

## **Useful Ideas for Doctoral Research**

collected by

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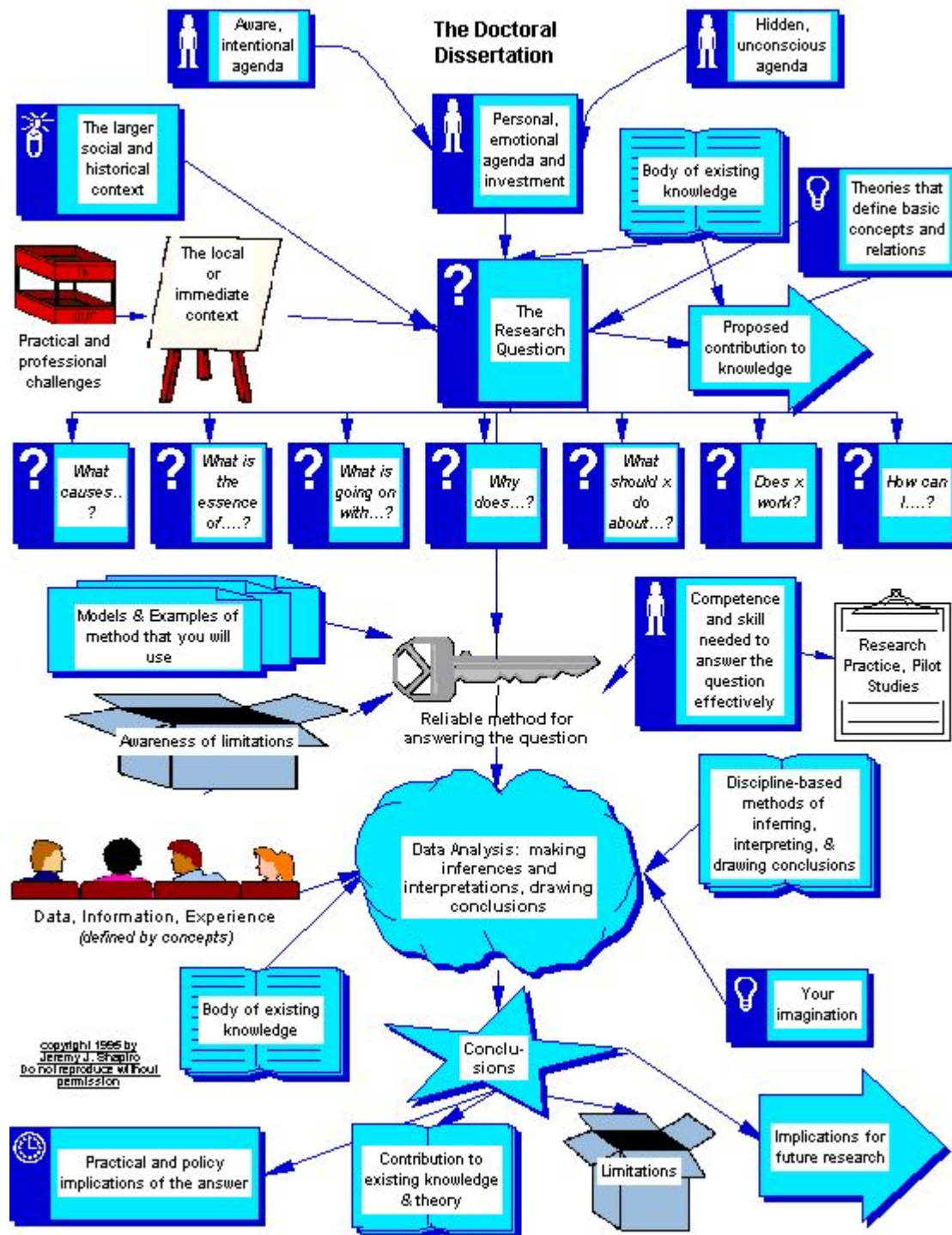
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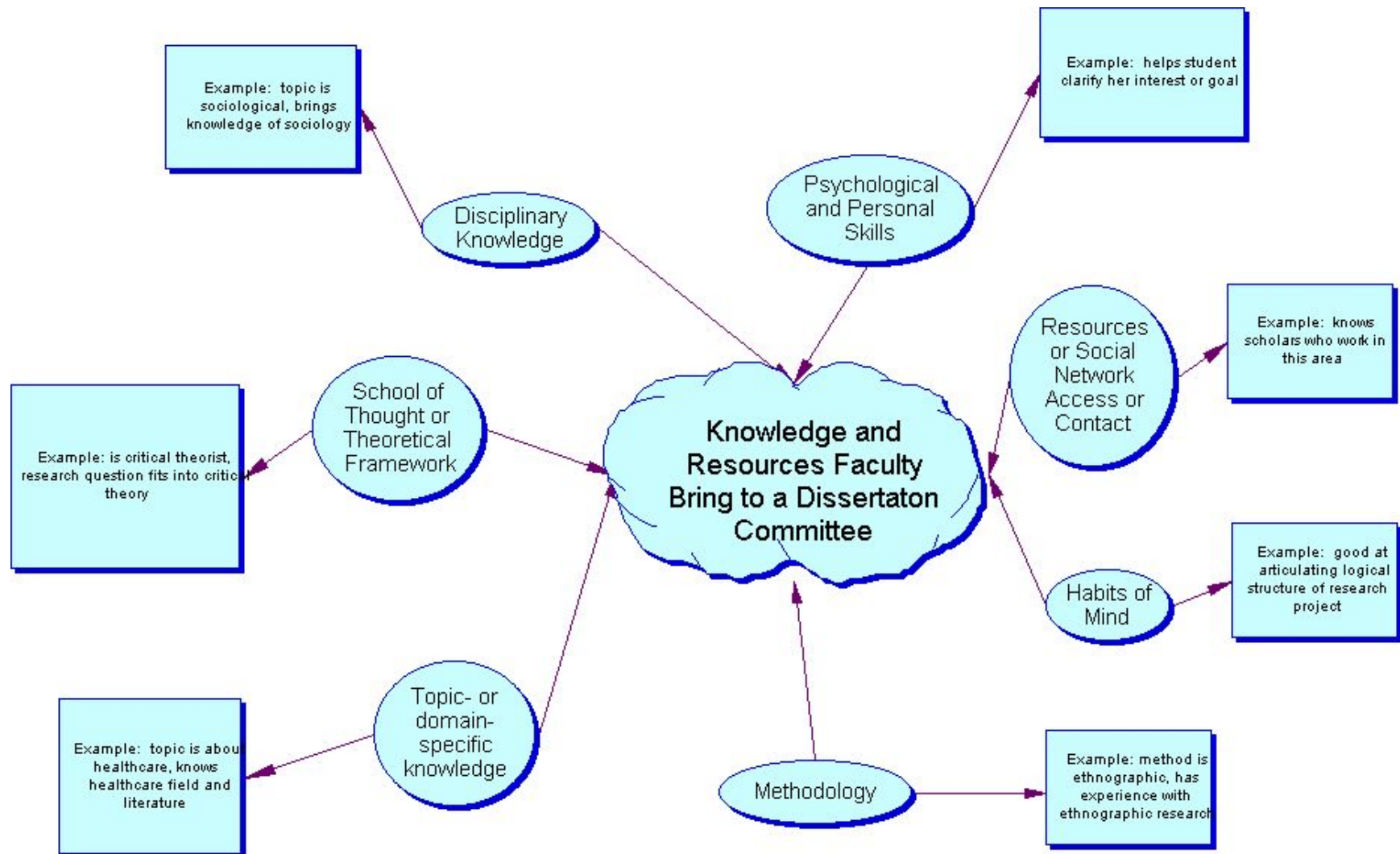
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# The Structure of a PhD Dissertation

By Jeremy J. Shapiro

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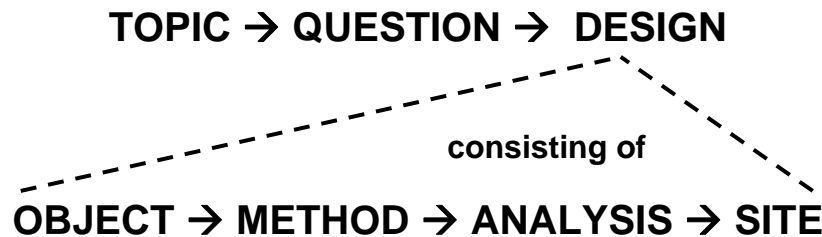




**SUGGESTIONS ABOUT HOW TO FORM YOUR DISSERTATION COMMITTEE**  
courtesy of Jeremy J. Shapiro © 2005

# **Seven Key Concepts in Social Research**

**Jim Spickard**  
*revised January 2010*



These seven concepts figure in almost all social research. Their order of flow is logical, but it is not always the order that is followed in practice. One should, however, be able to reconstruct this order retrospectively – before one begins gathering data

## **1. TOPIC**

The research topic is the general subject of your research: what it is about. It describes an area of interest about which one might ask any number of questions. “Religious social activists” is a topic; so are “the spiritual lives of religious social activists” (to name two of the topics that I have investigated). The key distinction here is between an area of interest and a specific question that one hopes one’s research will answer.

## **2. QUESTION**

A research question is the key element in any serious research. Typically growing out of the scholarly literature, it asks a specific question about one’s topic of interest. For example: my social activist research has taken up such questions as: “What formal motives do religious social activists report for engaging in their work for human betterment?”; “What sorts of elements do Catholic social activists use to express their identities as both Catholics and as activists?”; “What resources do religious social activists sustain their commitments and their communities?”. Such questions are not only more specific than are research topics; they are also grounded in specific scholarly literatures. They use concepts from those literatures and reflect on the adequacy of both the concepts and the literatures for understanding the topic in question.

