

Drawing Evidence-based Conclusions: A quick exercise

By essay's end, it's important for writers to make a **judgment** on the issue; in fact, we are obligated to do this for our readers. Lots of times, however, we struggle with what to say, so we simply go with what our heart pumps out. **WRONG**. If you're going to have a logical ending to your work, you'll need to offer a conclusion that reflects the build-up of evidence prior to it.

As an example, imagine your teacher is doing research on the following question:

To what extent is a university education essential?

As a person - specifically, a teacher - what opinion is your instructor likely to have about college diplomas in general?

Ok, now let's see what she found in her research...here's an imaginary list that reflects the jist of the evidence he/she found:

- College diplomas make getting a job more likely, but going to school is expensive, so the money one makes ends up going toward paying off loans.
- Specialty skills and certifications are becoming more popular than 4-year degrees.
- Lots of college degrees today no longer apply to the job market.
- Having a college degree gives you a stronger resume, making you more hireable
- College is unnecessary for those who are smart and driven; plenty of examples in Silicon Valley and in professional sports to prove.
- Over half of toay's jobs are acquired through networking.

Now that you know your teacher's personal perspective as well as what the research says, what recommendation would you make to help her end her essay? What conclusion should she draw?

Notice that if we're not careful your own personal biases and preconceptions/misconceptions can easily get in the way and cloud our approach to research. Be careful of this!

Bottom Line:

Any conclusions you draw must be based on the EVIDENCE PRESENTED in the essay, not just personal opinion!