

remember to revisit your purpose statement and research questions. If you fail to do this, the readers may feel a bit cheated. Consider this example from a study from Mazerolle, Gerhard, and Eason,<sup>10</sup> who sought to explore the work-life balance perspective of athletic trainers who were employed at institutions of higher education that used a medical model approach to delivering health care to intercollegiate athletes:

After the initial analysis of data, three dominant themes emerged: role congruity, work time control, and collegial relationships (Table 2). The separation of the athletic training department from the athletics department became a noticeable sub-theme within the area of role congruity. Similarly, professional commitment appeared to be a sub-theme of collegial relationships. Each of these sub-themes are presented with supporting [participant] quotes.



***How many times should I present the purpose of my study?***

In an ideal world, all readers would view our work in the order we wrote it. However, just as you may have jumped around while reading this book, students may elect to read your work in the order that makes sense to them. Therefore, you should reiterate the purpose statement at the beginning of a discussion. In a thesis or dissertation, expect to restate the purpose statement at the beginning of each chapter. Don't fight it, just do it!

## ***Body of Text***

When writing the body of the discussion, be sure to systematically discuss your findings in the same order that you presented them in the results section. This practice adds logic and order to your overall presentation. When discussing your findings, you have some freedom to speculate about the meaning of the findings, but readers will expect you to compare and contrast your findings with existing literature.

You have 2 options for relating your study to existing literature. You can first discuss the finding itself and then explain the relationship. Your other option is to discuss the literature before articulating your findings. We present examples of each technique. The first example presents the finding from the study first. The second example leads with a literature citation. Both methods of presentation are appropriate.



***I know I need to link my results to the literature in the discussion section. Can I introduce new literature at this point, or should I only refer to literature included in the review?***

Again, it depends on your intent. Are you introducing new literature because your findings led you down a different path or because you simply missed these articles in your literature review? The former might be anticipated, but the latter is unacceptable.

In a study of women with disabilities and their perceptions about aging, Goodwin and Compton<sup>11</sup> relate the loss of physical freedom, one of the findings from their study, with 2 sources from the literature:

The potential for decreased independence with age elicited strong psychological feelings about the women's quality of life. The women were disheartened about the