

Discipline specific expectations of thesis and dissertation writing

The structure of theses and dissertations

A 'simple' traditional thesis

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|-------------------|---|--|
| Degree: MEd | Study area: Education | Rater consistency and Judgment in the direct assessment of second language writing ability |
| <u>Chapter 1:</u> | <u>Introduction</u> The nature of the problem Origins of the study Focus and structure of the thesis | <u>Chapter 4:</u> Results Introduction Degree of rater consistency Interpretation and application of performance criteria Raters' reading strategies Influences on rater judgments of writing ability |
| <u>Chapter 2:</u> | <u>Literature review</u> Introduction Performance assessment Performance assessment and reliability Conclusion | <u>Chapter 5:</u> Discussion Introduction Degree of rater consistency Interpretation and application of performance criteria Raters' reading strategies Influences on rater judgments of writing ability Conclusion |
| <u>Chapter 3:</u> | <u>Methodology</u> Introduction Selection of research design, setting, informants and texts Data collection and analysis Conclusion | <u>Chapter 6:</u> Conclusions and recommendations |

A 'complex' traditional thesis

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| Degree: PhD | Study area: Architecture, Building and Planning | Community perceptions of town character: A case study of Byron Bay |
| <u>Chapter 1:</u> | <u>Introduction</u> The concept of town character Research strategy Thesis structure | <u>Chapter 6:</u> Community description of town character Survey aims and research questions Method Results Discussion |
| <u>Chapter 2:</u> | Byron Bay: From sacred sites to tourist attraction Regional setting, natural history and cultural history Concern with maintaining town character | <u>Chapter 7:</u> Identifying town character features Research questions Method Results Discussion |
| <u>Chapter 3:</u> | Place character: A theoretical framework Spirit and concept of place Models of place Dimensions of place character | <u>Chapter 8:</u> Relating landscape features to town character Research questions Inventory of town character features Randomly selected landscape scenes Part One: respondents, and rating scales Analysis and results Part Two: respondents and rating scales Analysis and results Discussion and further research Conclusion |
| <u>Chapter 4:</u> | Methodological considerations Community involvement in assessing town character Landscape assessment paradigms and methods Research design | |
| <u>Chapter 5:</u> | A threat to town character Club Med development proposal Research questions Method Results Conclusions Limitations and future research | <u>Chapter 9:</u> General discussion Addressing the research questions Concluding remarks |

A topic-based thesis

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|-------------------|---|
| <u>Degree:</u> MA | <u>Study area:</u> Cultural Studies |
| <u>Title:</u> | <u>Unworldly places: Myth, memory and the Pink and White Terraces</u> |
| <u>Chapter 1:</u> | Introduction Disappearing wonders |
| <u>Chapter 2:</u> | <u>Plotting</u> Travels of colonial science Plotting destinations |
| <u>Chapter 3:</u> | <u>Sightseeing</u> Topophilic tourism Site specifics Painting the place and myth Souverering the site |
| <u>Chapter 4:</u> | <u>Astral travel</u> Mnemonic tours in the 'new wonderland' Memory tours The buried village: Embalmned history Living out the past Museumising the past: Sanctioned memory |
| <u>Chapter 5:</u> | <u>Postscript</u> |

A compilation of publishable research articles.

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| <u>Degree:</u> PhD | <u>Study area:</u> Dental Science |
| <u>Title:</u> | <u>Vertical root fracture and fracture-related properties of dentine</u> |
| <u>Chapter 1:</u> | <u>Introduction</u> |
| <u>Chapter 2:</u> | <u>Background and literature review</u> |
| <u>Chapter 3:</u> | <u>Aims of the study</u> |
| <u>Chapter 4:</u> | <u>Load and strain during lateral condensation and vertical root fracture</u> |
| | Introduction Literature review Materials and methods Results Discussion Summary and conclusions |
| <u>Chapter 5:</u> | <u>Mechanism of vertical root fracture by finite element analysis and strain gauge technique</u> |
| | Introduction Literature review Materials and methods Results Discussion Summary and conclusions |
| | <u>Chapter 6:</u> |
| | <u>The effects of dentine location and tubule orientation on selected physical properties of dentine</u> |
| | Introduction Literature review Materials and methods Results Discussion Summary and conclusions |
| | <u>Chapter 7:</u> |
| | <u>Additional finite element analysis and general discussion</u> |
| | Further work and investigations |
| | <u>Chapter 8:</u> |

Summary of thesis types and their typical organizational structures (Paltridge, 2002: 130)

| <u>Traditional: simple</u> | <u>Topic-based</u> |
|--|---|
| Introduction | Introduction |
| Literature review | Topic 1 |
| Materials and methods | Topic 2 |
| Results | Topic 3 etc |
| Discussion | Conclusions |
| Conclusions | |
| <u>Traditional: complex</u> | <u>Compilation of research articles</u> |
| Introduction | Introduction |
| Background to the study and review of the literature (Background theory) (General methods) | Background to the study |
| Study 1 | Research article 1 |
| Introduction | Introduction |
| Methods | Literature review |
| Results | Materials and methods |
| Discussion and conclusions | Results |
| Study 2 | Discussion |
| Introduction | Conclusions |
| Methods | Research article 2 |
| Results | Introduction |
| Discussion and conclusions | Literature review |
| Study 3 etc | Materials and methods |
| Introduction | Results |
| Methods | Discussion |
| Results | Conclusions |
| Discussion and conclusions | Research article 3 etc |
| Discussion | Introduction |
| Conclusions | Literature review |
| | Materials and methods |
| | Results |
| | Discussion |
| | Conclusions |
| | Discussion |
| | Conclusions |

Task: Thesis types

Look at the summary of thesis types on your handout. Which of these is most typical in your area of study?

Task: Discipline specific expectations

Look at a thesis written in your area of study. What organizational pattern does this thesis mostly follow?

Task: Organizational features of 'high quality' theses

What, in your view, are some of the organizational features of 'high quality' theses written in your area of study?

References:

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- Dudley-Evans, T. (1999). 'The dissertation: A case of neglect?' in P. Thompson (ed.) *Issues in EAP Writing Research and Instruction*, Reading, UK: Centre for Applied Language Studies, University of Reading.
- Moore, T. and Searcy, H. (1998) 'Theses and dissertations: A guided tour', in P. Master and D. Brinton (eds) *New Ways in English for Specific Purposes*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL.
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