

Thesis: Structure & Organization for Graduate Students

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What are some common challenges experienced by writers of theses / dissertations?

Common responses from graduate students in prior presentations



This presentation will explore strategies for:

- Organizing the Thesis
- Managing the Thesis-Writing Process

Organizing the Thesis – Models

- Talk to your advisor / department
- Look in UofM Libraries' *MSpace*

<http://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/index.jsp>

- Check out *Theses Canada*

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/services/theses/Pages/search.aspx>

Organizing the Thesis – Models: Look for . . .

- Structure / Organization
 - Chapters (order, length, content)
 - Headings, sections
- Scope
 - How have others chosen to limit their projects
- Secondary Sources
 - What kinds of sources? Within the field? Interdisciplinary?
- Scholarly context
 - How do others position their work within the broader scholarship?
 - How do they (effectively) show their engagement with the field?
 - *what phrases signal participation in the scholarly conversation?*



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Search

Search:

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1 2 3 4 ... 355 Next Page

Practices of **community health** nurses related to **health** advice given to caregivers of infant

This study examined the oral **health** knowledge of rural, northern and urban

Community health assessment through an income-related **health** equity lens: a retrospective case study of three regional **health** authorities in Manitoba

Community Health Assessment (CHA) is a legislated process in Manitoba, Canada, which provides an overview of **health** in each Regional **Health** Authority (RHA). This process is important for operational and strategic planning, and provides...

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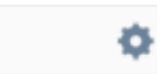
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and what
ices in oral

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- Research Publications from other Manitoba institutions
- Research Publications from University of Manitoba Researchers
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Practices of **community health** nurses related to oral **health** advice given to caregivers of infants and children Coutu, Jennifer (2018)

This study examined the oral **health** knowledge of **community health** nurses in Manitoba and what oral **health** advice is given to the caregivers of infants and children. In addition, the differences in oral **health** knowledge of rural, northern and urban...

Community health assessment through an income-related **health** equity lens: a retrospective case study of three regional **health** authorities in Manitoba Lemaire, Jacqueline (2017)

Community Health Assessment (CHA) is a legislated process in Manitoba, Canada, which provides an overview of **health** in each Regional **Health** Authority (RHA). This process is important for operational and strategic planning, and provides...

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Subject

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[intellectual disability \(2\)](#)
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Department

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[psychology \(10\)](#)
[family social sciences \(7\)](#)
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Refine to search by
topic/department
and advisor

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1 2 3 4 Next Page



Characteristics that determine complete physical examination rates in Manitobans with an intellectual or developmental disability: a retrospective cohort study

Ratnayake, Iresha

(2017)

A population-based comparative study of health and health care utilization of Manitoba children in care with and without developmental disabilities

Heinrichs, Dustin

(2015)

Hepatitis B vaccination coverage among foreign-born Canadians: data from the community health measures survey

Gunaratna,
Hasantha

(2018)

Sample master's thesis table of contents

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Dedication	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Rationale for the Present Study	3
Study Objectives and Research Questions	4
Objective 1	4
Questions	4
Objective 2	5
Questions	5
Theoretical Frameworks	6
Life Course Theory	7
International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)	9
Active Aging Framework	12
Age-Friendly Communities Framework	15
What Makes a Community Age-Friendly	16
How the Frameworks were used in the Present Study	17
Chapter 2: Literature Review	18
Definition and Prevalence of ID	18
Definition of Intellectual Disability	18
Global Prevalence of ID	20
Prevalence of ID in Manitoba	21
Where do Individuals with ID Live	21

Domains of an Age-Friendly Community	31
1. Transportation	31
2. Housing	32
3. Social Participation	33
4. Respect and Social Inclusion	34
5. Opportunities for Community Involvement	34
6. Communication and Information	35
7. Community Supports and Health Services	36
8. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	37
Age-Friendly Manitoba	38
Developing Age-Friendly Communities for Older Persons Living with ID	39
Recommendations for "Aging in Place" for Older Persons Living with ID	41
Chapter 3: Methods	43
Study Design	43
Interviews	43
Focus Groups	44
Sites for Recruitment	45
Target Population	45
Recruitment Method	46
Data Collection	47
Ethics Approval	47
Data Analysis	48
First Cycle Coding	48
Pre-Coding	48
Attribute Coding	49
Descriptive Coding	50
Initial Coding	50

Most thesis and dissertation proposals include an introduction and a review of relevant studies on the topic. Most also include a formal or informal explanation of the methodology that will be used. In the social sciences, these three elements are typically presented as separate chapters. Notice the specific elements that are included in each chapter.

