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A good intro

Writing a good introduction

In the first 2 paragraphs of an empirical study report, a few key intellectual steps or moves have to be made in order to make clear to the reader what he or she is about to read and how it is interesting and contributes to the field.

Steps

1. Identify the topic or field in which the work is situated

2. Identify what is already known about the aspect of the field to which your work relates.

3. Identify what is not known, problematic, or a gap in the field which your paper will address

4. Identify the major innovation, contribution that your paper makes.

5. Only cite important or major sources

Example:

This example consists of the first 2 paragraphs of a recent co-authored piece. I've stated the logical or rhetorical purpose of each sentence in the order in which they were published in: Brown, G. T. L., & Eklöf, H. (2018). Swedish student perceptions of achievement practices: The role of intelligence. *Intelligence, 69,* 94-103. doi:10.1016/j.intell.2018.05.006

- **Topic space identified:** A continuing challenge in education is to understand, if possible, the intertwined relationship of intelligence, performance, and attitudes students have about school work and achievement.

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with greater ability to cope with the achievement demands (e.g., testing, homework, schools place on students (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2005).

- **Gap in the field identified:** Research on these relationships has been largely conducted in twin studies, rather than in general population. Furthermore, studies of student intelligence and their attitudes rarely link student performance and attitudes with those of their parents or caregivers.

- **Contribution of paper to the gap:** This study extends previous research by examining, in a large representative cross-section of the Swedish population, the relationship of IQ scores to student and parent self-reported coping with school achievement demands.

- **Novelty, originality stated:** This contrasts with previous studies that have used twin populations (e.g., Tucker-Drob, Briley, Engelhardt, Mann, & Harden, 2016) or those which have used school curriculum achievement measures (e.g., Brown & Hirschfeld, 2008; Brown, Peterson, & Irving, 2009).

- **Summary of contribution:** Hence, this study contributes to our understanding of how general intelligence interacts with self-reported coping attitudes students and their parents have towards the demands school work and assessments place on them.

- **Narrowing problem space:** Schools place achievement demands on students by giving homework, testing students on their home learning, administering examinations, and asking questions in class. Students experience further demand in how their parents ask about performance in lessons and on assessments.

- **Justification of manuscript's sample and measures:** Because a child's performance on school measures matters to their parents, the judgment of these important actors influences student abilities to cope. Parents often seek to protect their children from unfair or unnecessary pressures or demands associated with achievement assessment, homework, pace of schooling, and report card grades.

- **Narrowing of problem:** While these evaluative processes are generally considered legitimate (Harris & Brown, 2016), they can engender anxiety and concern among parents that may well communicate itself to the students .

- **Basic expectation or hypothesis identified:** It is expected that students with greater cognitive ability will cope better with such demands, and their parents will be less anxious overall, because intelligence is a contributor to academic success (Fergusson, Horwood, & Ridder, 2005).

This basic approach can be called problem/gap/hook. Have a look at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4602011/?report=classic for a clear explanation of how you can write the introduction using that technique.

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