

Text from the Dissertations Bulletin Board

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Regents Center Library (RCL)
Bulletin Board Series
Dissertations
Fall 2007

Definitions

A **dissertation** is an original research document submitted to the graduate school of the university for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree.

Literature Search or Review

Doctoral students start work towards writing the dissertation by searching for and reading all of the work that has been written on their topic. It is recommended to consult with a reference librarian as you begin this process.

Students can **make appointments with a librarian** in order to get the individual attention they need.

Dissertation Research Blog @RCL <http://www.dissertationresearch.blogspot.com/>

A selection of dissertations completed at KU contain most of the following sections:

- Title Page
- Acknowledgments
- Dedication Page
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables
- Chapter One . (Introduction to the Study)
- Chapter Two . (Review of the Literature)
- Chapter Three . (Methodology)
- Chapter Four . (Research Findings--Product)
- Chapter Five . (Summary, Discussion, Conclusions)
- References
- Appendices

Hints:

- Follow the proposal that was approved by your committee.
- Plan your process and follow your plan. Write down daily goals. Be realistic (nice to yourself). **For help, see Handout @RCL** <http://www.lib.ku.edu/rclibrary/DissertationLinks.pdf>
- Have a place to write and to be alone. Relax as you work. Concentrate easily with what is in front of you.
- Stop and breathe throughout your writing time and be present in your dissertation writing moment.
- Remember: NOTHING is perfect, nothing.
- Tidy-up and take breaks. Avoid clutter in your writing room and in your head!
- Cite accurately & be consistent. See: **APA Style Shortcut @RCL** <http://www.lib.ku.edu/rclibrary/Handout-APA-Samples2007.pdf> . Using a citation manager will simplify this process. See: **EndNote** Slides from our library workshop @RCL <http://www.lib.ku.edu/~public/distlearn/Lissa/EndNote.pdf>
- Manuscript style: check with your department
- **KU Writing Center** Dissertation Writing / http://www.writing.ku.edu/~writing/graduate_students/
- Don't procrastinate. Write every day. See: *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day* by Joan Bolker. And, subscribe to **Dissertation Research Blog @RCL** <http://www.dissertationresearch.blogspot.com/>

A man may write at any time, if he will
set himself doggedly to it.

-- Samuel Johnson

WHAT DO DISSERTATIONS LOOK LIKE?

Study other dissertations to determine style, flow of writing, etc. (See: **Finding Dissertations**, handout for locating dissertations @RCL <http://www.lib.ku.edu/rclibrary/HandoutFinding2007.pdf>) Different types of dissertations are organized in different ways. Check with your advisor along your writing way. The dissertation as a series of units or chunks that are welded together rather than a novel, which flows seamlessly.

✓ **ABSTRACT** Have you followed the guidelines provided by the Graduate School? Would another researcher: understand what you did? .. understand how you did it? .. know your conclusions?

✓ **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Are the entire contents of the dissertation identified here?

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✓ **CHAPTER ONE--INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

- Have you stated a clear question with a minimum of words?

Purpose of Study

- What was the purpose of the study? Was the purpose of the study revisited in the conclusion?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the questions to be answered in this research? Are answers addressed in the conclusion?

OBJECTIVES

- What are the key outcomes of the study? Were the objectives addressed in the conclusion?

SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUR STUDY

- What difference will the study make? How is the significance addressed in the conclusion?

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

- Are all definitions of key words addressed?

ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

- How is this dissertation organized?

SUMMARY

- What are the main points contained in this chapter?

✓ **CHAPTER TWO – REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

INTRODUCTION How is the review of the literature organized?

BODY Work that has influenced your thinking. These sources provide a good argument in support of your thesis.

- What have previous authors written about and around the topic?

SUMMARY The review of literature disclosed what?

✓ **CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY**

INTRODUCTION

- How is this chapter organized?

METHODOLOGY

- What was the sequence of procedures? What is the reliability and validity of the methodology?

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- What evidence did you gather with the needs assessment?

PRELIMINARY FIELD TEST

- What information did you find in preliminary field test? What criteria did you use to select participants?

MAIN FIELD TEST

- What revisions occurred in the product? What criteria did you use to select the participants?

SUMMARY

- What were the main points that were covered in this chapter?

✓ **CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS, THE VALIDATED PRODUCT**

PRODUCT

- The product should appear in its entirety.

HINTS

- The pagination will need to be consistent with the rest of the dissertation; however, the pagination will be different when the product is viewed by itself. Remember, THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SECTION OF YOUR DISSERTATION.

✓ **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

- Why and how did you conduct this study (briefly)?

CONCLUSIONS

- What are the conclusions derived from the study? Do they relate to your original research questions?

IMPLICATIONS

- What difference will this study make and to whom? Ask yourself this question: "so what?"

DISSEMINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

- What needs to be done to disseminate this information? What additional R&D activities will need to be done (beyond what you have already done)?

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

- What questions were generated as A RESULT of this study? What additional research could be done?

SUMMARY What did you say in this chapter?

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