



Writing a synopsis

Education research report synopsis

You have probably come across examples of synopses, or abstracts, at the beginning of academic journal articles when researching your assignments. If you have read these synopses, you'll already know that a synopsis is a summary of the article; its arguments and conclusion. Consequently, a synopsis is very useful in helping you to decide if an article is relevant to your research, and if it is worth reading. Synopses are also an integral feature of conferences: presenters are required to submit an abstract or synopsis of their papers, which conference delegates later receive. This helps the delegates decide which presentation they will attend.

As a student you may be required to submit a synopsis to accompany a long essay or report. Your synopsis should include an overview of your arguments and conclusions. Synopses are generally only one or two paragraphs long, and they are placed before the beginning of the report or essay.

The following synopsis, or abstract, is from a Master's degree research report. The topic of the report was: *The role of writing checklists in the teaching/learning cycle: developing English for Further Study students as writers and text analysts.*

Student abstract	Comments
This study investigates the effect of extending the Disadvantaged Schools' Program (DSP) teaching/learning cycle with English for Further Study students to incorporate writing checklists. The writing checklists were introduced after the modelling of the text phase and used in the following ways: i) to recap generic textual features of the model essay ii) to guide writing in the joint negotiation of a text phase and in the individual construction of a text iii) and as a marking instrument by the teacher and students.	<i>Aim of the research project</i>
The study draws on data from the classroom in the form of transcripts of the modelling phase of the texts and the joint negotiations, questionnaires, the students' essay writing, the writing checklists and a research journal for classroom observation.	<i>Method</i>
It was found that teachers and students can use checklists compiled from analyses of model texts to revise language features and schematic staging of factual writing genres, and to guide and prompt the teacher and students in the joint negotiation of the DSP cycle. Checklists allow students to communicate to the teacher their area of difficulty when writing, as well as assist them in the drafting and revising of essays. Finally, checklists provide teachers with a marking tool which encourages the teacher to make explicit written comments about how well the student's writing approximated the genre in question. The results of the study suggest that there are considerable benefits to be gained from including writing checklists in the teaching/learning cycle.	<i>Results</i>
	<i>Discussion</i>
	<i>Conclusion</i>

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