

Ten Steps to Completing a Successful Dissertation

M. L. Munroe, Ed.D.

Step One

Acknowledge your fears

- ▶ What are you afraid of?
 - ▶ The dissertation process?
 - ▶ The amount of work involved?
 - ▶ The possibility of failing?
 - ▶ The possibility of succeeding?

Step Two

What is your research interest?

- ▶ What intrigues you so much that you are willing to spend the next year or more researching an answer?
- ▶ What questions would you like to answer?
- ▶ What moves you?
- ▶ What are your passions?

Step Three

Establish a rapport with your professors and dissertation chair

- ▶ Remember your role: You are the student, not the dissertation coach!!!
- ▶ Listen to everything you're told.
- ▶ Ask questions/Take notes during each meeting.
- ▶ Maintain an open line of communication (weekly contact).
- ▶ Accept construction criticism and feedback as tools to improve your research skills and to mold you into an effective researcher.
- ▶ Respect deadlines and timeframes.
- ▶ Remember the quote by Bob Carter, "Poor planning on your part does necessitate an emergency on mine."

Step Four

Utilize the services of the Alvin Sherman Library

- ▶ Request reading/research material.
- ▶ Make copies of articles.
- ▶ Schedule appointments with a librarian (online, face-to-face, by phone.)

- **Reference desk** is open from 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. (Friday until 6 p.m. / Sunday until 7 p.m.).

- **Call** (954) 262-4613

- **Email** refdesk@nova.edu

- **Chat** with a Librarian

- **Appointment** request form | En Español

- **Text** (954) 372-3505

Nova Southeastern University. Retrieved from <http://sherman.library.nova.edu/>

Step Five

Read other dissertations

- ▶ Read other dissertations written about your research topic.
- ▶ Read those written by former students of your dissertation chair.
- ▶ Read dissertations that were selected as Dissertations of Distinction.

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Dissertations databases by for NSU Patrons (options 1-4).

Retrieved from <http://sherman.library.nova.edu/e-library/index.php?action=subject&col=n&cat=dis>

Step Six

Read, write, read, write

- ▶ As a doctoral student, you should be reading and writing daily.
- ▶ Read as much literature as you can about your research topic. This prepares for you the development of the literature review.
- ▶ Create a folder of your work and save **EVERYTHING**
 - ▶ Assignments
 - ▶ Papers
 - ▶ Emails

Step Seven

APA and Research Methods

- ▶ Key books for APA style writing and research methods:
 - ▶ Publication Manual of the APA
 - ▶ APA Style Guide to Electronic References
 - ▶ Research Methods (Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods) Creswell, J.

Step Eight

Find a mentor

- ▶ Don't be afraid to get a second or third opinion about your writing. Remember, you are the student, your role is to listen and learn from others.
- ▶ Share research ideas and listen to suggestions.

Step Nine

Join a Productive Support Group

- ▶ Support groups are essential to the success of the doctoral student. No one truly understands your journey the way another student does.
- ▶ Social network groups are awesome!
- ▶ This is not the time to join the group that is most popular, join the group that is most productive!

Step Ten

Don't forget about you

- ▶ Allow yourself the freedom of living the human experience.
 - ▶ During this journey, there will be a need take a break, reevaluate, cry, scream, complain, threaten to give up, question your intellect and your ability to complete this program, etc.

These emotions are **NOT** an indicator of weakness, they're simply reminders that you're human. This is a good thing because the alternative is not favorable.

**REMEMBER, YOU ARE
NOT IN THIS ALONE.
BEST OF LUCK!!**

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