

Creating Module Introductions and Summaries

Module Introduction

Introduce the module topic(s) or theme(s) in your own words. What does this module cover? Why should learners care about this? How does it fit into the big picture? How is it connected to previous and/or future topics? How are the assignments designed to assess their achievement of the module and relevant course learning outcomes? What content and/or assignments do you want them to pay more attention to, or how do you want them to “think through” certain items?

Consider:

Attention-grabbing pictures or videos, or if there is a good opportunity to introduce the module with an interesting quote or “essential question”? (Note that you can also record this introduction as a short video, which will also strengthen your teaching presence).

Example #1:

Theories of crime and delinquency explore questions such as: Why do people break the law? Who is most likely to break the law? Where and when are these offenses most likely to take place? This week’s theories focus on the “where” and “when” by exploring the situational factors that can render people more likely to break the law. Specific types of situational theories include:

- Choice theories, which are rooted in the classical notion that people commit crimes when they believe the benefits will outweigh the costs; and
- Victimization theories, which outline the circumstances in which individuals are more likely to be targeted for victimization.

These theories have important practical applications, as with “target hardening strategies” that can reduce the vulnerability of particular targets to crime.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzRu--zQC6U>

Example #2:

In this module we focus on two statistical concepts that help researchers show relationships. First, bivariate description is a statistical method that allows two or more variables to be analyzed to determine if a relationship exists between them. The descriptive statistics we have discussed so far such as frequency distributions, central tendency and variability, do not illustrate relationships. However, bivariate descriptive statistics, such as correlation, do illustrate relationships between variables. We examine bivariate statistics, specifically correlation, in more detail. Second, statistical inference focuses on probability, sampling distributions and hypothesis testing. Inference or inferential statistics allows researchers to draw conclusions about a sample population. Hypothesis testing is one approach to inferential statistics. We will explore this concept in more detail due to its importance in helping researchers draw conclusions about expected relationships between variables.

To help with both of these concepts you will complete a quiz focused on understanding the statistical concepts and applying this knowledge to discussions on these concepts as they are used within research studies. As you work through the instructional materials in this module consider how the topics can be utilized within quantitative studies to illustrate and describe relationships.

Module Summary

Summarize the module that learners just completed. What are the “big takeaways”? If they only carry through 3 – 5 things to the next module or rest of the course, what should they be? What do you want them to reflect on from this module? How does what they learned connect to previous information, or how will they use it in future parts of the course? Have you included content or assignments that are scaffolding items yet to come? If so, give them a preview of that connection. Again, consider recording this summary as a short video.

Example #1:

In this module we covered the topics of correlation analysis, Pearson’s r , and simple linear regression. Correlation and simple linear regression are statistical techniques used frequently in a variety of research applications. The main themes from this module are:

- Correlation analysis helps researchers draw inferences about relationships between two or more variables in a population.
- Pearson’s r , also referred to as the product moment correlation coefficient, determines the magnitude and direction of a relationship between two variables measured on an interval scale. Pearson’s r , is a descriptive and an inferential statistic. Descriptively, it summarizes the magnitude and direction of a relationship between two variables. As an inferential statistic, Pearson’s r is used to test hypotheses about population correlation.
- Simple linear regression is a statistical technique that is used to analyze relationships between variables and to make predictions about values of variables.

The assessments in this unit as well as previous units focus on the course goal for learning how to choose the right statistic for your quantitative study. To learn how to do this, it is necessary to understand how the four components of quantitative research fit together: a) variables, b) measurement, c) hypotheses, and d) statistics. The correct statistic is a function of the number of variables in your study, how they are measured, and whether your hypothesis is looking for differences among groups or relationships among variables. These ideas carry over to the next module, where we start analyzing complex research issues that involve three or more variables.

Example #2:

During this module, we looked at what is happening with technology and what the future promises for technology in our classrooms. The two chapters in this module introduced you to the world of educational technology and reviewed the knowledge and skills teachers need to prepare to utilize technology in the classroom. Our engaging discussions and collaboration efforts touched on adopting technology for learners with special needs, using electronic portfolios, social networking, and open source options for enhancing technology utilization in our classrooms. You applied these elements in your journaling by focusing on (1) knowing why we use technology as we do and (2) how we can implement it to get best results by utilizing theories and strategies. The points to remember are:

- Many societal, educational, cultural/equity, and legal/ethical issues impact the development and implementation of technology.
- Research results alone offer insufficient guidance on how to use technology effectively; each teacher must develop a personal rationale for using technology in the classroom, based upon findings from research and practice on the contributions of technology to teaching and learning.
- Two lines of learning theories have given rise to two types of integration models: directed and constructivist. The challenge is to find the proper balance between these two models in your teaching.
- The Technology Integration Planning (TIP) Model is a three-phase, seven-step model designed to help you plan for effective classroom uses of technology.

You will incorporate these elements into developing your curricula lesson plans utilizing appropriate technology for this class and within your classroom teaching experiences.