Developing the thesis

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Qualities of a good thesis

- Well defined argument
- Development of ideas
- Unity
- Structure (cohesion/coherence)
- Well presented
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2VCfOC69jc

Showing argument

- In presentation of problem
- In commanding the literature
- In the relevance and validity of data
- In the significance of the findings

Developing an idea-don't leave it stranded!

- Make a point
- Elaborate/explain/justify/qualify it
- Show how it relates to the bigger issue-how does it move us forward in our thinking

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Development of ideas

- The Australian Automobile industry is also a leader in research and development in environmental related issues.
- For example, Holden are developing a car that
- This experimental design has not been used before.
- The presentation of three pictures in a sequence enables ….
- (cf. the experimental design used in Chapter Four).
- This design is somewhat similar to that used in Chapter Four in that

- This has parallels with Allport's (2000) work.
- Both use numbers as the experimental stimuli

- Because the purpose of the current study is to explore mothers' perceptions of the impact of homelessness and shelter life on their relationships with their children, the qualitative research paradigm was selected as most appropriate. Qualitative methodology is particularly useful in studying families because of the emphasis on meanings, interpretations, interactions, and subjective experiences of family members (Daly, 1992). The theoretical underpinnings of the qualitative research paradigm in family research are phenomenology and symbolic interactionism. Phenomenology attempts to 'understand the meaning of events and interactions..and the subjective aspects of people's behaviour (Bogdan & Bicklen, 1992) ….

- (Pyrczak &Bruce, 2000)

- To our surprise residential instability did not predict behaviour problems and in fact children who had moved more often in the past year were less likely to have internalizing or externalizing behaviour problems…Although not a definitive finding, a possible explanation is that some children may habituate to residential instability and be less affected by moving to a shelter than children who have experienced greater housing stability prior to becoming homeless.

- (Pyrczak &Bruce, 2000)

- The present intervention has financial implications for communities as well. It has been estimated that women make approximately 1.5 million medical visits per year to treat injuries sustained by male partners and ex-partners (Straus, 1986). When one calculates the cost involved in this, added to the criminal justice system costs, …….is a tremendous financial burden to communities. It is notable, then, that women (in this study) who received advocacy services were more than twice as likely to remain completely free from intimate violence across a 2-year time period. Given the low expense, involved in training and supervising paraprofessionals (used in this study), this type of intervention is extremely cost effective.

- (Pyrczak &Bruce, 2000)

- In interpreting the present results, readers should consider several limitations to this study. First, only fifth-grade students from one elementary school participated. It may be difficult to generalise these results to other age groups. For example, younger students might have had more difficulty interacting and staying on task in cooperative group activities. In addition, mathematics was used as the content area for this study. These results might not necessarily transfer to other subject areas such as languages and arts. Writing activities, for example, generally take longer to complete than do maths problems. Students might have more difficulty completing this type of activity in cooperative groups because of the personal nature of writing activities.

- (Pyrczak &Bruce, 2000)

- Self-reported communication behaviour was assessed with the Communication Patterns Questionnaire (Shenk, 1991), a 23-item inventory in which each partner rates the extent to which they use each of a number of common patterns of couple communication in managing conflict, such as demand-withdraw and mutual avoidance (Shenk, 1991). The scale has been used extensively in recent couples research and has established reliability and validity (Shenk, 1991)

- (Pyrczak &Bruce, 2000)

- One gender difference that did emerge, as we predicted, was that wives in aggressive marriages tend to perceive their husbands' aggression as motivated by a wish to control them, whereas this was reported significantly less often by husbands. This finding is consistent with other research in which men describe their own marital aggression as instrumentally motivated (Hamber, 1992). The finding is also consistent with social control theory, which posits that aggression is used as a means of redressing perceived deviations for expectations. For instance, Gondolf (1985) observed that aggressive husbands often become aggressive in response to a perception that their wives failed to fulfil a role obligation.

