Designing Thesis and Dissertation Research

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Begin your thesis or dissertation on the first day of your graduate program!

Finding a Research Topic

What are people talking about these days?

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Trade Magazines
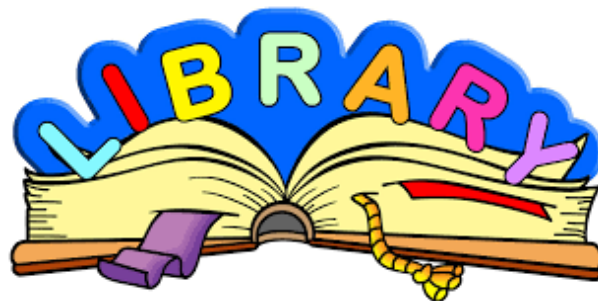
Go to the Library!!!!

Google Scholar   Journals

Companies on Social Media

Where do you look for a topic?

- ProQuest- electronic dissertations and theses

- Google Scholar

- Hardcopy dissertations and theses in library
  - Look at Ch. 5 recommendations
  - Read abstract of dissertation
  - Similar study in a different context
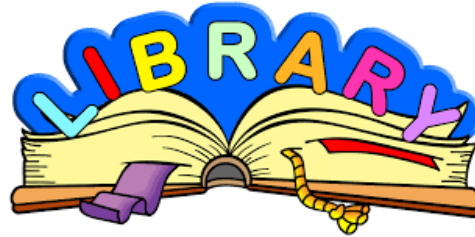 - Repeat a study from over 20-30 years ago

Where do you look for a topic?
Trend websites…

- *Chronicle of Higher Education* innovation/technology section
  - http://www.chronicle.com/specialreport/Next-The-Innovation-Issue/57?cid=FEATUREDNAV
- Campus Technology
  - https://campustechnology.com/Home.aspx
- CIO Dive, Higher Education Dive, K-12 Dive
  - http://www.ciodive.com/
  - http://www.educationdive.com/
- Educause
  - http://www.educause.edu/
- UNESCO and Technology
  - http://iite.unesco.org/

- Pearson Education and Technology Blog
  - http://www.pearsoned.com/education-blog/the-current-state-of-educational-technology-use/
- e-School News
  - http://www.eschoolnews.com/
- Inside Higher Education
  - https://www.insidehighered.com/
- Look at the Blogs in your field
  - http://www.briansolis.com/2016/02/26-disruptive-tech-trends-2016-2018/
- Journals in your area (look at table of contents)
  - https://journals.uair.arizona.edu/index.php/itet
  - https://thejournal.com/Home.aspx

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Now You Have a Topic…

Use software to help keep track of the references

Should be exhaustive research at this point

Back to the library to see if anyone else has published on your topic

Software to Use

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_reference_management_software

