A Guide for Online Graduate Students:

Writing a Great Thesis or Dissertation

Part I: Crafting a Great Proposal

Chapter 1 An Introduction to Your Desktop Guide

 It is really important to understand the online platform that students are going to use for the online course. Some programs will allow students to set up sharing spaces for group projects, give them access to recoded materials shared by the instructors, and a link to download them. Some of these features need some practice, so as soon as access is been given to login, students should familiarize themselves with the various features.

 Chapter 2 Aligning All Your Resources

 Setting goals at the beginning of an online course is important. Students who set high goals for their online course, and falling short sometimes, are better than those who set low goals that might not realize their potentials. At the beginning of the course, setting up a master schedule or a calendar that is shared with all family members with the time dedicated to course work marked “busy” is a useful organizational tool. It is also helpful to set a quite space that is dedicated to school work, preferably away from the center of the house. Many adult online students set their work station in their kitchen, where their bill-paying station might be, but for studying, it may prove distracting.

 Chapter 3 Finding a Topic, Purpose, and Research Question

 The topic has to be of interest to the students. They should be willing to immerse themselves in it and pursue it as an area of expertise after their research is done. The purpose of a dissertation should define the significance of the research and its value in the field of study. Research question should indicate specifically what the research is intended to study including the research methodology (quantitative, qualitative or mixed)

Chapter 4 A Systematic Review of Literature through Technology

 Or/ Organizing and Writing Review of Literature

 Organizing the literature review is crucial to researchers. It is lining up the evidence for their argument. The reader of the research should understand the argument. Moving from one evidence to the next should make sense. Literature review could be organized chronologically or grouped according to the theme. The important part about organizing research literature is that it demonstrates that the researcher has explored the topic in depth and understood the issues around it.

Chapter 5 Considerations for Choosing a Research Design: Qualitative or quantitative and why

Choosing a research design should depend on the literature review; when researchers review previous scholars’ work, it would be easier to decide the best design for their research. During their study, researchers come across many variables, and they need to decide on the most important ones to their study and include them because some variables might not be relevant to their particular topic. The golden rule is to keep it simple

 Chapter 6 Statistics at Your Fingertips (Descriptive, Correlation, t-Test, z-Test)

Researchers need to be clear about what a z-score is and how to use the z-table to find the probabilities they want. They also need to know the difference between a percentile and a percent, percentile is a cutoff value of the data set, while a percentage is the amount of data below that cutoff value

 Chapter 7 Statistics at Your Fingertips (ANOVA & Multiple Linear

Regressions)

Researchers need to understand which descriptive statistics will be needed for their particular research. It is important to understand the terminology and calculations for these statistics. They also need to understand that correlation applies to quantitative variables and they always need to look at a scatter plot of the data as well.

 Chapter 8 Creating Data Collection Instruments

 Data collection instrument need to be strong enough to support the findings of the study. There are tools that do not require the researcher’s direct contact with the subjects, but might not allow them to monitor the accuracy of the participants’ responses. In-person surveys and interviews get the researcher to be directly involved with participants and get more in-depth answers to the study questions.

 Chapter 9 Time to Write Chapter III

 Chapter III which explains the study method, should be clear enough to allow other researchers to replicate the study. Starting with this chapter when writing a dissertation gives the researcher an idea if the topic of the study is suitable and if the methodology is appropriate. As researchers begin the chapter with the purpose of the study, they start to acquire the right focus and discover if the topic is too broad or too narrow. This chapter is the core of the study and starting with it will save researchers precious time.

Chapter 10 Writing an Introduction

Part II: Advancing a Proposal to a Completed Dissertation

Chapter 11 Organizing and Writing Chapter IV –The Findings

Chapter 12 The Discussion

**Suggestion of chapters**:

I suggest to include a chapter about digital tools that might help researchers to save time and get access on the go. Here are some examples:

Gale Reference Resources

<http://solutions.cengage.com/apps/>

iAnnotate for reading and annotating PDFs

<http://www.iannotate.com/ipad>

Grafio: to draw Diagrams, make sketches and flowcharts

<http://www.tentouchapps.com/grafio>

Evernote: is a workplace on the cloud, good for collaborating, sharing, syncing between devices

<https://evernote.com/>