

DISSERTATION NEWSLETTER

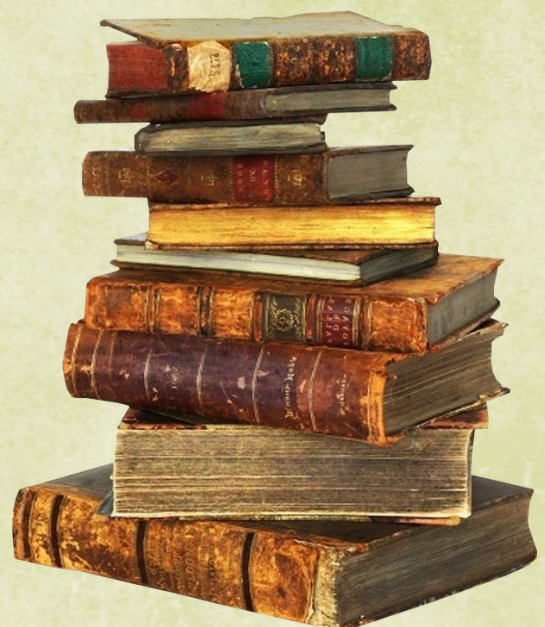
Fall Quarter, 2018

Dissertation Liberation

One thing I observed early on is that if you want to make a change in this field, you must write . . . a lot. In my own experiences as a student, I remember the first few quarters where major theorists were studied. I quickly realized that we were not reading content from authors who have only published one or two articles. Instead, we were studying theorists who have volumes of content, so much so that there was often too much for one quarter of material. This got me thinking that in order to make a theory, it is important to continue writing. There is not one article that is a theory in and of itself, instead, it takes a collection of works in which, upon reflection, a theory starts to take shape. In fact, many of the major theorists' writings conflict with one another as time goes on, that is to say from the same author you can read varying accounts on important topics, dependent on where they were in their own development of their theories.

How does this relate to dissertation writing? Well, one way to view it is liberating. Think about this, have you read Jung's or Freud's dissertation? Likely, no. So, even the foremost thinkers of our field were not constrained by their original and early writings. Of course, there is the implication that if your work will be changing our field, you will need to continue writing about it. But, think about this, you cannot get to that point unless you finish your dissertation. One of the most difficult parts that I have observed for dissertation writing is the feeling that it must be something, or mean something. My suggestion is to write it from an authentic authorship perspective and it will be. However, to my knowledge, there is not one writing that has established a theory. It is a relationship with that theory that must be evoked and crafted over time. So, free yourself a bit to realize that if you are to change the world, as I believe you will, this dissertation is but one step among many. Time to take it, so you can see where the rest will lead you.

—Brenda Murrow, PhD, Clinical Psychology Faculty



How to Finish Your Dissertation When The Muse is on Vacation: Five Practices to Help Sustain the Process

One of the best pieces of advice one of my dissertation readers gave me was “a good dissertation is a done dissertation.” It was said in jest, but it is true. The muse of my creativity was constantly fickle and hardly ever present when I wanted her to be. To finish the dang dissertation on time, I found it important to find ways to be consistent in my research and writing. This way, when the muse did show up, I would have more to work with.

Here are five practices that helped me complete my dissertation:

1. In *The Miracle Morning*, Hal Elrod researched what high achievers and successful people do, and found that they all had a morning routine with six things in common. Incorporating these practices into my daily routine has helped sustain me and catapult me forward in life. This book will help you start your day and your writing in a peak state while optimizing your mind and body.
2. Set a minimum number of pages you will write each day and be religious about it. If it is writing 1–3 pages a day, do it! If you meet your goal, you have won the day.
3. Find a consistent place to write. As with a meditation practice, finding a place that will trigger your mind into the state of your desired task is quite helpful. Your mind will associate that environment with “writing time,” and you’ll have an easier time dropping into writing mode. Keep your space free of distractions and things that can have the “look a squirrel” effect.
4. Do not strengthen the procrastination muscle. Procrastination is a sneaky beast. This trickster is insatiable; it will have you believe that it is ok to put off your dissertation for one more day, to take a longer break, to avoid it for now. Train your mind to resist procrastination and keep working.
5. This is the fun one: Reward yourself! Your mind likes a good dopamine rush, so reward yourself when you accomplish your daily goals. It seems trite, but the mind loves novelty, rewards, and something to look forward to.

That’s it. There are countless other things you can learn to do to help the process, but these practices helped me. For good books on writing, I strongly recommend books by Steven Pressfield.

Much luck to you in your process! Try to actually enjoy it. Your dissertation will be completed before you know it and perversely you will miss it!

—Miles Salisbury, PhD, is a 2018 graduate from the Depth Psychology Psychotherapy program. Dr. Salisbury has a practice in Portland, Oregon where he specializes in helping people unleash their best selves through the use of attachment-based psychotherapy, mindfulness/meditation, and a depth psychological-existential approach.



Academic Writing Tips

Diction

Diction refers to the choice of words you use. Awareness of the words you use is important because words that have almost the same denotation [dictionary definition] can have very different connotations [implied meanings]. This is particularly true in academic writing because words and terminology can evolve a nuanced meaning that describes a particular idea, concept, or phenomenon derived from the epistemological culture of that discipline. Therefore, use concrete words [not general] that convey a specific meaning. If this cannot be done without confusing the reader, then you need to explain what you mean within the context of how that word is used within a discipline.

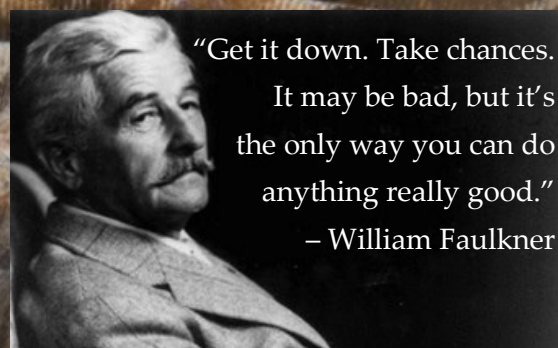
The Language

The investigation of research problems in the social sciences is often complex and multi-dimensional. Therefore, it is important that you use unambiguous language. Well-structured paragraphs and clear topic sentences enable a reader to follow your line of thinking without difficulty. Your language should be concise, formal, and express precisely what you want it to mean. Avoid vague expressions that are not specific or precise enough for the reader to derive exact meaning ["they," "we," "people," "the organization," etc.], abbreviations like 'i.e.' ["in other words"] or 'e.g.' ["for example"], and the use of unspecific determinate words ["super" "very" "incredible"].

Complexity and Higher-Order Thinking

Academic writing addresses complex issues that require high-order thinking skills to comprehend [e.g., critical, reflective, logical, and creative thinking]. Think of your writing this way: One of the most important attributes of a good teacher is the ability to explain complex ideas in a way that is understandable and relatable to the topic being presented. This is also one of the main functions of academic writing—describing and explaining the significance of complex ideas as clearly as possible. Often referred to as higher-order thinking skills, these include cognitive processes that are used to comprehend, solve problems, and express concepts or that describe abstract ideas that cannot be easily acted out, pointed to, or shown with images. As a writer, you must take on the role of a good teacher by summarizing a lot of complex information into a well-organized synthesis of ideas, concepts, and recommendations that contribute to a better understanding of the research problem.

USC Libraries. (2018, July 10). Organizing your social sciences research paper: Academic writing style [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://libguides.usc.edu>



"Get it down. Take chances.
It may be bad, but it's
the only way you can do
anything really good."
– William Faulkner

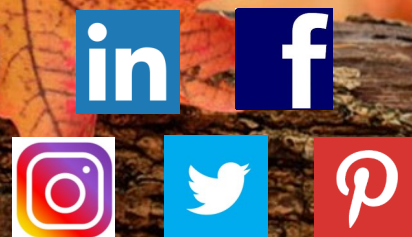
Looking for free, easy-to-use tools
that will help you collect, organize,
cite, and share your research?
Try Zotero or Mendeley!



Pacifica Web Links

[Dissertation Webpage](#)

[Upcoming Oral Defenses](#)



Recently Published Pacifica Dissertations

Lori Gentilini Burri, Depth Psychology
Somatic Studies, *Relational Somatic
Psychotherapy: Integrating Psyche and
Soma Through Authentic Relationship*

Brian Damien Dietrich, Depth Psychology
Jungian & Archetypal Studies, *Honoring the
Ecology Between Worlds: Depth Psychology
and Relational Guided Imagery*

Ana M. Doehner, Depth Psychology
Psychotherapy, *The Individual and the
Collective: A Depth Psychological
Reading of The Fountainhead*

Traci Grundland, Clinical Psychology,
*The Reemergence of an Empathogen:
A Consensual Qualitative Research Study
of MDMA-Assisted Psychotherapy*

Nicholas Henry Simpson Higgins, Clinical
Psychology, *The Cave of San Francisco:
A Psychological Phenomenological Study
of Healing and Place*



Autumn evening on Lambert Campus.
Stairs leading to the Pacifica Research
Library. Photo by Rachel Reeve.

Debbie A. Holderle, Depth Psychology
Psychotherapy, *Exploring Archetypal
Reality in the Experience of
Hallucinations Across Cultures*

Laurie Sue Larsen, Mythological Studies,
Ma'at's Mysteries: The Roots of Renewal

Glenn William Orris, Clinical Psychology,
*Moral Injury and PTSD:
Toward an Integrated Model of
Complex, Combat-related Trauma*

Rodger Stacy Questin, Clinical Psychology,
*Letters to Fathers: A Qualitative
Analysis of Gay Sons' Experiences
of Paternal Childrearing*

Teresa Jeannette Rodriguez,
Depth Psychology Somatic Studies,
*Lady Blood: An Intuitive Inquiry into
the Transformative Effects of
Remembering my Ancestors*

Kari Saenz, Clinical Psychology,
*Healing the Soul in Crisis:
A Grounded Theory Study of Schizophrenia*

Miles Graham Salisbury,
Depth Psychology Psychotherapy,
*Insecure Attachment Bites: How Early
Relationship Wounding Transmits
the Vampire Archetype*

Patricia A. Selbert, Depth Psychology
Somatic Studies, *Exploring the Somatic
Sensory and the Somatic Emotional
Aspects of Immigration*

**These dissertations are available
on [ProQuest](#) and in the
[Pacifica Research Library](#).**