

Introductions and conclusions

Introductions and conclusions are essential for most of your assignments. You usually use about 10% of the full word allowance for the introduction and the same for the conclusion.

Introductions

You might find it easier to write the introduction after you have written the body of the paper because in it you include what you are going to say in the body of the paper. However, when you write it depends entirely on you.

The introduction usually:

- begins with a general statement about why this topic is important in your area of study
- sums up in one or two statements your overall answer to the question
- specifies the scope of your essay. What limits have you set on it in terms of the aspects/ issues/ factors you consider in the body
- outlines the structure of your essay. What are the main points you have included in the body?
- defines important terms.

Conclusions

The conclusion should sum up and tie together the main points you have presented in the body of your paper as an overall point.

In the conclusion you can:

- restate the overall answer you gave in the introduction
- evaluate how and to what extent the evidence you presented supported that statement
- indicate what other aspects might be considered and/ or suggest what may happen in the future.

Activity 1: Write the introduction to your paper

Write a general statement about why this topic is important in your area of study.	
Sum up in one or two statements your overall answer to the question.	
Make clear the limits you have set on it in terms of the aspects/ issues/ factors you consider in the body. Define specific terms if necessary.	
Outline the structure of your paper - what are the main points you have included in the body?	

Now edit what you have written to ensure a good flow in your writing.

Activity 2: Write the conclusion to your paper

Restate the overall answer you gave in the introduction.	
Restate the main points you provided in the body of the paper - evaluate how and to what extent the evidence you presented supported that statement.	
Indicate what other aspects might be considered and/ or suggest what may happen in the future.	

Now edit what you have written to ensure a good flow in your writing.

See the following examples and compare them with your writing.

Examples of Introductions and Conclusions

(Taken from student assignments with permission)

Introduction

When used effectively classical conditioning has the potential to serve as a facilitator directed tool. McInerney and McInerney (2002) suggest that learners themselves are generally unaware of the conditioning they are undergoing. Examples of how this form of learning may be implemented will be demonstrated briefly and the potential benefits examined. The particular areas focussed on are the positive effect classical conditioning may have on self-esteem, creating beneficial learning environments, and use in behaviour management.

Comments

Introduction to the whole area of conditioning in learning.

Statement of what ideas will be presented and indication of their order.

Introduction

Intelligence is a multi-faceted aspect of humanity – it does not lend itself to one single definition; the concept of intelligence varying depending on the culture or society in which it is being defined (McInerney & McInerney 2002). It is fundamental for educators to understand the diversity in students' intelligence theories which foster each individual's success. Two leading theories, Gardner's multiple intelligences (MI) and Sternberg's triarchic model, provide educators with valuable insights into teaching and learning practices. Numerous research projects demonstrate the advantageous impacts these theories have on students, including raised self-esteem and general academic success.

Comments

Introduction to the area of intelligence.

Statement of importance of understanding how intelligence is defined.

Clear indication of what models are referred to.

Reference to theory and a very brief statement about topics to be covered.

(Note: this part of the introduction would be improved with clear statements about what is to come in the essay.)

Conclusion

Although Gardner's multiple intelligence theory and Sternberg's triarchic model differ in their approaches to teaching and learning, both justly claim to improve student success and promote a learner centred environment in which students profit from their educational experience. Theories such as these recognise the individual student and acknowledge intelligence as a universal but also culturally and socially dependent concept. Implementing such theories allows educators to reveal an individual's intelligence to a maximum level enhancing each student's ability to learn, reason and apply knowledge and skills to create a more fulfilling academic and personal life.

Comments

Lists the main points made in the body of the essay.

Final sentence places importance of the topic for educators.

Conclusion

The examples given are just some of the potential ways that classical conditioning can be used in an educational setting. The studies conducted by Baccus, Baldwin and Packer (2003) and Grossman and Till (1998) indicate that classical conditioning does have an effect on an individual and how they perceive things. Both studies, however, may need to be further explored and tested to see just how extensive and effective these methods are. Issues such as long term retention (months, years, etc.) of conditioned responses may be further examined and larger study groups used. With further study and analysis classical conditioning can serve as a handy educational tool to possess.

Comments

Main points made in the body of the essay are listed.

Final sentence places importance of the topic for educators.

Adapted from: Packham, G, McEvedy, M & Smith, P 1985, *Studying in Australia: Writing assignments*, Nelson, Melbourne.