Buy a Style Manual
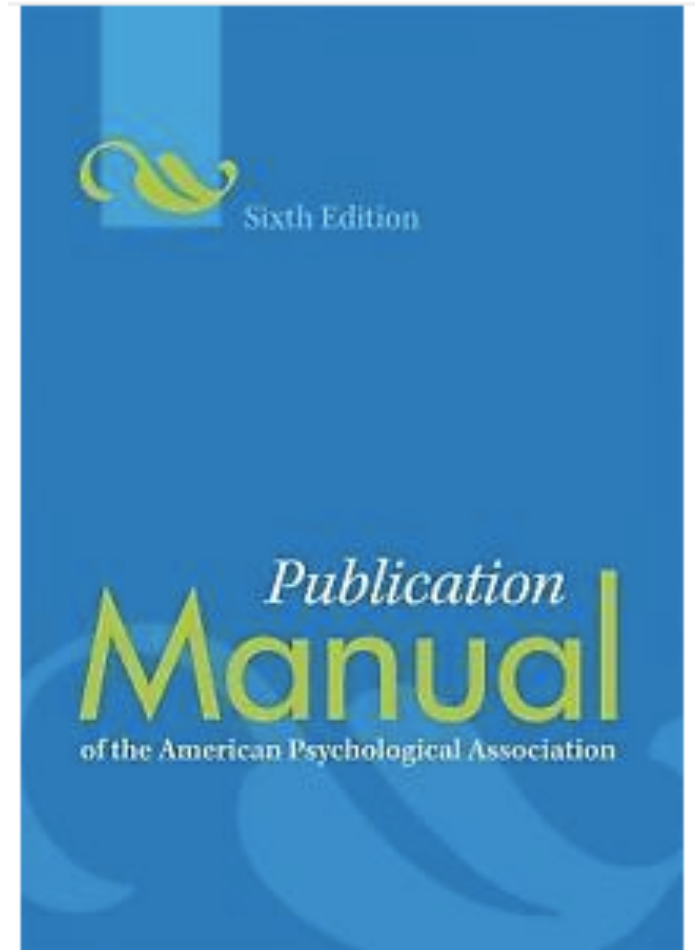
Key Questions…

1. Do you have research questions?

2. Do you have any literature review to begin with?

3. When do you need to finish?
   a. Develop a timeline with dates for completing work. (work backwards from question #1)

4. What are possible barriers to finishing by the timeline date?
   - Faculty takes a sabbatical
   - Faculty leaves the university
   - Who are your committee members (visit often!!!!)

5. How much "leg work" is needed to gather data?

Now the Research Question (RQ)…

- RQ's guide the methodology

- Central RQ (and possibly related questions - subquestions)

- Stay on target as you conduct the research

- Grounded in current theoretical and empirical knowledge

- Quantitative Studies: formulation of a clear hypothesis and operational definitions

- Answer to the RQ should important in terms of theory and application

See: http://dissertationrecipes.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Developing-Research-Questions.pdf

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Types of RQ's

- Existence
  - To what extent do octogenarians suffer from depression?
  - To what extent do teachers use technology to teach social studies?

- Description and Classification
  - How do austic children function in an inclusive classroom?
  - How do adults with ADD learn to cope on the job?

- Descriptive-Comparative
  - Are there significant differences in depression between those enrolled in social media and those not using social media?

- Relationship
  - Is there a significant relationship between mathematics anxiety and test anxiety?

- Causality-Comparative
  - Is there a significant difference in the performance of tests by children in elementary school when comparing physical exercise to mental exercise?

- Causality-Comparative Interaction
  - Is there a significant difference in student performance on standardized tests after being exposed to exercise 30 minutes before the test?

Durrheim, K. (1999). Quantitative analysis. In M. Terre Blanche & K. Durrheim (Eds.), *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (pp. 96-122). Cape Town:

Excerpts adapted from: Simon, M. K. (2011). *Dissertation and scholarly research: Recipes for success* (2011 ed.). Seattle, WA: Dissertation Success, LLC.
http://dissertationrecipes.com/

Research Question Checklist...

Statement	Check
1. The research questions are precise and concise, there are no unnecessary words.	
2. The research questions are manageable and contain appropriate restriction, qualification, and delineation.	
3. The research questions arise logically from the problem statement.	
4. The research questions reflect the type of study that will be conducted.	
5. The research questions are of sufficient depth to warrant graduate level research.	
6. The research questions do not require a binary (yes/no) or numerical response.	
7. There are no pronouns such as you, they, we, us, etc. in the research questions.	
8. The research questions are board enough to guide the entire study.	
9. The purpose statement explains how the research questions will be answered.	
10. Each research question is answerable by the methodological tools available to you.	
11. The Independent Variable(s) [IV] and the Dependent Variable(s) [DV] are delineated as is the relationship between them.	

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Chapter 1 Considerations…

- Introduction that tells us the importance of this topic

- Problem Statement

- Purpose of the Study

- Research Questions

- Short Intro to your Theoretical Framework

- Include who will be involved in the research

- Limitations/Delimitations

- Definition of Terms

Chapter 2 Considerations

- Exhaustive Research (150+ references)

- Use a graphic organizer, concept map or mind map to organize!

