

DukeWrites Enrichment Suite

Essay structure, part two (2A)

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We'll be making a reverse outline of Chelsea Ducille's paper, "Musical Healing: Music Therapy as a Supplement or Replacement to Postoperative Pain Medication" published in *Deliberations*, the journal of first-year undergraduate writing.

The reverse outline identifies the main point of each paragraph ~ and I'll also be talking about how the paragraphs serve the main point of the paper.

Paragraph 1: Imagine lying in a hospital bed with severe pain after a recent surgery. Now combine that with nausea, vomiting, headaches, dizziness, and possibly respiratory depression. Often it is the pain medication administered that causes these uncomfortable and aggravating side effects. When patients have to deal with these side effects, it prolongs surgical recovery time.

Pain medications are certainly necessary in postoperative care, but finding a way to lessen the amount used and therefore lessen the side effects could greatly improve patient care. Many of the pain medications administered to patients postoperatively can cause complications or delay the recovery process. They also contribute to increased hospitalization costs.

This paragraph communicates why the paper's topic is important, which tells us as readers why we should care about it. The paragraph says the topic is important because post-surgical pain medications, that is pain medicines given after surgery, can have negative side effects. So it would be good to lower the amount of medications used.

And I'm just going to jot down the main point here in the margin, which is a great thing to do when you're doing ~ it's an important thing to do ~ when you're doing a reverse outline.

Okay, on to Paragraph 2. Alternative pain treatment methods, such as music therapy, should be considered as a solution or aid to some of the problems posed by postoperative medications. Implementing music therapy could possibly reduce the health risk of these pain drugs and medical costs. In order to determine music therapy's efficacy, much experimentation and testing is needed. However, effectively measuring, testing, and studying the effects of postoperative music therapy is difficult.

Pain is relative to each patient; each person has his or her own level of pain tolerance. Several studies have succeeded in measuring the effects of music therapy both

quantitatively and qualitatively. In the majority of these studies, all discussed in this commentary, the results of the experiments suggest that music therapy may reduce pain and/or increase the comfort and relaxation of the patients.

Some studies demonstrate statistically significant data that music therapy reduces the need for pain medications. Others show no statistical evidence of a reduction in pain therapy, but do acknowledge that clinical ~ clinically significant results exist that music therapy reduces pain in subjects. This commentary assesses the efficacy and potential of postoperative music therapy on patient recovery.

The first part sentence in paragraph 2 first brings up music therapy as an alternative method for treating pain. And the next sentence establishes the relevance of the research presented in the paper. Paragraph two forecasts what the paper is about and what it will do. After saying that music therapy may be an alternative pain treatment method and that studies have shown it to be effective, it also says that this paper will assess “the efficacy and the potential of postoperative music therapy on patient recovery.”

This last sentence says what the paper will do. It’s the main point of the paper. It isn’t really a main claim or thesis statement because it doesn’t make an argument or claim. However, because this paper is a commentary summarizing existing scholarship on a topic, it doesn’t require a thesis statement, although many papers in college do. To learn more about making effective claims, see the module on that topic.

And I’m just going to write down here the main point of this paragraph. Music therapy is an alternative pain treatment.

Ok, so on to paragraph three: Doctors can use prescription drugs effectively to treat severe pain, but with an increased risk to the patient. Prescription pain medications are often opioid analgesics or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS). Unlike over-the-counter drugs, these stronger pain medications in greater dosages are more effective at relieving pain, but also expose patients to a greater risk of side effects.

Even over-the-counter drugs, such as the analgesic acetomenaphin/paracetamol, pose some risk. Such drugs are usually safe but can cause liver and kidney damage. In contrast, the stronger prescription NSAIDS have several side effects, which can cause deterioration in many parts of the body. Ulcers, hearing loss, hemorrhaging, and renal failure are a few of the side effects. Out of all the pain medications available, opioids pose the greatest risk. Patients experience nausea, vomiting, and constipation, as well as the possibility of narcotic addiction and tolerance. Addiction and tolerance can lead to increased use of prescription drugs, which then can result in worsened health or hypersensitivity to pain.

So the main point is that pain medications can cause significant problems. These exact words don't appear in the paragraph, but this is a summary of the main point.