Thesis and dissertation writing    Session 1

1. Introductions, course outline and assessment procedure.

2. What research degree are you doing? Why are you doing it?

3. Complete the following context analysis for your thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of text</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus and perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship between writers and readers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expectations, conventions and requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship with other texts</td>
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4. Types of thesis

Simple/Complex/Topic based/Research articles

What do you think characterises a good thesis/dissertation in your field?

**Types of thesis/dissertation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1: A ‘simple’ traditional thesis</th>
<th>Degree: MEd</th>
<th>Study area: Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Rater consistency and judgment in the direct assessment of second language writing ability</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 1:</strong></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>The nature of the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Origins of the study</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus and structure of the thesis</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 2:</strong></td>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Performance assessment</td>
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<td>Performance assessment and reliability</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 3:</strong></td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Selection of research design, setting, informants and texts</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Data collection and analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 4:</strong></td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Degree of rater consistency</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation and application of performance criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 5:</strong></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Degree of rater consistency</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation and application of performance criteria</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Raters’ reading strategies</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Influences on rater judgments of writing ability</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 6:</strong></td>
<td>Conclusions and recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2: A ‘complex’ traditional thesis

Degree: PhD
Study area: Architecture, Building and Planning
Title: Community perceptions of town character: A case study of Byron Bay

Chapter 1: Introduction
The concept of town character
Research strategy
Thesis structure

Chapter 2: Byron Bay: From sacred sites to tourist attraction
Regional setting, natural history and cultural history
Concern with maintaining town character

Chapter 3: Place character: A theoretical framework
Spirit and concept of place
Models of place
Dimensions of place character

Chapter 4: Methodological considerations
Community involvement in assessing town character
Landscape assessment paradigms and methods
Research design

Chapter 5: A threat to town character
Club Med development proposal
Research questions
Method
Results
Conclusions
Limitations and future research

Chapter 6: Community description of town character
Survey aims and research questions
Method
Results
Discussion

Chapter 7: Identifying town character features
Research questions
Method
Results
Discussion

Chapter 8: Relating landscape features to town character
Research questions
Inventory of town character features
Randomly selected landscape scenes
Part One: respondents, and rating scales
Analysis and results
Part Two: respondents and rating scales
Analysis and results
Discussion and further research
Conclusion

Chapter 9: General discussion
Addressing the research questions
Concluding remarks
3. A topic based thesis

**Degree**: MA  **Study area**: Cultural Studies

**Title**: *Unworldly places: Myth, memory and the Pink and White Terraces*

**Chapter 1**: Introduction
- Disappearing wonders

**Chapter 2**: Plotting
- Travels of colonial science
- Plotting destinations

**Chapter 3**: Sightseeing
- Topophilic tourism
- Site specifics
- Painting the place and myth
- Souvenering the site

**Chapter 4**: Astral travel
- Mnemonic tours in the ‘new wonderland’
- Memory tours
- The buried village:
- Emalmed history
- Living out the past
- Museumising the past:
- Sanctioned memory

Chapter 5: Postscript

4: A compilation of research articles presented as a PhD thesis

**Degree**: PhD  **Study area**: Dental Science

**Title**: *Vertical root fracture and fracture-related properties of dentine*

**Chapter 1**: Introduction

**Chapter 2**: Background and literature review

**Chapter 3**: Aims of the study

**Chapter 4**: Load and strain during lateral condensation and vertical root fracture
- Introduction
- Literature review
- Materials and methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Summary and conclusions

**Chapter 6**: The effects of dentine location and tubule orientation on selected physical properties of dentine
- Introduction
- Literature review
- Materials and methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Summary and conclusions

**Chapter 7**: Additional finite element analysis and general discussion

**Chapter 8**: Further work and
Chapter 5: Mechanism of vertical root fracture by finite element analysis and strain gauge technique

Introduction
Literature review
Materials and methods
Results
Discussion
Summary and conclusions

(Paltridge, 2002)

How are the sample theses/dissertations organised?

6. Generic assessment criteria for theses/dissertations

Examiners focus on:

The literature review
Research design
Presentation of results
Discussion and conclusions
Originality
Significance of research
Contribution of knowledge
Standard of scholarly writing
High quality thesis = Judged to be acceptable as is by all examiners
Low Quality = revise and resubmit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Criteria</th>
<th>Specific Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Quality theses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis topic and approach</td>
<td>Significance and challenge of topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fusion of originality of the approach with realization of a significant contribution to the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>Expert use of the literature in design of the study and discussion of the findings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thorough, clear and incisive reporting of the literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicative competence</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications arising</td>
<td>Recognised need for early publication of/from the study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Holbrook et al 2004, p 117)

References