- Ask a couple of friends to look at your literature review topics

Lit Review Mindmap
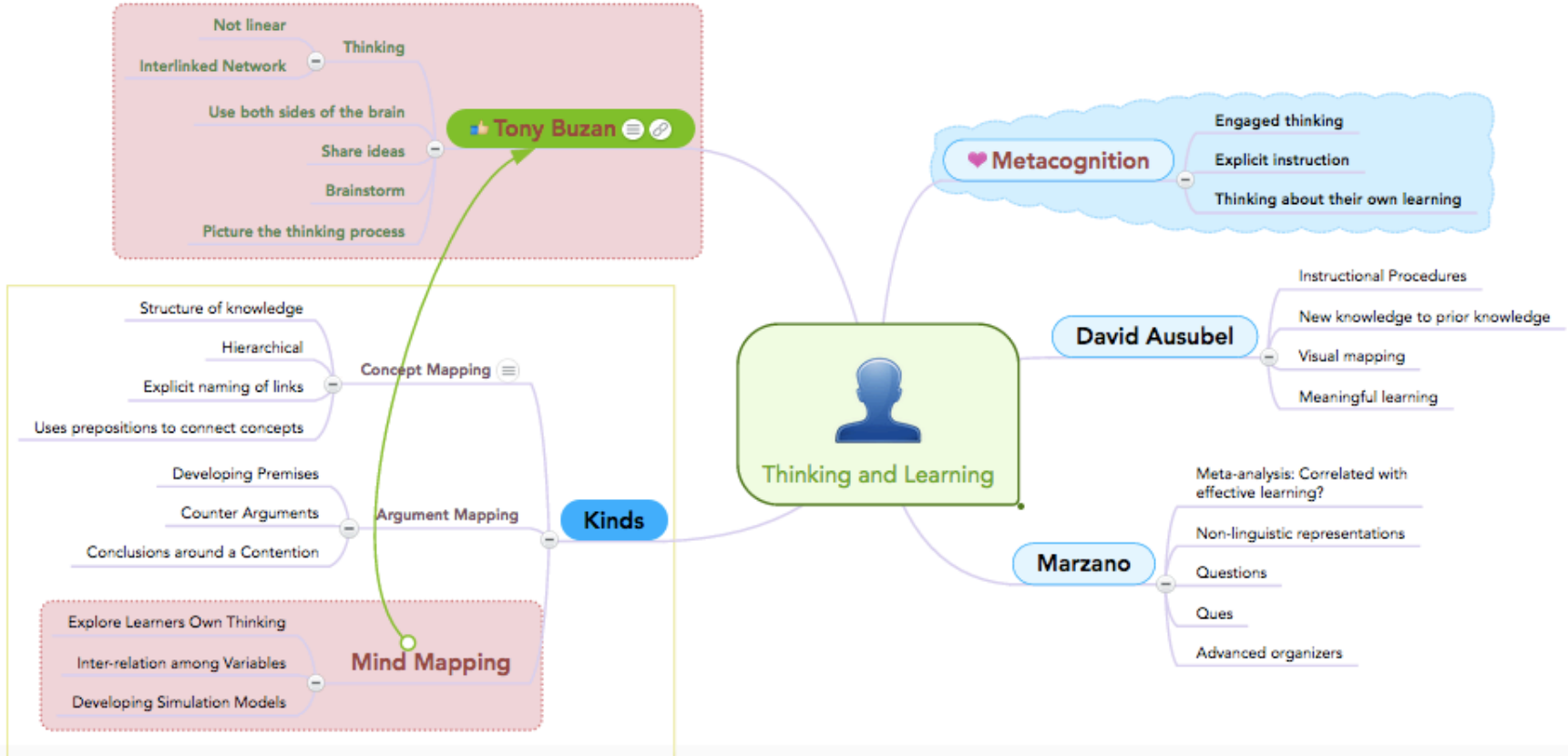
Chapter 3 Considerations…

- Should tell the reader
  - Who, What, When, Where, Why, How
  - Justification of the method
  - Justification of theoretical framework chosen
  - Timeline for the research
  - Who are the participants and why chosen
  - Survey: Provide in appendix, the literature review that supports each question in the survey.

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Now you defend!

- Create a short presentation (15 slides max.)
  - Have handouts of the presentation
  - May want to send the presentation out a day earlier than the defense
  - Have snacks, people are nicer when they eat...
  - Be prepared for questions
  - No one gets an automatic pass!
- Expect edits (lots of them)
- Expect that not everyone will agree with you!
- Listen to your chair!