## **3. DESIGN**

The Research Question determines your research design. Most dissertations use a descriptive design. Some use a correlational design. A few use a true case study design. Any of these can be either qualitative or quantitative. A very few dissertation use an action research design. (See the *handout “Varieties of Research Design”*.)

Research designs combine our final four concepts into a coherent whole

#### **4. OBJECT**

A research object is the kind of thing that one is looking for in one's research. Different sorts of things have different metaphysical statuses. Much of my research on social activists, for example, seeks their opinions. As such opinions exist "in their heads", so to speak, I must ask my informants questions. As I am more interested in "deep" opinions than in "shallow" opinions, much of my research involves interviews.

I am also, however, interested in things about which my informants are not necessarily conscious. I thus observe their behavior, seeking to locate patterns that are beyond their awareness.

#### **5. METHOD**

Research method comes after one knows the kind of thing one is looking for – i.e., the research object. Different methods produce different objects. One cannot, for example, gather deep opinions from a survey nor deduce people's intentions from their overt behavior. See the handout "How to Choose a Research Method" for guidance about the relationships between research methods and research objects.

#### **6. ANALYSIS**

Once one has chosen ones object and method, one knows what kind of data the research will produce. Only then can one choose how that data should be analyzed. Some methods generate data suitable for quantitative analysis. Others generate qualitative data. There are, however, several different kinds of each, and one's analytic scheme depends on what type one has.

This is usually pretty clear with quantitative data: for example, one doesn't typically run cross-tabs with small data sets, because cross-tabs require a large number of measurements for meaningful comparisons. But qualitative data also come in several types. For example, hermeneutic interviews must be analyzed for meaning, while phenomenological interviews must be analyzed for experiences. There's no one-size-fits-all.

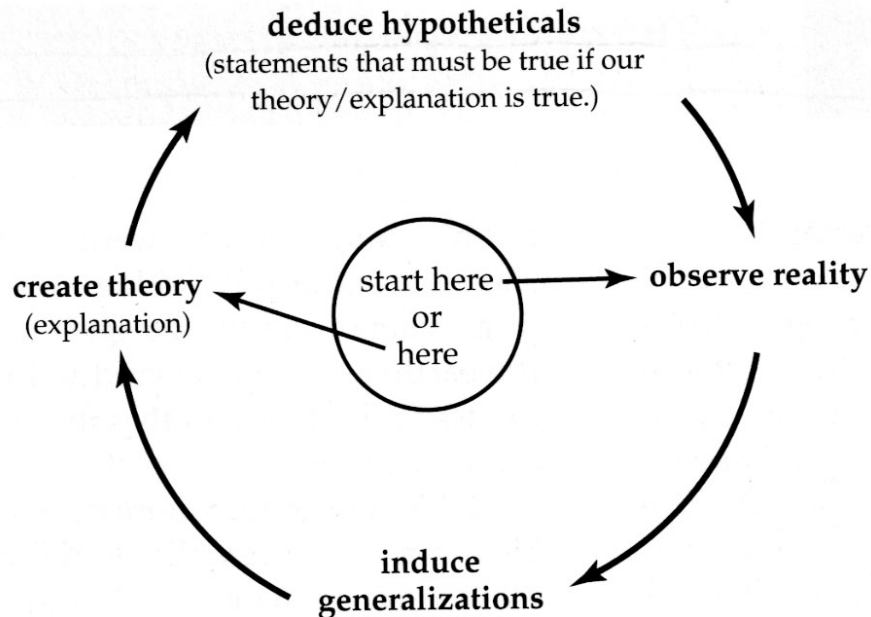
#### **7. SITE**

The research site is the place where one does one's investigations. Except for ethnographies, one usually chooses a site based on one's research question and the method one can use to generate data there. This makes sense, because one cannot find answers to all research questions in every site. (Ethnographers often start with a site, and then find interesting questions to ask there. But this is very hard work.)

My current "site" for social activist research is a Los Angeles-based network of activists, most of whom know one another but few of whom work for the same organizations.

# The Research Circle

(applicable to research that seeks generalizable knowledge)



Social research generally follows a circular process. One can begin by observing reality, making generalizations about that reality, and then creating theory (or explanations) of the social regularities that one sees. Or one can begin with theory, deduce what must be the case if that theory is correct, and then observe reality to see whether these deductions hold.

Both kinds of research are legitimate. Neither, however, lives in a vacuum. Each inductive move requires deductive testing and each deductive test requires inductive interpretation.

Furthermore, scholars taking each route must be extremely familiar with all of the research done in the other mode. It is not enough to say, "No one has ever done this before." One must recount everything that has been explored anywhere on this circle, and must demonstrate the validity and importance of concentrating on one part of the circle instead of another.

Far too many apprentice scholars err in thinking that they are the only people to have noticed a particular thing. When they explore the existing scholarship deeply, they usually find that many parts of this circle of knowledge have been filled in.

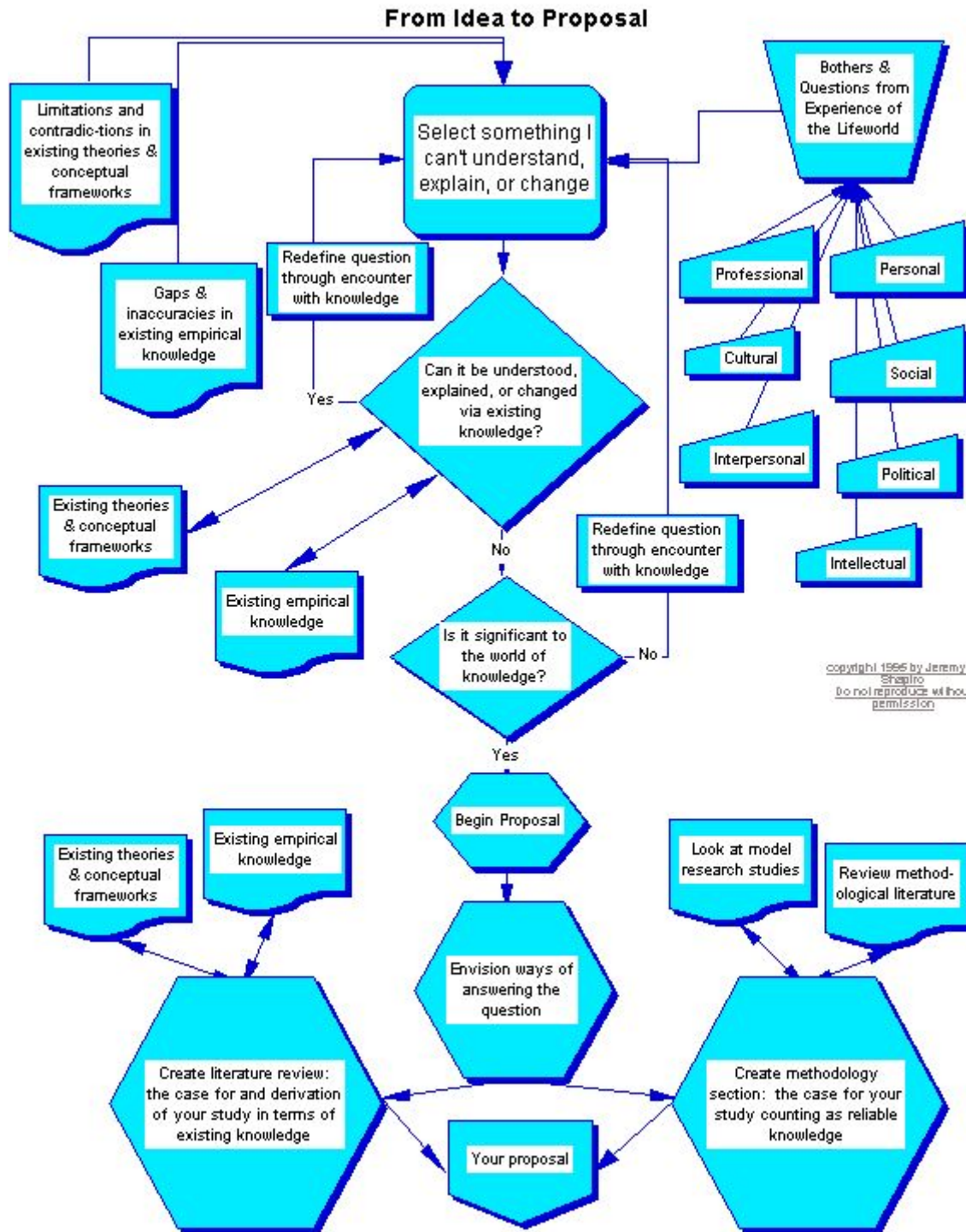
-- Jim Spickard  
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# How to Find a Research Question

