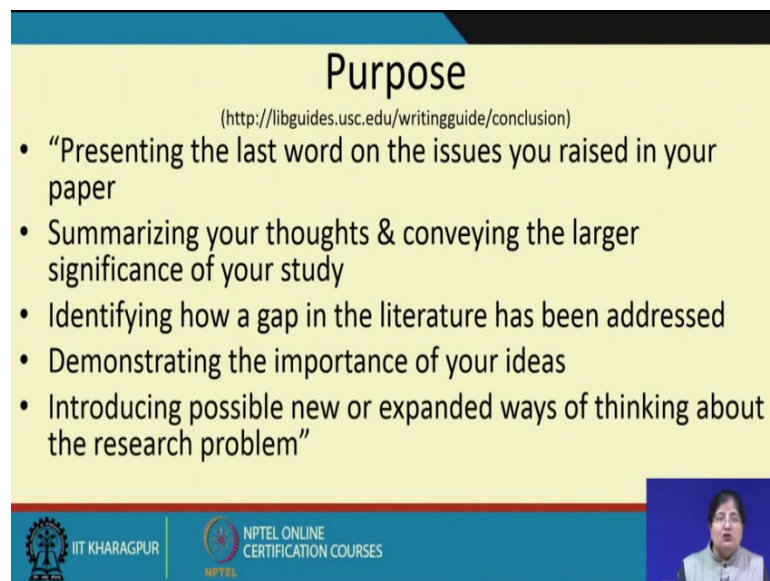


**Research Writing**  
**Prof. Aradhna Malik**  
**Department of Management**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur**

**Lecture – 22**  
**Writing the Conclusion Section**

Welcome back to the MOOC course on research writing. My name is Aradhna Malik, and I am helping you with this course. And in the previous lecture, we discussed the section or the chapter called discussion of results. We talked about how you can discuss your results in light of the literature you have reviewed. Now we are going to tie everything up, and we are going to talk about the section on conclusion or the chapter on conclusion, that you know what you write in the last part of your document conclusion.

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**Purpose**

(<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/conclusion>)

- “Presenting the last word on the issues you raised in your paper
- Summarizing your thoughts & conveying the larger significance of your study
- Identifying how a gap in the literature has been addressed
- Demonstrating the importance of your ideas
- Introducing possible new or expanded ways of thinking about the research problem”

The slide features a blue header with the title 'Purpose'. Below the title is a URL in small text. A bulleted list contains five points about the purpose of a conclusion. At the bottom, there are logos for IIT Kharagpur and NPTEL, along with a small video inset of Prof. Aradhna Malik speaking.



The purpose of this section is to present the last word on the issues you raised in your paper or your document. It is also to summarize your thoughts and convey the larger significance of your study, it also helps identify how a gap in the literature has been addressed. And it helps demonstrate the importance of your ideas, it also introduces possible new or expanded ways of thinking about the research problem, when you talk about directions for future research, you talk about your limitations, the problems you faced, and then you talk about the future research that can take place.


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## General rules

(<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/conclusion>)

- “State your conclusions in clear, simple language. Restate the purpose of your study, then state how your findings differ or support those of other studies & why
- Do not simply reiterate your results or the discussion of your results. Provide a synthesis of arguments presented in the paper to show how these converge to address the research problem & the overall objectives of your study”
- Indicate limitations of your study
- Tie in the research question, results and limitations of the study with opportunities for future research

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Some general rules for writing up the conclusion section, are you state your conclusions in clear simple language. Restate the purpose of your study, and then state how your findings differ or support differ from or support those of other studies and why. So, you have already explained this in the discussion section. You just take you summarize whatever you have said in the discussion section, and you state your conclusions. But you must remember, that even in this section, you must talk about your research problem.

So, very, very briefly, you said this is what we started out with, this is where we have ended. Do not simply reiterate your results or the discussion of your results. Provide a synthesis of arguments presented in the paper to show how these converge to address the research problem, and the overall objectives of your study. And in doing so you must restate your research problem, and the objectives of the study. You must summarize your findings, and present them in the conclusion section.