Finally, Just Good Advice…

- Take very good notes with references completely cited

- Keep a copy of the article that you plan to use in your paper.

- Organize in a software the titles and topic of all articles.

- Always keep everything formatted – APA
  - https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

- Write for at least 1 hour every day once you start writing your proposal…even nonsense works

- Talk to your friends about your dissertation

- Write with a friend

- Get and pay an editor if needed

Advice Continued…

Use a template (email me for an OU one):

– https://www.ohio.edu/graduate/etd/index.cfm

MS Word Templates

Instructions on the use of all MS Word templates are written in the sample chapters of each document.

Video training on the use of the templates, including solutions to common problems is available.

- Training for Windows users
- Training for Mac users

Macintosh version of Word 2008 and later:

- Center for International Studies
- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Fine Arts
- College of Health Sciences and Professions - General
- College of Health Sciences and Professions - Rehabilitation and Communication Sciences
- The Patton College of Education
- Russ College of Engineering - General
- Russ College of Engineering - Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
- Russ College of Engineering - Electrical Engineering and Computer Services
- Scripps College of Communication - APA/MLA
- Scripps College of Communication - MITS - APA/MLA
- Scripps College of Communication - Chicago
- Scripps College of Communication - MITS - Chicago
- Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs

Windows version of Word 2007 and later:

- Center for International Studies
- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Fine Arts
- College of Health Sciences and Professions - General
- College of Health Sciences and Professions - Rehabilitation and Communication Sciences
- The Patton College of Education
- Russ College of Engineering - General
- Russ College of Engineering - Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
- Russ College of Engineering - Electrical Engineering and Computer Services
- Scripps College of Communication - APA/MLA
- Scripps College of Communication - MITS - APA/MLA
- Scripps College of Communication - Chicago
- Scripps College of Communication - MITS - Chicago
- Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs

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Plagiarism Advice…

- **Use a plagiarism checker!**

- **Remember the following when you check your paper:**

    1. Online plagiarism checkers usually only check materials that are openly accessible and free on the internet. That means they can't find sources that are in databases. So they won't find everything.

    2. Not all online plagiarism checkers work equally well. They all make mistakes. They are just computer code algorithms and are not perfect. But they can be useful nonetheless!

    1. You will need to interpret what the checker tells you. It will find all matches—even if you put it in quotation marks or a block quote. The checker can't tell the difference. It will even find matches for your reference list. So you need to remember that matches don't always mean you've plagiarized. You have to read and interpret the reports and make the decision.

    1. Some of these services offer a free version that is less powerful than the paid version they offer. Some work online and some have to be downloaded. Some only work if you pay and/or register.

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Possible Online Plagiarism Checkers

- The Plagiarism Checker (http://www.dustball.com/cs/plagiarism.checker/) This is free for a limited number of words, but you can pay for stronger checking possibilities. The free one seems to do a pretty good job. You can paste text in or upload.

- Dupli Checker (http://www.duplichecker.com/) This is free for a limited number of words and it uses Google, Yahoo, or MSN for the search engine. You can paste text in or upload. You can also identify if you have quotes or not.

- Doc Cop (http://www.doccop.com/index.html?nc=0.18362667) This is a powerful checker but requires some training time. But it's worth learning how to use it! You can either do a web search or do a file check. The web search seems to be able to get inside some databases. The file check analyzes sources you upload against each other. You need to register and keep your Guest ID for each time you use it.

- Article Checker (http://www.articlechecker.com/) This one also can search in some databases and is fast. It seems to not be as limited in word count. Paste text in.

- Plagiarism Detect (http://www.plagiarismdetect.com/) This site requires a login. There is a Demo that is free for 100 words, or you can pay for a more extensive one. The Demo is pretty good, easy to read, and fast, when it works. It can find matches on sites and in some databases. You can pay for a subscription by the use, month, or year.

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References

- All images are from Google Images and are being used to make the presentation more interesting. No monetary gain has been received by doing this presentation.

- http://dissertationrecipes.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Developing-Research-Questions.pdf

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_reference_management_software

- http://www.phdcomics.com

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