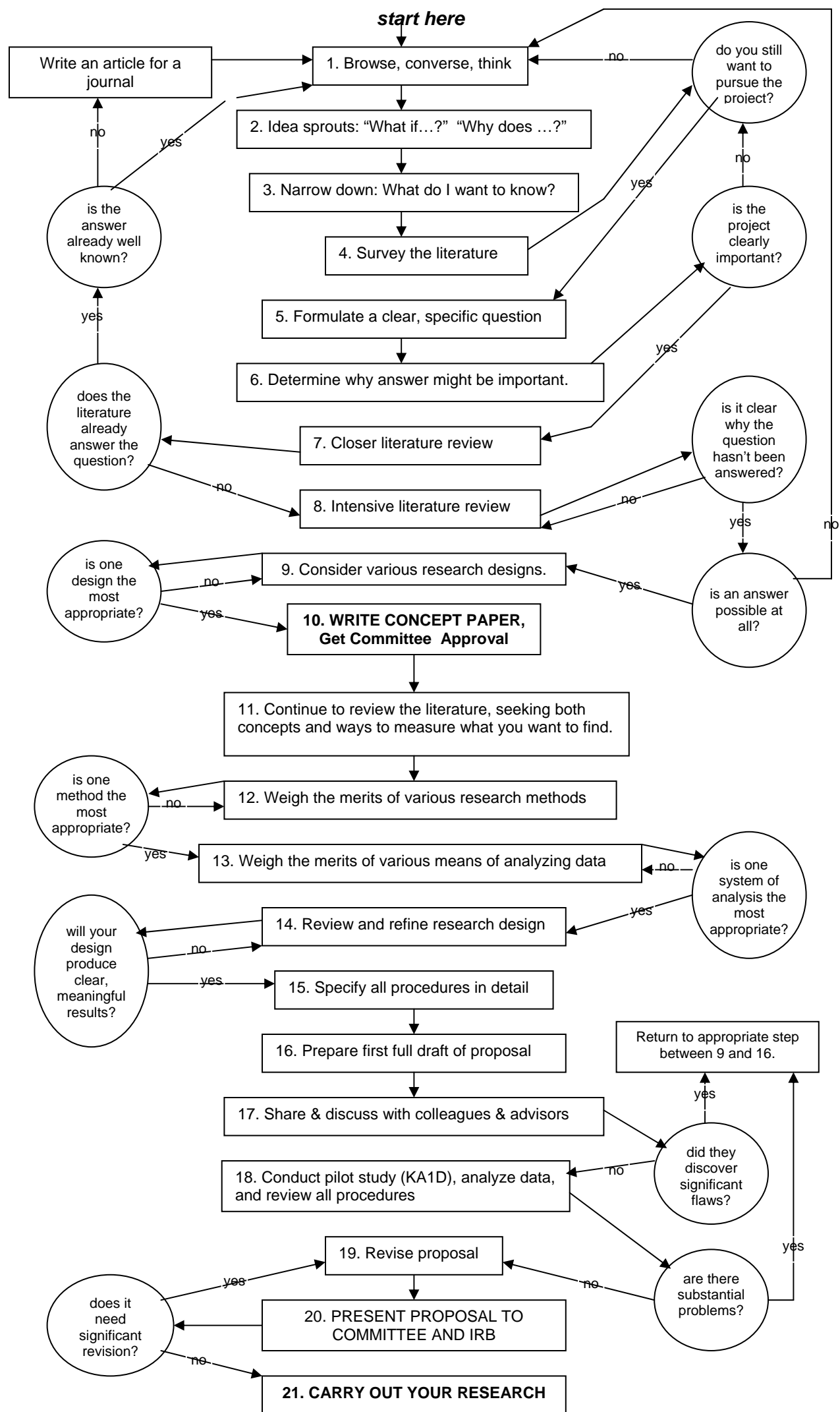
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Twenty-One Steps to a Proposal -- A More Linear View<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Modified by Jim Spickard from a flowchart in *Proposals That Work: A Guide for Planning Dissertations and Grant Proposals* by Lawrence F. Locke, Waneen Wyrick Spirduso, and Stephen J. Silverman (Sage, various editions).



## **What Is A Concept Paper?** **(a 1-page outline)**

by Jim Spickard

All research projects need a concept paper: a short summary that tells the reader what the project is, why it is important, and how it will be carried out. Even if no one else ever reads it, the concept paper helps a researcher spot holes in her or his project that might later prove fatal. It is far better to be clear at the beginning than to put in a lot of effort for naught!

Typically, a concept paper contains these elements:

1. A clear description of the research topic, including a summary of what is already known about that topic.
2. A one-sentence statement of the research question that the project will seek to answer. (This is almost always something that is not known.) The concept paper should connect this question to the existing literature -- something that almost always takes more than one sentence to accomplish.
3. A demonstration of why it is important to answer this research question. What good comes of this answer? Why is this project worth anybody's time?
4. A description of how the researcher plans to answer the research question. This includes:
  - a. a description of the data that the researcher plans to gather or use;
  - b. a description of how the researcher will analyze these data;
  - c. a demonstration of how these data and this analytic method will answer the research question; and
  - d. a summary of any ethical issues that may arise in the research process.
5. A statement of the limitations of this research, specifically the things that it cannot discover (and why).
6. Longer projects -- term papers, masters' theses, dissertations, and professional research -- also typically include a selected bibliography.

Concept papers typically range from 2 to 5 double-spaced pages (500 to 1250 words), not counting bibliographies. Longer projects spend more time reviewing what is already known about a topic, typically drawing on several different scholarly literatures to do so. Shorter projects do not need such depth.

Some projects, notably honors theses, dissertations and professional research, later develop the concept paper into a formal research proposal, which covers the above points in greater depth. Different advisors and granting agencies call for different amounts of detail. It is a rare proposal, however, that takes up more than 20 double-spaced pages (5000 words). A concept paper is a good first step in such proposal development.

In any case, the point of a concept paper is to provide a clear summary of the research project. It should enable a casual reader to understand what the researcher is investigating, why it is important, and how the investigation will proceed.



## The Two Faces of “The Literature Review”: Tips for Automating a Conceptual Transition

Jim Spickard  
(with thanks to Shelley Hughes)

All research projects require literature reviews, for two reasons:

- First, you have to know what has been written about a topic, and you have to have enough background about that topic and related topics to discover something new.
- Second, you need to give your readers a sense of that background, so that they see why your research question is important.

The first of these happens before you do your research; the last happens afterwards, when you write up your results.

### The Problem

Too many students – and professionals!! – don’t notice that the logic of these two steps is different.

- The first requires you to read broadly. That reading is generally organized by disciplines and by authors. You want to know what various academic disciplines, sub-disciplines, and communities of inquiry have to say about a topic. And you want to know what various authors have said about it.
- The second requires you to focus narrowly. Your text is organized around your research question, not by disciplines, authors, etc.

If you write your literature review in the former style, your readers have to wade through pages and pages of arcane matter, wondering why you have included things whose relevance to your research is at least obscure, if not opaque. Literature reviews organized this way risk violating the first rule of authorship: “Don’t put your readers to sleep!” (This rule includes your dissertation committee; life is much easier if you keep them entertained.)

### Software to the Rescue

While sitting in on one of Shelley Hughes’s presentations about qualitative data software programs, I thought of a way to make this transition easier. Software like NVivo and NUD\*IST can automate the shift from discipline-based reading to question-based writing. Here are the steps:

1. Enter your bibliographic notes in NVivo as proxy documents, following the system that Shelley outlines in her handout, “Using NVivo for Your Literature Review”.\*
2. Enter category codes as you read for discipline, author, etc. (It would probably be best to attach such codes or apply “attributes” to the whole document rather than just to a part of the note. That way, sorting on those codes will retrieve the whole thing, not just part of it.)
3. Code these same documents by their relevance to various aspects of your research question. For example, if a part of particular document is a good example of Argument “A” on your topic, give it this code. If another part is a good example of Argument “B” code it accordingly.
4. When the time comes to write up your research, make an outline of your argument, along the lines that Sara Cobb lays out in “Argument as It Bears on Scholarly Writing and Literature Reviews.” Assign the codes that you developed in step number 3 to each step in that argument.
5. Sort your documents using these codes. This puts all the references that bear on a given step in your argument together, making it easy to choose the ones to which you want to refer.

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\* These documents are available from Shelly Hughes at Fielding Graduate University.

## Argument As It Bears On Scholarly Writing And Literature Reviews

by Sara Cobb

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I met with the NY cluster, an extremely rowdy and intellectually stimulating group, this November and we worked on argumentation as a writing skill. I learned quite a bit and enjoyed it a lot. Folks have asked me to post these learnings here at this site, so here they are. These are just notes on my learning and intended to stimulate conversation, not "instruct."

Here are some of my learnings about scholarly writing and argumentation.

- (1) Academic writing can be placed on a continuum of style that ranges from "slash and burn" to appreciative. The more typical is the slash and burn, and I think the more "advanced" is appreciative, so I would recommend that folks ground themselves in what Peter called the "conflict model" ("I am doing something that others have either failed to do properly," or "I am doing something that has not been done because folks saw the problem/issue in a different/wrong way)." Once scholars master the accepted arguments that are made in the conflict model, they can evolve to a more appreciative mode where the argument is more inclusive ("I am extending the work of others that have pointed us all in the right direction through a new method or a new framing") Both styles are important, so although the appreciative model might feel better, it is still very important to make claims about what is wrong and why.
- (2) Good arguments are a combination of both styles. They should inform us first and foremost who else has CONTRIBUTED to our understanding of the issue, and then tell us in what way that contribution is limited or limiting (either epistemology, method, theory etc). Whatever the reason is that is given for extending the work, should open us to new scholarship that has moved in that direction (lets say they have used the advocated method) and again, the move is first to appreciate the contribution of the scholar(s) and then to address the limits of that work for YOUR project. Here is what a sketch of an argument looks like from this appreciate/address limitation perspective (BOTH OF WHICH ARE INVOLVED IN CRITICAL ANALYSIS).

### I. The Structure of the Dissertation Argument

#### **Introduction:**

- (1) Real world practical problem \_\_\_\_\_.
- (2) Related to lack of understanding of \_\_\_\_\_.
- (3) Increasing understanding of this problem would be good because \_\_\_\_\_.

Please note that why YOU care about it as an author is NOT central to the argument. Also, your description of your journey to the question is NOT the argument---Peter makes a good distinction between the "context for discovery" and "the context for justification"---the former assumes that the writer's "discovery" of the problem/issue IS equivalent to the argument and it is not. The latter provides a description of the problem as a function of features/aspects of the problem itself.

#### **Review:**

##### **Round 1:**

- (1) Scholars that have addressed this problem (of understanding) have said \_\_\_\_\_.
- (2) This has helped us to understand the problem because \_\_\_\_\_.
- (3) But their frame/method/epistemology limits our understanding of the problem in the following way \_\_\_\_\_.
- (4) So we need another frame/method/epistemology to help us understand the problem, given the limits of our current understanding.

##### **Round 2:**

- (1) There is a group of scholars that help us move past these limits given their focus.
- (2) This focus helps us understand the problem because it addresses \_\_\_\_\_.
- (3) However it delimits our understanding because it does not address \_\_\_\_\_.

##### **Writer's Contribution (at end of lit review):**

- (1) Summary: within the desired frame, although group 1 (Round 2) has helped us understand the problem, we need additional research because of issue #3 (in Round 2).
- (2) I propose to do \_\_\_\_\_ which will address this issue as it helps us understand the problem.

**There may be multiple "rounds," depending on the complexity of the review.**

#### **Method:**

- (1) Lit Review: Scholars have addressed issues like #3 (in Round 2) using \_\_\_\_\_(method) \_\_\_\_\_.
- (2) This method, developed by \_\_\_\_\_ has helped us look at \_\_\_\_\_.
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_'s work has been particularly pertinent because they address \_\_\_\_\_.
- (4) I will follow this person's work as it will enable me to address #3 (in Round 2) by \_\_\_\_\_.

### Discussion

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_(Findings)\_\_\_\_\_ is related to #3 (in Round 2).
- (2) Now our understanding of #3 (in Round 2) is augmented in the following way:\_\_\_\_\_.
- (3) Given this new understanding of #3 (in Round 2) we now can understand \_\_\_\_\_about the problem.
- (4) However this new understanding does not take \_\_\_\_\_ into consideration, so the understanding of the problem is limited.
- (5) More research on this problem (i.e., #4) might increase our understanding of the problem.

What should be clear is that issue #3 in Round 2 is itself a contribution to our understanding of the problem, and that the research that is done is done on it as a way to extend our understanding of the problem.

It also should be clear that there is a pattern to scholarly argument: discussion of the presence of the contribution of a given theory/method for helping us increase our understanding of something, and then a discussion of the limitations of that same perspective. Then the solution to those limitations is itself addressed in terms of what it adds (presence) and what it cannot do for us (absence). This way, each new line of research that is discussed is the Solution to the problems that are raised in the discussion of the "absence" of the previous body of research.

Then in the discussion section, the new findings should help us address what is absent in all the previously reviewed perspectives. This should be a dense and interesting re-tracing of all the "absences" in relation to your (the writer's) findings.

This is why your faculty, Peter and Jeremy, would say that writing is a critical activity---it is an analysis of the contributions and the limitations of a given way of understanding a problem. Our understanding of the problem is thus advanced through this critical analysis, long before you get to your own findings (in the case of a dissertation).

### II. Implications for this model of argumentation:

- (1) Summaries are essential to argumentation---they help tie limitations back to the problem and tie contributions to limitations etc. Each section of a scholarly piece should have a good summary paragraph reminding folks what we now know. This is the mortar in the bricks of your argument.
- (2) Headings help focus the reader on a new segment that is connected logically to the previous, but is a new area. These should appear with every new arena of research that is reviewed or each segment of the argument itself (in the example above it would be the various rounds, etc. Headings should be logically related to each other, in a hierarchical relation, so that the main headings subsume topics that are to be read as subsumed under that topic. Here is how they should be done according to Chicago manual of Style.

#1 Centered Underlined: Animals

#2 Centered: Mammals

#3 Left Justified and Underlined: Dogs

#4 Left Justified: Wild Dogs of Africa

#5 Indented 5 spaces, as the first segment of a paragraph, bolded or italics, followed by a period:  
"Matriarchy in Wild Dog Packs."

(3) Using this notion of "argument," the lit review and the data analysis are both contributions to research, as both augment our understanding. Many of the journal articles you read will increase our understanding by review the "lit" or the issues in a new way, and never get to data or analysis. So be clear that you are doing scholarship when you use this kind of critical analysis.

(4) Lists are logic crutches---they appear when there is no logic to string things together. While I have suggested that argue-mentation (cool huh..) is better for scholarship, sometimes you may need lists. I am just suggesting that you watch out where they show up and be curious about what they are masking in your writing.

(5) This mode of argumentation is logico-deductive. It has been central to logical positivism. AFTER you have mastered it, you can think more freely about how the form of the writing is reflexively related to the kind of knowledge we generate, and there are other ways of writing that better fit extremely reflexive projects like participatory action projects for example. Meanwhile I strongly suggest that you master this logico-deductive model of argumentation as I am very much hoping that we can provide you skills needed to participate in scholarly conversations, including scholarly publications.

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Please do not read this posting as either an "instruction" or as representing the thoughts of the HOD faculty. These are my thoughts, having read and enjoyed Booth et al's book The Craft of Research.

-- Sara

# Student's Responses to Committee's Dissertation / Proposal Comments

Section &/or Page	Comment By	Essence of Comment	What I'll Do About It
Chapter 1			
	Faculty X	Sample overall comment (yada yada yada)	[SAMPLE] Good point! I've made changes at points a, b, and c in response to this.
Page 3, line 12	Faculty X	Sample specific comment (yada yada yada)	[SAMPLE] Also a good point, but solved by change 6 lines below.
Page 4, line 14	Faculty Y	Sample specific comment (yada yada yada)	[SAMPLE] I'm not sure I see the point of this, given the method that I'm using. What am I missing? Can we talk?
	Student Reader	Sample comment (yada yada yada)	[SAMPLE] I'll fix this in the next draft
	External Examiner	Sample overall comment (yada yada yada)	[SAMPLE] Good point, but obviated by h and i on pages 6-7
Page 12, line 6	External Examiner	Sample specific comment (yada yada yada)	[SAMPLE] Thanks for the reference. It led me to change j, k, and l.
	Student's own comments	My own insights, after re-reading my work	[SAMPLE] I've made changes e, f, and g in response to this.
Chapter 2			
	Faculty X	[Similar stuff]	[Similar stuff]
Page m, line n	Faculty Y	[Similar stuff]	[Similar stuff]
	Student Reader	[Similar stuff]	[Similar stuff]
	External Examiner	[Similar stuff]	[Similar stuff]
Page q, line r	External Examiner	[Similar stuff]	[Similar stuff]
	Student (Self)	[Similar stuff]	[Similar stuff]
ETC.			

NOTE: Thanks to Ande Diaz for reminding me of this template's existence. She seems to think that I invented it. I remember using it with several of my dissertation students some years ago, but I doubt that I can claim such creativity. At any rate, it deserves wider distribution. – Jim Spickard

**How to Grade a Dissertation:**  
**Characteristics of Outstanding, Very Good,**  
**Acceptable, and Unacceptable Work**

Barbara E. Lovitts  
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The American Association of University Professors recently reported the results of a study that surveyed professors at major research universities about what they look for in a dissertation. (Academe, Nov-Dec 2005, pp18ff.; <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/academe/2005/ND/Feat/lovi.htm>).

**Characteristics of Dissertations**

Below are the criteria the focus group members specified for each level of dissertation quality.

**Outstanding**

- Is original and significant, ambitious, brilliant, clear, clever, coherent, compelling, concise, creative, elegant, engaging, exciting, interesting, insightful, persuasive, sophisticated, surprising, and thoughtful
- Is very well written and organized
- Is synthetic and interdisciplinary
- Connects components in a seamless way
- Exhibits mature, independent thinking
- Has a point of view and a strong, confident, independent, and authoritative voice
- Asks new questions or addresses an important question or problem
- Clearly states the problem and why it is important
- Displays a deep understanding of a massive amount of complicated literature
- Exhibits command and authority over the material
- Argument is focused, logical, rigorous, and sustained
- Is theoretically sophisticated and shows a deep understanding of theory
- Has a brilliant research design
- Uses or develops new tools, methods, approaches, or types of analyses
- Is thoroughly researched
- Has rich data from multiple sources
- Analysis is comprehensive, complete, sophisticated, and convincing
- Results are significant
- Conclusion ties the whole thing together
- Is publishable in top-tier journals
- Is of interest to a larger community and changes the way people think
- Pushes the discipline's boundaries and opens new areas for research

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**Very Good**

- Is solid
- Is well written and organized
- Has some original ideas, insights, and observations, but is less original, significant, ambitious, interesting, and exciting than the outstanding category
- Has a good question or problem that tends to be small and traditional
- Is the next step in a research program (good normal science)
- Shows understanding and mastery of the subject matter
- Has a strong, comprehensive, and coherent argument



- Includes well-executed research
- Demonstrates technical competence
- Uses appropriate (standard) theory, methods, and techniques
- Obtains solid, expected results or answers
- Misses opportunities to completely explore interesting issues and connections
- Makes a modest contribution to the field but does not open it up

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### **Acceptable**

- Is workmanlike
- Demonstrates technical competence
- Shows the ability to do research
- Is not very original or significant
- Is not interesting, exciting, or surprising
- Displays little creativity, imagination, or insight
- Writing is pedestrian and plodding
- Has a weak structure and organization
- Is narrow in scope
- Has a question or problem that is not exciting—is often highly derivative or an extension of the adviser's work
- Displays a narrow understanding of the field
- Reviews the literature adequately—knows the literature but is not critical of it or does not discuss what is important
- Can sustain an argument, but the argument is not imaginative, complex, or convincing
- Demonstrates understanding of theory at a simple level, and theory is minimally to competently applied to the problem
- Uses standard methods
- Has an unsophisticated analysis—does not explore all possibilities and misses connections
- Has predictable results that are not exciting
- Makes a small contribution

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### **Unacceptable**

- Is poorly written
- Has spelling and grammatical errors
- Has a sloppy presentation
- Contains errors or mistakes
- Plagiarizes or deliberately misreads or misuses sources
- Does not understand basic concepts, processes, or conventions of the discipline
- Lacks careful thought
- Looks at a question or problem that is trivial, weak, unoriginal, or already solved
- Does not understand or misses relevant literature
- Has a weak, inconsistent, self-contradictory, unconvincing, or invalid argument
- Does not handle theory well, or theory is missing or wrong
- Relies on inappropriate or incorrect methods
- Has data that are flawed, wrong, false, fudged, or misinterpreted
- Has wrong, inappropriate, incoherent, or confused analysis
- Includes results that are obvious, already known, unexplained, or misinterpreted

- Has unsupported or exaggerated interpretation
- Does not make a contribution

### **Components of the Generic Dissertation**

The following dimensions emerged from the analysis of the results of the study.

#### **Component 1: Introduction**

The introduction

- Includes a problem statement
- Makes clear the research question to be addressed
- Describes the motivation for the study
- Describes the context in which the question arises
- Summarizes the dissertation's findings
- Discusses the importance of the findings
- Provides a roadmap for readers

#### **Component 2: Literature Review**

The review

- Is comprehensive and up to date
- Shows a command of the literature
- Contextualizes the problem
- Includes a discussion of the literature that is selective, synthetic, analytical, and thematic

#### **Component 3: Theory**

The theory that is applied or developed

- Is appropriate
- Is logically interpreted
- Is well understood
- Aligns with the question at hand

In addition, the author shows comprehension of the theory's

- Strengths
- Limitations

#### **Component 4: Methods**

The methods applied or developed are

- Appropriate
- Described in detail
- In alignment with the question addressed and the theory used

In addition, the author demonstrates

- An understanding of the methods' advantages and disadvantages
- How to use the methods

#### **Component 5: Results or Analysis**

The analysis

- Is appropriate
- Aligns with the question and hypotheses raised
- Shows sophistication
- Is iterative

In addition, the amount and quality of data or information is

- Sufficient
- Well presented
- Intelligently interpreted

The author also cogently expresses

- The insights gained from the study
- The study's limitations

### **Component 6: Discussion or Conclusion**

The conclusion

- Summarizes the findings
- Provides perspective on them
- Refers back to the introduction
- Ties everything together
- Discusses the study's strengths and weaknesses
- Discusses implications and applications for the discipline
- Discusses future directions for research

## Style, Simplified

by  
Paul Spickard  
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It is only fair to warn you that I care about the English language. I come from a grammatically conservative family. If as a lad I had done something terrible—murdered someone, or committed rape or arson—my family would have been distraught but they would have stuck by me. They would have hired a lawyer for me, come to my trial, visited me in jail, comforted me on the night of my execution. But if I split an infinitive or dangled a participle in public I was *not to come home*. So, please, humor me. Do these things.

1. Construct sentences out of their basic parts: noun, verb, object. Learn to love verbs, dislike adjectives, and shun adverbs.
2. Use the active voice wherever possible.
3. Use simple, Anglo-Saxon words, with broad vowels and hard consonants:  
Not “occupation” but “job” or “work.”  
Not “possessed” but “had.”  
Not “flatulate” but “fart.”
4. Avoid jargon, be it social scientific, postmodern, or any other. “Lisible” is a lousy word, and “discourse” is not much better. “Site of contestation” is terrible writing. Your language should be accessible to any interested lay person, yet your ideas challenging to the very best people in the field. No thinking person will be impressed by a lot of big words that are hard to understand. If you must use an unfamiliar word (and sometimes you must), take care to define it and give an example that will clarify its meaning.
5. Do not use diacriticals, such as slashes and parentheses within words.
6. Do not coin new words. Do not engage in the sloppy American habit of turning nouns and adjectives into verbs. “Impact,” “center,” “gender,” and “access” are nouns; they are not verbs. Use up our fine collection of words before inventing new ones.

7. Do not use quotation marks, italics, or boldface type promiscuously. Let your words be your words. If you use quotation marks, you should have an endnote telling your reader whom you are quoting. If you’re not quoting someone, don’t use quotation marks.
8. Be concrete. Do not just pass out abstractions or references and expect your reader to fill in the details. Tell stories. Nail down each point with a concrete example. Be generous with details.
9. If you mention a person in the text, give his or her full name the first time you refer to him or her. In later references you may use just the family name. Thus, “Albert Einstein” in the first usage becomes “Einstein” in subsequent references, and “Mao Zedong” in the first usage becomes “Mao” subsequently. This is a politeness issue.
10. Use nonsexist language.
11. Spell out numbers under 100 unless you are referring to percentages, and in that case always spell out “percent,” or, better yet, “per cent.”
12. Take care that subject and verb and sequential sentences agree as to tense and number. Let the past stay in the past.
13. Contractions are okay, but do not use them promiscuously.
14. Use a comma after each item in a series except the last, thus:  
Not “a, b and c” but “a, b, and c.”
15. Capitalize proper nouns and adjectives, including “Black” and “White” used as names of races. They are not descriptive terms: almost no one is actually black or white. Capitalize “the U.S. Army,” a proper noun, but not “the army,” a simple descriptive reference.
16. Be thoughtful, be clever, but don’t be cute.

Thank you for your care with these issues.

## Research Definitions

Adapted from "A glossary for research reports", by C. D. Graham, Jr..  
Metal Progress, Vol. 71, No. 5, May. 1957.

PHRASE: "it has long been known..."  
DEFINITION: I haven't bothered to look up the original reference.

PHRASE: "Of great theoretical and practical importance..."  
DEFINITION: Interesting to me.

PHRASE: "While it has not been possible to provide definite answers to these questions..."  
DEFINITION: The experiment didn't work out, but I wanted to publish anyway.

PHRASE: "Extremely high purity"  
DEFINITION: Composition unknown except for the exaggerated claims of the supplier.

PHRASE: "Three of the samples were chosen for detailed study."  
DEFINITION: The results on the others didn't make sense and were ignored.

PHRASE: "Accidentally stained during mounting"  
DEFINITION: Accidentally dropped on the floor.

PHRASE: "Handled with extreme care during the experiments"  
DEFINITION: Not dropped on the floor.

PHRASE: "A fiducial reference line on the specimen"  
DEFINITION: A scratch.

PHRASE: "Although some detail have been lost in reproduction, it is clear from the original micrograph that..."  
DEFINITION: It is impossible to tell from the original micrograph.

PHRASE: "Typical results are shown"  
DEFINITION: The best results are shown.

PHRASE: "The most reliable data are those Jones..."  
DEFINITION: Jones was a student of mine.

PHRASE: "Agreement with the predicted curve is excellent."  
DEFINITION: "...fair."

PHRASE: "...good."  
DEFINITION: Poor.

PHRASE: "...satisfactory."  
DEFINITION: Doubtful.

PHRASE: "...fair."  
DEFINITION: Imaginary.

PHRASE: "Correct within an order of magnitude"  
DEFINITION: Wrong.

PHRASE: "It is believed that..."  
DEFINITION: I think...

PHRASE: "It is generally believed that..."  
DEFINITION: A couple of other guys think so too.

PHRASE: "It might be argued that..."  
DEFINITION: I have such a good answer for this objection that I shall now raise it.

PHRASE: "It is clear that much additional work will be required for a complete understanding of..."  
DEFINITION: I didn't understand it.

PHRASE: "Thanks to Joe Glotz for assistance with the experiment, and to John Doe for valuable discussions."  
DEFINITION: Glotz did the work, and Doe explained what it meant to me.

PHRASE: "It is hoped that this work will stimulate further work in this field."  
DEFINITION: This paper is not very good, but neither are any of the others on this lousy subject.

PHRASE: "Other results will be reported at a later date."  
DEFINITION: I'm hoping to get at least two publications out of this work.



# Characteristics of Quantitative, Qualitative, and Action Research

	<u>intention</u>	<u>type of knowledge generated</u>	<u>typical methods</u>	<u>researcher role</u>
<b>Quantitative Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ description</li><li>▪ inference</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ propositional (“what’s happening”; “what does it look like”)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ population statistics</li><li>▪ randomly-sampled surveys</li><li>▪ content analysis</li><li>▪ detailed observation of behavior</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ designs/owns research</li><li>▪ observer</li></ul>
<b>Qualitative Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ description</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ propositional (same)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ interviews</li><li>▪ surveys</li><li>▪ ethnography</li><li>▪ phenomenology</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ designs/owns research</li><li>▪ observer</li></ul>
<b>Action Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ change</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ propositional (same)</li><li>▪ skill (“how-to”)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ any</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ directs &amp; facilitates research process</li><li>▪ participant observer</li></ul>
<b>Participatory Action Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ change</li><li>▪ empowerment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ propositional (same)</li><li>▪ skill (“how-to”) for groups</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ any</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ facilitates research process</li><li>▪ consultant observer</li></ul>

*prepared by Jim Spickard*

Note that the division of research types into quantitative, qualitative, and action research does not correspond to Jürgen Habermas’ tripartite association of knowledge with the human interests in control, understanding, and liberation. Habermas is concerned with the role of theory in knowledge, not with systems of knowledge-generation *per se*. For various technical philosophic reasons, the two systems do not line up.

## Varieties of Research Design

after S. Isaac & W.B. Michael: Handbook of Research and Evaluation

DESIGN	PURPOSE	EXAMPLES
<b>Historical</b>	To reconstruct the past objectively and accurately, often in relation to the tenability of a hypothesis	A study reconstructing practices in the teaching of spelling in the United States during the past 50 years; tracing the history of civil rights in the U.S. education system since the civil war; testing the hypothesis that Francis Bacon is the real author of the "works of William Shakespeare."
<b>Descriptive</b>	To describe systematically a situation or area of interest factually and accurately.	Population census studies, public opinion surveys, fact-finding surveys, status studies, task analysis studies, questionnaire and interview studies, observation studies, job descriptions, surveys of the literature, documentary analysis, anecdotal records, critical incident reports, test score analyses, and normative data.
<b>Developmental</b>	To investigate patterns and sequences of growth and/or change as a function of time.	A longitudinal growth study following an initial sample of 200 children from six months of age to adulthood; a cross-sectional growth study investigating changing patterns of intelligence by sampling groups of children at ten different age levels; a trend study projecting the future growth and educational needs of a community from past trends and recent building estimates.
<b>Case and Field</b>	To study intensively the background, current status, and environmental interactions of a given social unit: an individual, group, institution, or community	The case history of a child with an above-average IQ but with severe learning disabilities; an intensive study of a group of teenage youngsters on probation for drug abuse; an intensive study of a typical suburban community in the Midwest in terms of its socio-economic characteristics.
<b>Correlational</b>	To investigate the extent to which variations in one factor correspond with variations in one or more other factors based on correlation coefficients.	To investigate relationships between reading achievement scores and one or more other variables of interest; a factor-analytic study of several intelligence tests; a study to predict success in college, based on intercorrelation patterns between college grades and selected high school variables.
<b>Causal-Comparative "Ex Post Facto"</b>	To investigate possible cause-and-effect relationships by observing some existing consequence and searching back through the data for plausible causal factors.	To identify factors related to the "drop-out" problem in a particular high school using data from records over the past ten years; to investigate similarities and differences between such groups as smokers and nonsmokers, readers and nonreaders, or delinquents and non-delinquents, using data on file
<b>True Experimental</b>	To investigate possible cause-and-effect relationships by exposing one or more experimental groups to one or more treatment conditions and comparing the results to one or more control groups not receiving the treatment (random assignment being essential).	To investigate the effectiveness of three methods of teaching reading to first grade children using random assignments of children and teachers to groups and methods; to investigate the effects of a specific tranquilizing drug on the learning behavior of boys identified as "hyperactive" using random assignment to groups receiving three different levels of the drug and two control groups with and without a placebo, respectively.
<b>Quasi-Experimental</b>	To approximate the conditions of the true experiment in a setting which does not allow the control and/or manipulation of all relevant variables. The researcher must clearly understand what compromises exist in the internal and external validity of his/her design and proceed within these limitations.	Most so-called field experiments, operational research, and even the more sophisticated forms of action research which attempt to get at causal factors in real life settings where only partial control is possible; e.g. an investigation of the effectiveness of any method or treatment condition where random assignment of subjects to methods or conditions is not possible.
<b>Action</b>	To develop new skills or new approaches and to solve problems with direct application to the classroom or other applied setting.	An in-service training program to help teachers develop new skills in facilitating class discussions; to experiment with new approaches to teaching reading to bilingual children; to develop more effective counseling techniques for underachievers.





# HOW TO CHOOSE A RESEARCH METHOD

## (a quick and dirty guide)

by Jim Spickard

3 questions to answer:

- 1) Am I looking for something general, or for something particular?
- 2) Am I looking for something observable, or not?
- 3) What kind of thing am I looking for? (action, belief, "trait")

### THE RESEARCH OBJECT: THE KIND OF THING ONE SEEKS

TECHNIQUES FOR SEEKING

	acts	reports of acts	personal opinions (shallow)	personal opinions (deep)	cultural knowledge	Expert knowledge	personal feelings	intra- psychic "traits"	self- identity	experience as it appears in consciousness	hidden social patterns
detached observation	X										X
participant observation (ethnography)	X	X	X	(X)	X	X			(X)		X
in-depth interview		X	X	X	X	X	X	(X)	X	(X)	(X)
questionnaire		X	X		X						
ethnoscience					X	X					
phenomenology		X								X	
ethnomethodology		X			X	X					X
critical incident interviews		X	X	X	X		(X)				
focus groups			X		X	X					
psychological tests								X	X		
content analysis					X			(X)	(X)		(X)
narrative/discourse analysis		X			X				X		X
grounded theory											X

"X" = standard method for this object;  
 "(X)" = possible method, but requires extra depth &/or interpretation to get results

## What Is "Hermeneutics" – An Contemporary Political Example

by Stanley Fish

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*This op-ed piece from the New York Times is a good short explanation of hermeneutics, framed in terms of how to decide whether a Supreme Court nominee would be a good interpreter of the U.S. Constitution:*

July 19, 2005

### **Intentional Neglect**

By STANLEY FISH

NOW that the speculation about who will replace Justice Sandra Day O'Connor on the Supreme Court is in full frenzy, we can look forward to debates in which words and phrases like "originalist," "strict constructionist," "textualist," "judicial activist" and "intentionalist" will figure prominently, because these labels are thought by many to stand for different styles of interpreting the Constitution. Those who think so are wrong.

If interpreting the Constitution - as opposed to rewriting it - is what you want to do, you are necessarily an "intentionalist," someone who is trying to figure out what the framers had in mind. Intentionalism is not a style of interpretation, it is another name for interpretation itself.

Think about it: if interpreting a document is to be a rational act, if its exercise is to have a goal and a way of assessing progress toward that goal, then it must have an object to aim at, and the only candidate for that object is the author's intention. What other candidate could there be

One answer to this question has been given by Justice Antonin Scalia and others under the rubric of "textualism." Textualists insist that what an interpreter seeks to establish is the meaning of the text as it exists apart from anyone's intention. According to Justice Scalia, it is what is "said," not what is "meant," that is "the object of our inquiry."

The problem is that there is no such object. Suppose you're looking at a rock formation and see in it what seems to be the word "help." You look more closely and decide that, no, what you are seeing is an effect of erosion, random marks that just happen to resemble an English word. The moment you decide that nature caused the effect, you will have lost all interest in interpreting the formation, because you no longer believe that it has been produced intentionally, and therefore you no longer believe that it's a word, a bearer of meaning.

It may look like a word - it may even seem to be more regularly formed as such than the scratchings of someone who is lost - but in the absence of the assumption that what you're looking at is a vehicle of an intention, you will not regard it as language. It is

not until you change your mind and become convinced that the formation was, in fact, designed, that the marks will become language and it will be appropriate to interpret them.

Even then you are not home free; just because you're now sure that the marks spell the word "help," you still don't know what it means. It could be a message from a person in distress. It could be a direction like those on a computer screen ("Need help? Look here."). It could be a petition to God. It could be a reference to a Beatles song. Scrutinizing the word won't tell you which of these things it means.

This is why Justice Scalia has it backwards: if you're not looking for what is meant, the notion of something being said or written is incoherent. Intention is not something added to language; it is what must already be assumed if what are otherwise mere physical phenomena (rocks or scratch marks) are to be experienced as language. Intention comes first; language, and with it the possibility of meaning, second. And this means that there can be no "textualist" method, because there is no object - no text without writerly intention - to which would-be textualists could be faithful.

And if there is no object - no plain and lucid text to which interpreters could be faithful - neither is there an object to which interpreters could be unfaithful. Consequently, "judicial activism," usually defined as substituting one's preferred meaning in place of the meaning the text clearly encodes, becomes the name of a crime no one could possibly commit. After all, you can't override a meaning that isn't there.

Indeed, because texts do not declare their own meanings, activism, at least of a certain kind, is inevitable. You must actively try to figure out what the author or authors had in mind when setting these marks down on paper. And while the text as written can be a piece of evidence, it cannot - just as that rock formation cannot - be self-sufficient and conclusive evidence.

It follows that any conclusion you reach about the intention behind a text can always be challenged by someone else who marshals different evidence for an alternative intention. Thus interpretations of the Constitution, no matter how well established or long settled, are inherently susceptible to correction and can always (but not inevitably) be upset by new arguments persuasively made in the right venues by skilled advocates

## **HOW TO CONSTRUCT AN INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

by Jim Spickard

My first research job was at Fordham University, where I was an assistant on a project evaluating two drug-treatment programs. I was not in charge of the research (thank God!), but I learned a lot about what one *shouldn't* do. The project produced no useable results, largely because the project director didn't know how to construct an interview protocol. He didn't know what to ask, and he didn't know that he didn't know this. So he fished for answers, hoping that he'd catch something useful. He didn't. Good fisher-folk know that you need some idea of where to fish before you cast your line.

The sad thing is, it is pretty easy to put together an interview protocol – the set of questions that you plan to ask your informants. The process has two steps. Tom Wengraf covers the first of these in Chapters 3 and 4 of his Qualitative Research Interviewing (Sage, 2001). The second step turns Wengraf's questions into an interview experience that flows.

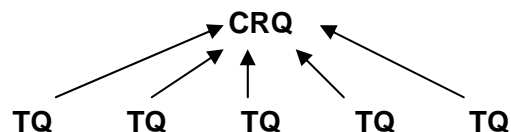
I'll describe these steps in brief, and then note a third step that helps you turn your interview results into useable data.

### **Step 1: Identify Central Research Question (CQ), Theory-Based Questions (TQs), and Interview Questions (IQs)**

Wengraf starts by noting that every piece of research has a Central Research Question (CRQ). This is often a general question, such as "How do social activists use religious or spiritual resources to sustain their activist commitments?" In some cases, it can be rather practical: "How can the Children's Bereavement Center weather its current organizational crisis?" In either case, the CRQ identifies what you want to know

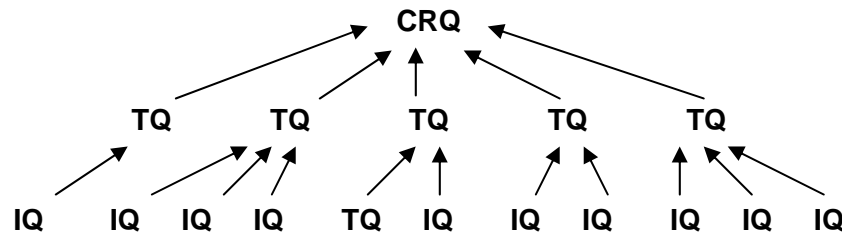
Any researcher, of course, has read a tremendous amount of literature on her or his research topic. Wengraf notes that this literature typically identifies possible answers to the CRQ – and often identifies several of them. The sociology of religion, for example, notes that people make use of (at least) two kinds of religious resources: "official" sources, endorsed by church authorities, and "nonofficial" ones, of which those authorities do not approve. Organizational development literature notes that all organizations – including non-profits – go through several predictable transitions in the course of their lives. If we knew whether our social activists look to official or to nonofficial religious resources, we would be a step closer to knowing how they sustain their activist commitments. And if we knew whether the CBC was in the midst of a predictable life-cycle transition, we would better know what actions to recommend.

Wengraf calls such questions Theory-Based Questions (TQ). After identifying one's CRQ, one needs to identify several TQs that, taken together, allow one to answer the CRQ. Schematically:



These TQs, however, are still too general. One needs to “operationalize” them – break them down into smaller parts that real people can understand and answer. It would not be a good idea, for example, for us to ask our social activists “Do you personally depend on official or on unofficial religious resources?” Few informants speak such academic jargon, and only some of those who don’t will have the gumption to say, “Huh? What’s that supposed to mean?” Most will say something that sounds like an answer, but they won’t really tell us much. People need to understand clearly what they are being asked, if they are to provide details.

The researcher thus needs to create a series of Interview Questions (IQ) from each Theory-Based Question (TQ). Informants’ answers to these IQs should, collectively, answer the TQ. The answers to the TQs, taken collectively, should answer the CRQ. Schematically:



We might, for example, ask our social activists about the kinds of religious services they attend, about their own private religious practices, what they do under stress, and so on. We might ask them about their feelings about their church leaders. We should definitely ask them if they ever achieve a feeling of transcendence and (if so) when and how. All these questions, taken together, let us answer our TQ about the official or non-official sources of religious support. The answer to this TQ, together with the answers to our other TQs, should let us answer our Central Research Question.

## **Step 2: Turn these Interview Questions (IQs) into a useable interview protocol**

Wengraf stops here. Though he might not agree with me, I think that this is still one step short of the goal. Interviews need not only to be logical and clear; they also need to engage our informants. Asking a long string of rather specific questions seldom does so. Nor does it typically encourage informants to give us more than we asked for – the rich detail that enlivens their accounts and deepens our understanding of them.

Fortunately, this is relatively simple to correct. One takes the list of IQs generated above, and rearranges them so that both engage informants and flow cleanly. One may, for example, ask our social activists to tell us about a time when they were especially discouraged, and how they pulled themselves out of it. Depending on how the story unfolds, we might then probe about the usefulness of this or that religious resource. We would certainly want to know if such stories were typical of our informants’ experiences – and we can ask this directly. The point is, one can call on our informants’ imaginative creativity, as well as on their logic, to get a fuller picture of their experiences.

We just have to make sure that our protocol includes questions, stories, or reflections that elicit answers to all of our IQs. We need no one-to-one correspondence, but we need to make sure that we have everything covered.

One way to do this is to construct a table like the one on the next page. Put your TQs, IQs, etc. across the top, and your interview protocol down the left side. Go through the rows, putting check marks beneath the IQs that each interview question answers. Make sure that

every column has at least one check mark in it; if it does not, you need to revise your protocol so that the IQ in question gets answered.

		TQ1		TQ2			TQ3		
		IQ1	IQ2	IQ3	IQ4	IQ5	IQ6	IQ7	...
1. Do you consider yourself religious?								X	
2. What does "being religious" mean to you?							X		
3. With which religious group do you identify?		X		X					
4. What do you get out of belonging to that group?			X			X			
5. Tell me about a time when ...				X	X			X	
6. Was this typical? How or how not?					X				
7. Can you tell me about a less typical instance?					X				
...									

### **Step 3: Interpreting the results**

As you can imagine, using this method would have greatly improved the Fordham project that I assisted many years ago. The method keeps things clear. It reminds you why you are asking each question. And it makes sure that you ask the right questions to get the response you need.

It has the further advantage of helping interpret your data. Remember that answering the IQs lets you answer the TQs, which (collectively) answer your Central Research Question. To answer any IQ, just read down the proper column, pulling together all of the answers in the rows that you have checked. In the chart above, for example, you would answer IQ3 by putting all of your informants' answers to questions 3 and 5 in a pile, then reading through them. *Voilà* – one knows that one's informants have to say about the matter. Do that for each column, combine the IQ answers to answer the applicable TQs, and you are well on the way to having answered the question with which your project started.

By the way: it makes no difference whether one sorts ones interview transcripts into actual piles on the living room floor, as one did in the old days, or with the help of qualitative analysis software like NVivo or NUD\*IST. The sorting logic is the same.

## How Many Subjects?

### A Quick Guideline for Interview Research

**Jim Spickard**

Students often wonder how many interviews they need for their dissertations. The answer, of course, depends on what they want to accomplish, but that doesn't seem to be what has penetrated the Fielding culture. Instead, we find the magic number "12". No matter what the project, many students initially propose doing twelve "in-depth" interviews. I suspect that this number is found in some sacred text, which, like most such texts, obscures as much as it reveals.

The next page contains "Spickard's Interview Rule of Thumb": a flow-chart that I developed to help decide how many interviews one really needs. Though pretty clear, even this chart needs to be set in context.

The key question is: "What are you trying to find out?" Here are three possibilities:

1. At one extreme: You want to learn the relative distribution of traits, experiences, etc., among a population. For example: What percentage of that population has experienced burnout? And what percentage of those had their burnout caused by factors "X", "Y", and "Z"?

This question calls for a quantitative study of a true random sample of the target population. Depending on how large that population is and how detailed an analysis one seeks, one aims for anywhere between 50 to 1500 interview subjects, most likely using a questionnaire or structured interview. (1500 will model the entire U.S. population within a few percentage points.) Response rate matters a lot, as a low number of responses prevents one from generalizing to the population at large.

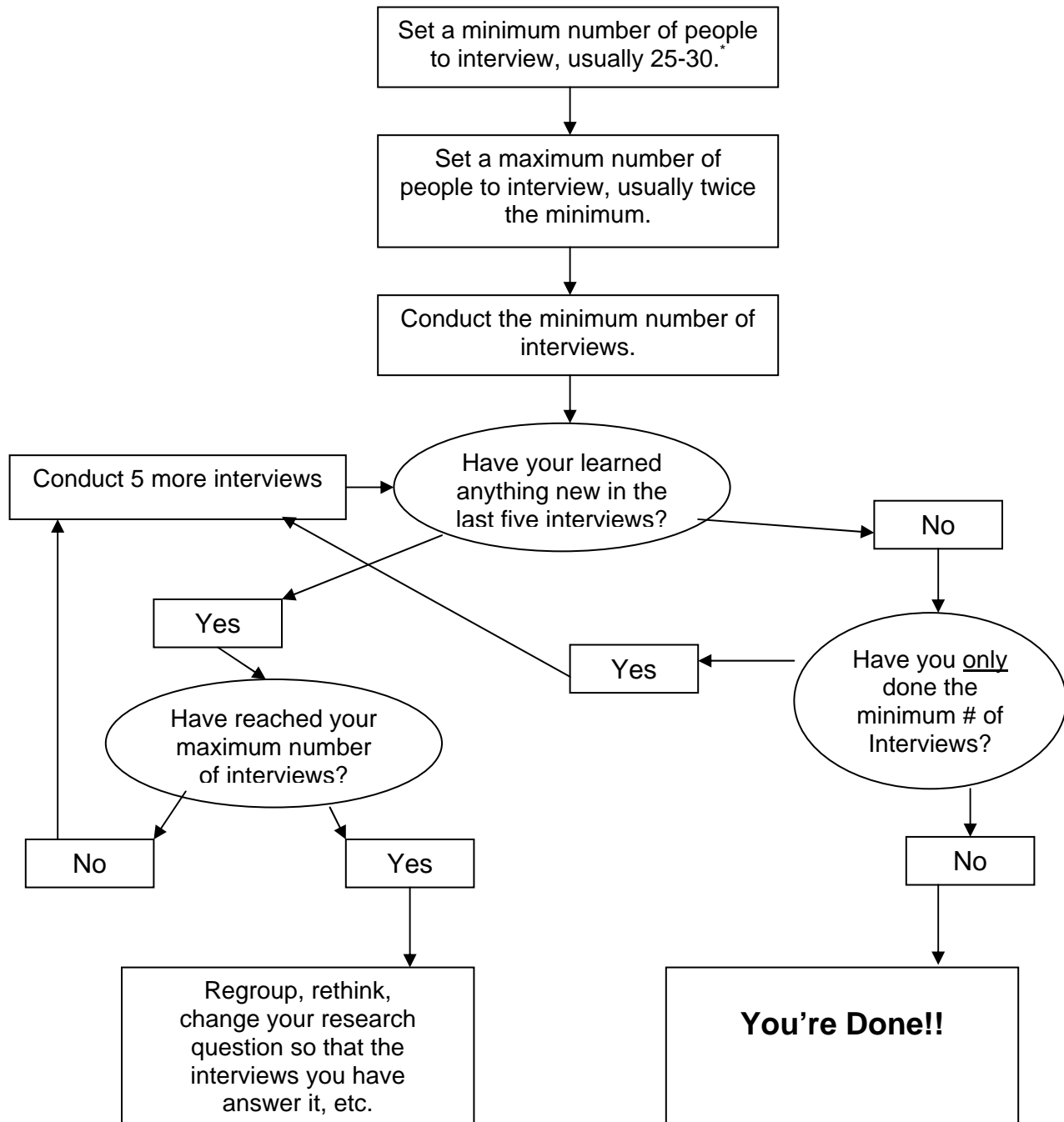
2. At the other extreme: You want to describe a universal or near-universal process, often an experiential one. One can interview a very small number for this, but the interviews must be both careful and deep: usually several hours spread over several sessions. Phenomenological, they must focus on the process itself, bracketing the meaning-systems by which the interviewees interpret the process. Any indication that the process is not universal nullifies this research design.