And you say this is what we found out, this is the method we used very briefly. The amount of space or the quantum of explanation comes down drastically. So, you have to be very crisp and everything comes down, and then you say ok, this is what we started out with. This is how we evaluated, or this is how we went about finding an answer to this problem. These were the results, this is how we are going to discuss or explain the results in light of pass, this is how we explained the results in light of pass literature. And

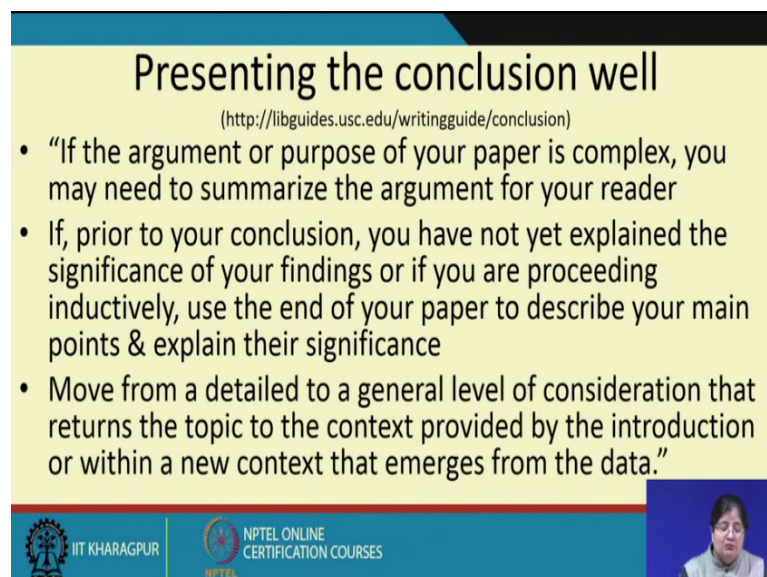
then you take these arguments, and then you show how everything has converged and you say ok, this is what we ended at. Indicate limitations of your study, do state, or do describe, or do a tell the reader very briefly in may be in bullet points if the format of your organisation or institute or or university allows that, as to why you were only able to do what you were able to do.

Or why many times we plan a lot of things, but we are not able to achieve our goals. So, you or we are not able to spread ourselves as much as the situation demands. So, you can say wish we could have gone further, but these are the results because of these limitations. They are not problems. They are not things that are that have gone wrong. These are just limitations may be even time has the limitation many times.

So, you know or the sample size could have been larger could have been things could have been more robust. The material we used could have been you know the weather affected the material we used. So, all of those things will make a difference. Tie in the research question results in limitations of the study with opportunities for future research.



So, you write down what you tie in your question, your results, and your limitations. With how some one who did not or who is not facing the same problem, or who had not faced the problems you had faced; would be able to take your study further. So, you say if these problems were not there, if the context had been different, the results could have been different. If the context was this, the results could have been this etcetera.


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**Presenting the conclusion well**  
(<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/conclusion>)

- “If the argument or purpose of your paper is complex, you may need to summarize the argument for your reader
- If, prior to your conclusion, you have not yet explained the significance of your findings or if you are proceeding inductively, use the end of your paper to describe your main points & explain their significance
- Move from a detailed to a general level of consideration that returns the topic to the context provided by the introduction or within a new context that emerges from the data.”

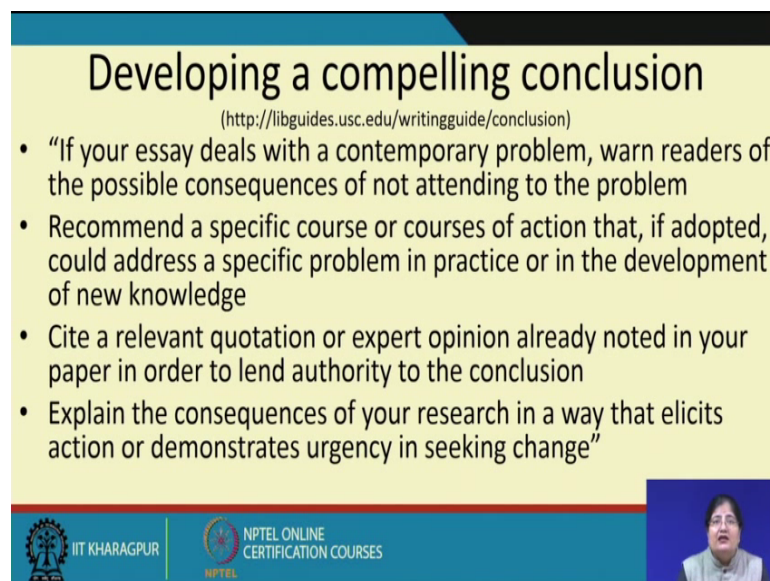
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Presenting how do you present the conclusion well. If the argument or purpose of your paper is complex, you may need to summarize the argument for your reader. If prior to your conclusion, you have not yet explained the significance of your findings, or if you are proceeding inductively use the end of your paper to describe your main points and explain their significance.

Move from a detailed to a general level of consideration, that returns the topic to the context provided by the introduction, or within a new context that emerges from the data. So, contextualise your findings and say within this context this is what we found out, this is the best we could do. Somebody with access to either more resources, or more time or a different context, could have done things differently, and arrived at different conclusions. Now this happens much more in the social sciences, than it does in the pure sciences, or engineering. So, you know that could be something that you might want to think about.

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**Developing a compelling conclusion**  
(<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/conclusion>)

- “If your essay deals with a contemporary problem, warn readers of the possible consequences of not attending to the problem
- Recommend a specific course or courses of action that, if adopted, could address a specific problem in practice or in the development of new knowledge
- Cite a relevant quotation or expert opinion already noted in your paper in order to lend authority to the conclusion
- Explain the consequences of your research in a way that elicits action or demonstrates urgency in seeking change”

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How do you develop a compelling conclusion? If your essay or document deals with a contemporary problem, warn readers of the possible consequences of not attending to the problem. So, if it is a problem that that the world is currently facing, then you can warn the readers of why you are you can use the conclusion section to to discuss why not attending to the problem could harm them. Recommend a specific course or courses of action that if adopted could address a specific problem in practice or in the development

of new knowledge. So, something that the world could do; so, then we were talking about action research at a different point in time. So, you know to relate whatever you have found or found out, to something that can be really something that can be really done. So, you say ok, if you do not pay attention to my results, then we are talking about the practical implications.

If you do not pay attention to what I have found out, or if you do not take whatever I have found out and put it into action, this is how things can suffer. This is the way you can take whatever I have found out and put it into action so that the the the specific problem in practice can be addressed. Now this is not going to be applicable, for purely theoretical kind of research. Which is again, but may be you know it depends on what journal you are using, what field you are from what is the norm in your own area. Cite a relevant quotation or expert opinion already noted in your paper or in your document, in order to lend authority to the conclusion.

So, related to past literature, explain the consequences of your research in a way that elicits action or demonstrates urgency in seeking change again. This is much more true for the social sciences. It may not be applicable to the pure sciences. It may not be applicable to purely theoretical papers, or purely philosophical papers. But then this kind of this is specifically true if if you are able to make that connection between theory and practice. Usually the readers tends to believe or it adds a lot of a significance it adds a lot of value to the the the document that you have written.


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## Developing a compelling conclusion (Contd.)

(<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/conclusion>)

- Restate a key statistic, fact or visual image to emphasize the ultimate point of your paper
- If your discipline encourages personal reflection, illustrate your concluding point with a relevant narrative drawn from your own life experiences
- Return to an anecdote, an example, or a quotation that you presented in your introduction, but add further insight derived from the findings of your study; use your interpretation of results to recast it in new or important ways
- Provide a 'take-home' message in the form of a strong, succinct statement that you want the reader to remember about your study"

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Restate a key statistic fact or visual image to emphasize the ultimate point of your paper. If your discipline encourages personal reflection, illustrate your concluding point with relevant narrative drawn from your own life experiences again this varies. Return to an anecdote an example or a quotation that you presented in your introduction, but add further insight derived from the findings of your study use your interpretation of results to recast it in new or important ways. So, tie it in that past literature. Provide a take home message in the form of a strong succinct statement, that you want the reader to remember about your study. So, you should end with the punch line.


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## Problems to avoid

(<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/conclusion>)

- "Failure to be concise
- Failure to comment on larger, more significant issues
- Failure to reveal problems & negative results
- Failure to provide a clear summary of what was learned
- Failure to match the objectives of your research"
- Apologizing for your work or the doubts you may have about your work
- New information: Lead the reader to new insights building on the information provided through the course of the document. Do not provide new information.

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Some problems to avoid. Many times we fail to be concise, you will say this is a reputation it is true even for the conclusion section, failure to comment on a larger on larger more significant issues, or to situate the results of your problem within a larger context. Failure to reveal problems and negative results many times. We reduce the size of our limitation section we do not report negative results.

Now, when we report negative results what we do is that, we say I had hoped that this is what my study would reveal; however, when I conducted my study, something else came out. But I still believe something differently, because of these reasons. Now when you report negative results, that really makes your work more sturdy. Failure to provide a clear summary of what was learned.

Failure to match the objectives of your research; so, you start out with something you end up with something different, and unless you tie both of them together, the coherence is lost. Apologizing for your work or the doubts you may have had about your work. Now this is the other extreme of limitations. Some people reduce the limitation section. Others tend to apologize for their work, and use a lot of Hagen statement which is not right.

Provision of new information, you lead the reader to new insights building on the information provided through the course of the document. But you must not provide new information. Now that is all we have time for in this lecture. We will continue with some more discussion on research writing in the next class.

Thank you very much for listening.