

## What is a thought paper?

Thought papers are concise, accessible summaries based on research and your interpretation of an analysis of the results at this stage.

These brief papers allow you to explore your own thoughts, ideas, and insights regarding a particular topic in a less formal way than a journal article or conference paper. They should be written so audiences outside your field can understand your analysis and discussion.

You get to determine why the discussion of these issues is meaningful, and why the questions raised are significant.

Your thought paper should demonstrate:

- evidence of considered, analytical thinking about the topic
- points articulated in a clear, straightforward, and understandable way
- a logical, compelling, and convincing argument, proposition or demonstration of the topic

The introduction should contain all the basic information in one paragraph (“tell them what you are going to tell them”). Begin the introduction with a general sentence or a relevant example from daily life. Then talk about the topic you have selected. Finally, include your own idea/opinion/view in a concise and focused form.

The body of your thought paper should provide support for your idea/opinion/view (“tell them”). For this, decide on the key points that will focus your ideas and put them into “topic sentences” (a topic sentence makes a general statement that is wider in its scope than the rest of the sentences in the paragraph, and those other sentences should support it). Try to write in short sentences and have a new paragraph for each of your ideas. The final sentence of each paragraph should lead into the next paragraph. Also, make sure (a) the topic sentence of each paragraph really supports your idea/opinion/view, and (b) this is obvious to the reader.

Questions to consider in the body of the paper

- Who is the message for?
- What issue does the your thought paper address?
- Why is this issue current and relevant?
- What position do you take on the issue? Why?
- What evidence do you have to support this argument?

The conclusion of the thought paper comes in the final paragraph. It should be a restatement of what you said in your paper. It can also be a comment which focuses your thoughts and/or makes predictions for future studies. Note that your conclusion should include no new information (“tell them what you told them”).

The thought papers are peer reviewed and then available online - [www.cdu.edu.au/northern-institute/ni-research-briefs](http://www.cdu.edu.au/northern-institute/ni-research-briefs) or a website to be negotiated. With enough interest, thought papers could be reworked into longer papers for a special edition of the Learning Communities Journal, a peer reviewed journal published by the Northern Institute - [www.cdu.edu.au/northern-institute/lcj](http://www.cdu.edu.au/northern-institute/lcj).

For any questions, contact

Belinda Snell

Research Coordinator, Northern Institute

[belinda.snell@cdu.edu.au](mailto:belinda.snell@cdu.edu.au)