3. "Spickard's Rule" is designed for cases in between. These are cases in which you know that your population's experiences vary, their interpretations of those experiences vary, or both. You don't, however, know the range of possibilities. In fact, this is what you wish to discover. And you don't care (at this stage) what percentage of the population thinks "X" and what percentage thinks "Y".

Thus, you need to do enough interviews that you are sure that you've found most of the possibilities, but you do not need to do them randomly. You are seeking a good spread, but few enough interviews that you can explore in depth.

"Spickard's Rule" generates a good intermediate number.

## Spickard's Interview Rule of Thumb (for Non-Random Samples)





## ON FIELDNOTES

### A Template Created by Jim Spickard

Social science often asks us to observe people. We want to see what people do, and we also want to know what they think about what they are doing. Whether we observe them in the laboratory or in their “natural habitat”, we need to keep track of our observations. Memory just doesn’t do it. Social scientists have developed various ways of taking notes, many of which are useful. I have found the following four-column system to be very helpful, at least in part because it separates one’s actual observations from what one thinks about those observations. Doing so is crucial, if one is to figure out what is really going on.\*

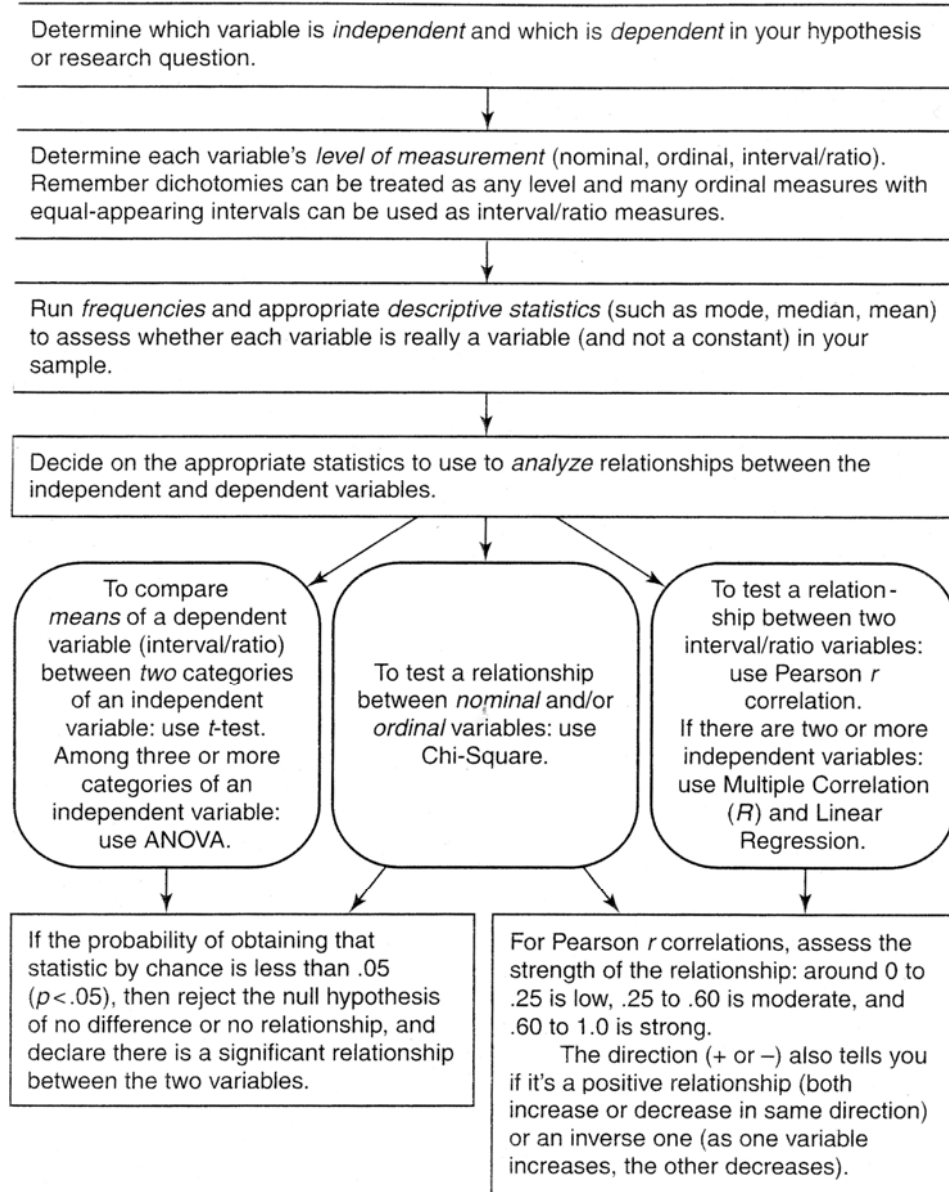
External Details	What I Observed	My Thoughts about What I Observed	Connections (Tame or Wild)
<p><i>This column reminds me where the event was, who was there, etc. E.g.:</i></p> <p>Mass at XYZ house, Denver. 9/27/04. Present: the core community, plus John Q, Fred R., Stacey P., plus five others I don’t know and wasn’t introduced to.</p>	<p><i>This column contains a detailed list of what I actually observed. E.g.:</i></p> <p>Mass began late. Roger R. was celebrant, introduced by Rick C. (as usual). Rick spoke at some length about the latest police raids in the local parish. Mike S. (in the audience) added news about the President’s latest war speech. Roger acknowledged both of these, saying that it was in just such times as these that Jesus asked his disciples to come together, as we do now, in prayer for the state of the world.</p> <p>First reading from Isaiah, on the duty toward the poor. Second was parable of the sower. Roger spoke for 2.5 minutes on these, connecting them to the recent actions of the Mayor’s office cutting funding for anti-poverty work. Floor opened for group homily (as usual), and Mike spoke of the need to remain faithful, despite acts of our national “leaders”. Kim spoke of the frustration at seeing so many people in need. ...<i>(etc.)</i></p>	<p><i>This column allows me to record my thoughts about what I observed, ideally matched to the relevant spot in column 2. E.g.:</i></p> <p>Note how negative tone is set, allowing (later) transition to positive tone in mass itself. Need to see this as part of the ritual, not separate from it. Celebrant draws explicit connection (which did <u>not</u> happen last time).</p> <p>These are not today’s standard readings. I wonder who chose them – and why?</p> <p>Mike usually talks here, and often on the same subject. Do people have informal roles? Or do they just know each other well enough to rely on certain people for certain insights?</p>	<p><i>This column lets me record wilder ideas, including connections with other situations, readings, thinkers, etc. E.g.:</i></p> <p>Those police raids are in M.D. parish; I wonder what Father Tony is telling his parishioners tonight? What passages is he using? How are they responding?</p> <p>The <i>Sojourners Community</i> has a very different approach, according to Jim W’s description of their practices. So do most of the Quaker groups I’ve visited. Why? Do their rituals serve a different function in community life?</p>

\* Tamah Nakamura pointed out to me that one also needs to record one’s emotional reactions – including “evil thoughts” that one might be having about the people one is observing. I agree, because these often provide useful clues to things hidden in the social scene. I generally put these in column three; others might wish to give them their own column. Later scanning lets one locate patterns to such emotional reactions, which – like psychoanalytic counter-transference – often highlight patterns of which one is not consciously aware.

# What Statistical Test Should I Use?

By Peter Nardi<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> From Doing Survey Research: A Guide to Quantitative Methods, by Peter M. Nardi. Allyn & Bacon, 2003, page 233. – **A GOOD BOOK!**

## Information about Qualitative Data Analysis Software<sup>\*</sup>

Name	Runs On	Website	Cost (regular)	Cost (educ)	Cost (student)
NVivo 8	PC	<a href="http://www.qsrinternational.com/">http://www.qsrinternational.com/</a>	\$2085 (ouch!)	\$595	\$240 (expires after 12 months!!)
Atlas.ti 6	PC	<a href="http://www.atlasti.com/">http://www.atlasti.com/</a>	\$1800	\$585	\$128 (€99)
Ethnograph 6	PC	<a href="http://www.qualisresearch.com/">http://www.qualisresearch.com/</a>	\$299	---	\$99
MAXqda 2007	PC	<a href="http://www.maxqda.com/">http://www.maxqda.com/</a>	\$1400/\$1800	\$579/\$620	\$128 (€99)
DRS	PC & Max	<a href="http://web.mac.com/andy.crabtree/NCeSS_Digital_Records_Node/Welcome.html">http://web.mac.com/andy.crabtree/NCeSS_Digital_Records_Node/Welcome.html</a>	free	free	free

- Most allow installation on 2 computers, but use on only one computer at a time (e.g., desktop & laptop). (NVivo may only allow one computer; the website is unclear about this.)
- Some (e.g., MAXqda) have site licenses available to educational institutions for use in school labs. They typically require students to purchase their own copies (at student rate) for use outside the lab.

### ***For further information:***

- CAQDAS – Computer Assisted Qualitative Data AnalysiS network project: [www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/caqdas](http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/caqdas)
  - Reviews of a few programs: <http://caqdas.soc.surrey.ac.uk/QUICworkingpapers.html>
  - A long list of programs, including the above, with links to many informative websites: <http://caqdas.soc.surrey.ac.uk/links.html>
- Good Books:
  - Richards, Lyn: Handling Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide. (Sage, 2005)
  - Ann Lewins & Christina Silver: Using Software in Qualitative Research: A Step-by-Step Guide (Sage, 2007)
  - Pat Bazeley: Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo (Sage 2007)

<sup>\*</sup> Prices and information as of 2 July, 2009. Collected by Jim Spickard, Dept of Sociology & Anthropology, University of Redlands