Research Study Tips and Hints

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Purpose

- To provide some tips and hints that should save some time, money, and effort

Contents

- Time Management
- Writing
- Scope
- Alignment
- Problem Statement Formation
- References
- The Committee

Time Management

- Learn and use project management tools and techniques to plan the dissertation and to track progress throughout the process
- Identify tasks, estimate time to complete, determine dependencies
- Gantt charts provide helpful visuals
- Some tools
  - Microsoft Project
  - Excel
  - Visio
  - Google "project management software" for a useful list

Writing

- Learn how to use Microsoft word as a word processor, not as a computer version of a typewriter
- Spend some time learning APA V6
- Find and hire an editor. The money spent will save money on tuition, frustration, and such downstream. A positive ROI!!
- Use the Writing Center for help
- Use Grammarly to check grammar, punctuation
- Ask almost anyone to read and critique

Writing

- Use active voice; minimize passive voice
- No block quotes; paraphrase
- Zero to few inline quotes; paraphrase
- Apply critical thinking concepts
  - Clarity
  - Accuracy
  - Logic
  - Precision
  - Breadth
  - Depth
  - Significance
  - Relevance
  - Fairness

See http://www.criticalthinking.org

Writing

- Words not to use
  - He, she, his, her, we, us, one, deal with, impact, British English, slang, colloquialisms, …
- Cite in past tense
- Do not use contractions
- Do not start sentences with the word "it" as "it" is ambiguous
- *Italicize* for emphasis in APA; quote marks require citations
- Double space all lines of text in APA V6
- In citations, & goes inside ( ), while *and* goes outside ( )

Writing

- Be sure to provide either the doi# (first preference) or the url of the journal homepage (second preference) for journal articles listed in the References section.

- Please do not list a database such as EBSCOhost, ProQuest, Academic Source Premier, or other university article databases

- Support assertions with evidence.

- Opinions, beliefs, or feelings are acceptable in journalism, but not in academic writing.

Scope

- The problem statement is critical; everything flows from it

- Scope a dissertation or doctoral study to a 12-18 month timeframe

- Don't try to solve world hunger; a great topic, yet not researchable in a few months.
  - Downscope to community hunger for example
  - Same topic, different scope

Alignment

- State the problem
- Derive the purpose statement from it
- Derive the research questions (RQs) and / or hypotheses from the problem statement
- Derive interview questions (IVs) from the research questions if qualitative
  - Participant responses to IVs aggregate to "answer" the RQs
  - "Answers" to RQs aggregate to "answer" the problem statement, thus closing the loop

Problem Statement Criteria
The Litmus Test

1. ## Is it justified?

   - Is there <u>evidence</u> that this problem is significant to the professional field?

2. ## Is it grounded in the literature?

   - Can the problem be framed in a way that will enable the researcher to either <u>build upon or counter the previously published</u> findings on the topic?

3. ## Is it original?

   - Does the problem reflect a meaningful <u>gap in the research literature</u>? (PhD)

   - Does the problem describe a meaningful <u>gap in practice</u>? (DBA)

4. ## Is it amenable to scientific study?

   - Can a <u>scholarly, systematic method of inquiry</u> be applied to address the problem?

References

- Download related dissertations to your topic and see how they were written and packaged
- Learn from imitation
- Suggest 100 or so references
  - 85+ peer reviewed journal articles published in last 3 – 4 years; a few seminal articles acceptable
  - A few academic or professional books recently published; a few seminal books acceptable
  - Professional / Government Websites acceptable
  - NO: Textbooks, Wikipedias, dictionaries, encyclopedias, newspapers, magazines, popular websites, blogs, student dissertations or doctoral studies, student papers, and so on

The Committee

- The committee is a guide through the research process.

- The committee does not include English majors and while the committee can and will help with APA and other form and style issues, the committee is not a substitute for an editor

Questions???