- (Pyrczak &Bruce, 2000)

Signposting

Examples

- Exemplifying/Illustration
  - Some women were resistant to change, particularly those in the older age group
  - The younger women were actively looking for work, for instance, they joined recruitment agencies (particularly through online search engines)

Examples

- Restatement
  - Memory retention correlated significantly with certain diphthong patterns, that is/in other words, rhyming does indeed facilitate recall

Examples

- Contrast & Comparison
  - Legalising cannabis would eliminate a lot of the underworld. On the other hand, it would create another monopoly for some huge conglomerate
  - Legalising cocaine would not result in a drug addicted society. On the contrary, making it acceptable would mean losing its appeal
  - There has not been a housing boom. On the contrary, prices have fallen

Examples

- Sequence
  - ...leads to increased unemployment which in turn creates social problems

  - Pasture feeding fattens up dams which in turn produce larger offspring

Unity

- Unity means having a common theme running through the whole thesis even though it is comprised of many different chapters, focusing on separate parts.

Chapter Starters…

- This chapter sets the stage for the thesis by reviewing…
- This chapter focuses on the philosophical ideas central to the way…
- This chapter outlines and debates the…
- This chapter works to demonstrate…
- This fifth chapter seeks a space to…
- In this chapter I demonstrate how…
- In the last chapter…
  - *A number of these expressions maybe used to map out one chapter, particularly useful for the literature review but be wary of attaching yourself to one or two

Starters

This chapter begins with theories of task switching costs as a framework from which to proceed

The main controversy is around whether the costs are ….

This is followed by a review of studies that involve switching between languages

This provides the basis for a more detailed examination of bilingual issues, starting with a definition of being bilingual

This sets the scene for how bilinguals deal with ….

The review then focuses on how the languages are organised

Moving from structure to process, models of speech production are considered, and in particular how languages are encoded

Closing the chapter

- The importance of chapter summaries – allows reader to move from the intensity of specifics to the broader picture.
  - At various parts of the chapter
  - At the end of the chapter

- Summary section, or final summary paragraph

  - In conclusion, …
  - In summary, …
  - This review of the literature indicates that…
  - This analysis highlights…
  - Throughout this chapter, the…has demonstrated how…
  - Having identified and responded to…, it is now appropriate to summarise the central points raised in this chapter.

Uniting the Whole

- Create links at the end of chapters
  - These outcomes, as well as the…are delineated in Chapters Three, Four and Five.
  - Chapter Three moves on to consider...
  - The final analysis chapter follows, which looks at the…
  - Chapter Two consists of …
  - In Chapter Three the effects of …..are investigated
  - Chapters Five to Seven are concerned with
  - Finally Chapter Eight summarises the findings from all the experimental chapters. The main conclusions are provided along with supporting evidence from …

Linking sections within chapter

- Having outlined the problems of ….. I'd like to now consider the benefits
- As in the previous point which looked at the approaches of …, the next also considers multiple approaches.
- So far we have examined the partnership and the family relationships, in particular …... This leads us to wider relationships in the community
- The theoretical models have provided us with …Moving from theory to practice I'd like to consider how these models are actually used
- This final point is crucial to understanding business dynamics.
- In summary, we have considered

Not losing sight of the big picture

- Constantly need to relocate your big topic (chapter or thesis topic) within small sub-topics - ensure links between sections within chapters:
  - This model can be used to explain workplace relations.
  - These results provide further evidence for the benefits of early second language acquisition
  - This experiment uses the same triplet design as with Experiments 1-2. The only difference is the ...

Some Useful Resources

Becker, H.S., & P. Richards. (1986). *Writing for social scientists. How to start and finish your thesis, book or article.* Chicago: Chicago University Press. (808.0663 Bec)

Cantwell, R. (2006). Thinking and writing for your thesis. In C. Denholm & T. Evans (Eds.). *Doctorates downunder: Keys to successful doctoral study in Australia and New Zealand* (pp.182-190). Victoria, Australia: ACER Press

Day, R.A. (1998). *How to write and publish a scientific paper* (5th ed.). Phoenix, AZ: The Oryx Press. (808.0665 Day)

Evans, D.G. (2000). *How to write a better thesis.* Carlton: Melbourne University Press. (808.02 Eva.)

Pyrczak, F, & Bruce, R.R. (n.d). Writing empirical research reports (3rd ed.). LA: Pyrczak Publishing

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Wolcott, H.F. (2001). *Writing up qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage