



Thesis writing

Body chapters



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

EDUCATION EXAMPLE

Example: thesis structure

Overview of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Subjects and Subjectivities

Chapter 3: The historical context: mapping the discourses and practices of physical education

Chapter 4: The cultural context: images of the body

Chapter 5: Discursive biographies: students' and teachers' subjectivities

Chapter 6: The case studies

Chapter 7: The physical education lesson as genre

Chapter 8: Conclusion

each chapter has an introduction and conclusion and is clearly linked to other chapters of the thesis

chapter titles indicate topic and/or role in thesis, and signal key concepts

each chapter is divided into sections and subsections

number of chapters depends on topic

Structure is imposed on the presentation within chapters by the division of information into sections and subsections, in a way that allows readers to see the relationships between different topics and subtopics. Because there is an organisational hierarchy here or a nesting of bits of information inside other bits of information, some kind of numbering system is needed to make the hierarchy apparent to the reader, as in the following excerpt:

Example: thesis structure type 2 (excerpt)

Chapter 3: The historical context: mapping the discourses and practices of physical education

3.1 Introduction

3.2 The British experience

3.2.1 Boys' physical education drill and games

3.2.2 The female tradition in NSW to 1960

3.3 The Australian experience

3.3.1 Drill and games – 1880 – 1930s

3.3.2 The female tradition in NSW to 1960

3.3.3 The male tradition in NSW to 1960

3.4 The masculine tradition as the tradition with sports and games as its focus

3.5 State of the art: the 1980/5 Syllabus in New South Wales

3.6 Conclusion: Physical education, sport and social control

ACADEMIC LITERACY

Learning, Teaching & Curriculum – Learning Development



Notice how the table of contents excerpt above allows readers to see how bits of chapter, sections and subsections begin the process of presenting the argument to the reader: seeing a chapter outlined in this way gives the reader a ‘big picture’ understanding of what concepts the chapter is dealing with and what arguments are being presented.

Structure within the sections and subsections of the thesis is also important for providing the reader/examiner with an easy-to-read thesis. Some of these issues involve the structure of paragraphs, the use of cohesive devices to ensure that your sections ‘hang together’ well and the creation of logical flow within and between paragraphs.

