The Key to Dissertating: Defining Your Contribution

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Focus on Contribution

Avoid the problem of TMI (Too Much Information)
Contributions

Design
Choose data collection activities
Devise tools
Conduct data collection
Analysis

RQ

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Contribution:
the destination of your thesis

Consequence
Evidence
Novelty

Contribution

(Carlis, 2009)
Contribution

1. Consequence
   • Start with WHO CARES about your topic.
   • What do they need? What are they curious about?

2. Novelty
   • How your research will meet a need, fill a gap, provide something new and unique?

3. Evidence
   • What credible information will your research gather to fill that gap?
   • Will the people who care think the kind of evidence you’ve gathered is credible?

4. Dissemination
   • How will you share what you’ve learned? Where will it be most accessible to the people who care about the topic?
Articulating your contribution

• Interview your neighbour about his or her research in terms of its CONTRIBUTION:
  • Novelty: How is your work unique?
  • Consequence: Who cares about your work?
  • Evidence: What type of data will help you understand your RQ and persuade your audience?
Contribution in a sentence

- Look, here is [something novel and valuable] about [topic area], that [these folks] in the field care about, and I will prove/illustrate/describe it with [this evidence].
If you’re just getting started...

- What are you curious about?
- To what data sources can you get access?
- Sample

Dissertation

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References


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