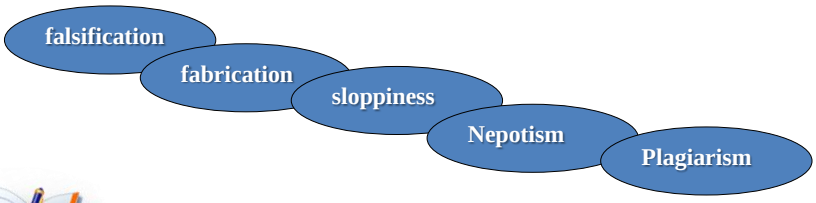
Writing up

- Legitimacy
- Academic Style



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Practical steps to complying with law and academic conventions

- Copy right laws
- Exploit credible source as evidence
- Academic style
  - Tenses (past/present)
  - Me, I , we

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Use of the first person

- The use of 'I'

I used to be a student nurse, and when I graduated as
a clinical nurse, I saw that
verbal exchanges between nurses
in any general medical or surgical disciplines
had never deviated from the form of a 'unique nursing language'

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Use of the first person

- The myth of using 'the author' to replace 'I'

~~**As a student nurse, and later, a clinical nurse, the author saw that**~~
~~**verbal exchanges between nurses**~~
~~**in any general medical or surgical disciplines**~~
~~**had never deviated from the form of a 'unique nursing language'**~~

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Use of the first person

- ~~'I' replaced by 'the author'~~

From my experience as a student nurse,
and later, a clinical nurse, verbal exchanges between nurses
in any general medical or surgical disciplines
had never deviated from the form of a 'unique nursing language'

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  - Tenses (past/present)
  - Me, I , we
  - impersonal passive voice

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Advantage of using passive voices

- Provide a long variety in a long document

However, it is asynchronous text-based computer mediated conferencing (ACMC) which has become and remained a popular pedagogical model in e-learning, especially in postgraduate education, professional education (Bjarnason, 2007) and continuing healthcare professional development (Sandars & Langlois, 2006).

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Advantage of using passive voices

- Provide a long variety in a long document

- Ensure anonymity

Nurses like to...

Apparently, it was a common nursing practice that...

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Advantage of using passive voices

- Provide a long variety in a long document
- Ensure anonymity
- In line with written language and not spoken language

I search through Medline and CINAHL system , and obtained a total of 176 hits. I found that 10 papers were relevant.

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Advantage of using passive voices

- Provide a long variety in a long document
- Ensure anonymity
- In line with written language and not spoken language

The search through Medline and CINAHL system resulted in a total of 176 hits, and 10 papers were found to be relevant.

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Advantage of using passive voices

- Making referencing easier

From my experience as a student nurse,
and later, a clinical nurse, verbal exchanges between nurses
in any general medical or surgical disciplines
had never deviated from the form of a 'unique nursing language'
This personal experience of mine was in fact,
echoed in a study by Hyde, *et. al.* (2006).

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Numbers or no.s?

The search through Medline and CINAHL system
resulted in a total of 176 hits,
and 10 papers were found to be relevant.

The search through Medline and CINAHL system
resulted in a total of one hundred and seventy-six hits,
and ten papers were found to be relevant.

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Numbers?/no.s?

~~176 hits were obtained via the search through Medline and CINAHL system~~

One hundred and seventy-six hits were obtained via the search through Medline and CINAHL system

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  - Impersonal passive voice
  - Value judgment words (avoid using)

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Value-judgment words/phrases

- It was obvious/(crystal) clear...
- It is welcome...
- It is a fact that...
- Everyone can see...
- Everyone will agree...
- Very; Excellent; Brilliant; Crucial

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Practical steps to complying with the law and academic conventions

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- Academic style
  - Tenses (past/present)
  - Me, I , we
  - Impersonal passive voice
  - Value judgment words (avoid using)
  - Discriminatory words (avoid using)

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Discriminatory words

Hart, 1998

- Workman
- Ladies
- Man-hour
- Laymen

Women, Females

Worker

Workhours

Lay people, General Public

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Overall plan

- Structure
- Line of Arguments

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Structure of Reasoning

- Show the structure of reasoning that was employed
- Avoid any fallacies, inadequacies, lack of evidence or lack of plausibility with some or all of that reasoning
- To show possibilities of one's position

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Working on the structure of your argument

Claim – clarity, plausibility cogency, consequences, practicability

Evidence – amount, relevance, reliability, reproducibility, credibility

Information – details resources, contacts, time periods

Warrant – robustness, degrees of connection, assumptions, rhetoric

Backing - problem awareness, admissibility, strength, validity

Conclusion - logic, substantiation, consequences, plausibility

Toulmin 1958

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Types of evidence

- Statistics – primary, secondary, descriptive, analytical
- Testimony - personal, expert, primary, secondary, historic
- Examples – first hand, general, detailed
- Hypothetical examples – impossible, abstracted, plausible
- Hypothetical scenarios – cause and effect, process oriented
- Personal experience – anecdotal, narrative, recent , historic

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Possible Structures of argument

- **Problem-awareness pattern (summative evaluation)**
- **Cause and Effect pattern (analytical evaluation)**
- **Possible solution pattern (formative evaluation)**

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Problem awareness pattern

- Describe the nature of the problem
- Show the relevance of the problem to the reader
- Explain the consequences if nothing is done or if current state continues
- Outline the parameters of the problems
- Outline an approach (recommendations for tackling the problem situation

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Cause and effect pattern

- Establish the existence of the problem(propose possible causes of the problem)
- Clarify confusing areas (provide evidence)
- Focus attention on proposed cause)
- Suggest recommendations to deal with the problems

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Possible Solution pattern

- Considered existing solutions (give relevant examples
- Consider possible alternatives
- Summarise the problems, explain why existing strategies fail
- Prove recommendations for alternative approaches

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Producing a Sound Argument

Dos

Use
- reliable structure that is explicit
- clear definitions of any terms
- plausible reasoning to support argument
- reliable assumptions

that are based on value-free judgments
- reliable and legitimate evidence

in the public domain

Don'ts

Avoid
- fallacies such as generalisations, abstraction and misplaced concreteness
- appeals to authority, convention and tradition

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References

- Hart, C (1998). Doing a Literature review. London: Sage Pub
- Toulmin, S (1958). The uses of argument. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

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