Sample master's thesis table of contents

Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Dedication	iii
List of Tables	viii
Chapter One: Introduction and Literature Review	1
Statement of the Problem	1
A Background on Dementia/Prevalence and the Importance of Dementia Education and Training's Impact on Various Groups	3
Literature Review	5
Improvements for Education and Training are Needed	7
The Ageism Framework and Ramifications on Dementia Care	11
Why Does Ageism Exist?	11
Care and Quality of Life	16
Individual Residents and Person Centered Care	17
Institutions/Other Residents	20
Staff	21
Working in LTC is Stressful	23
Staff Don't Have Time	25

Communication Issues	27
Pain Management Issues	30
Family Members	31
The Need to Develop More Person Centered Care	33
Barriers to Person Centered Care	35
Summary	36
Chapter Two: Methods	38
Qualitative Research Methods	38
The Role of the Researcher And Assumptions	39
My Location as a Researcher	41
Ethical Review Process	44
Recruitment/Choosing The Research Site	45
Criteria for Qualitative Sample Selection	46
Participant Characteristics	47
Participant Characteristics and Shaping the Findings	52
The Interview	54
Data Analysis and Interpretation	56
Rigour	59
Qualitative Research Rationale	62
Chapter Three: Findings	64
Findings	64

Notice how this thesis combines the introduction and lit review into a single chapter, which is common in some fields, especially in the physical and biological/medical sciences.

Sample doctoral dissertation table of contents

DEDICATION.....	i		
ABSTRACT.....	ii		
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ivii		
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii		
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii		
LIST OF CHARTS.....	vii		
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1		
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF CONCEPTS AND LITERATURE.....	8		
Section One: Concept and Models of Health – A Historical Perspective....	9		
Conceptual Frameworks of Health Determinants.....	12		
Section Two: Guiding Conceptual Framework.....	16		
The Evans and Stoddart (1994) Population Health Framework.....	17		
Section Three: The Single-item Indicator of Self-rated General Health			
Status.....	22		
Section Four: Determinants of Self-rated Health.....	28		
Summary and Gaps in the Literature on Determinants of Self-rated			
Health.....	66		
CHAPTER 3: METHODS.....	73		
Part I: Statistics Canada’s National Population Health Survey.....	73		
Sample Design for the Household Component.....	75		
Variables included in the NPHS.....	78		
Part II: Quantitative Methods - Addressing the First Research Question....	79		
Population.....	79		
Study Sample – The NPHS Longitudinal Panel.....	79		
Methodological Considerations in Analysis of the NPHS Data.....	81		
Weighting and Estimation.....	81		
Design Effect and Variance Estimation.....	81		
Preparing the Data.....	84		
Variables of Interest for this Study.....	85		
Variable Definitions.....	87		
Statistical Methods for Research Questions 1-7.....	99		
Methods for Research Question One.....	100		
Methods for Research Questions 2, 3, 4.....	102		
Methods for Research Questions 5, 6, and 7.....	110		
Methods for Research Questions 8.....	110		
Summary.....	111		
CHAPTER 4: DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS.....	113		
Demographic Profile of the Study Population.....	113		
Socio-economic Characteristics.....	114		
Health and Functioning Characteristics.....	117		
Premature Death of Parent(s).....	127		
Social Environment Characteristics.....	127		
Individual Behavior and Lifestyle Characteristics.....	135		
Disease.....	152		
General Well-being.....	153		
Summary.....	156		
CHAPTER 5: PREDICTORS OF NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE			
SELF-RATED HEALTH - VARIATIONS ACROSS DEMOGRAPHIC			
SUB-POPULATIONS.....	158		
Section I: Establishing the Construct Validity of the Single-item			
Self-rated Health Indicator.....	159		
Section II: Factors Associated with Self-rated Health – Examining			
Bi-variate associations.....	165		
Section III: Factors Predicting Fair or Poor Self-rated Health – Variations			
across Demographic Sub-populations.....	173		
Are the Predictors of Fair or Poor Self-rated Health Different for			
Men Compared to Women?.....	193		
Longitudinal Model Predicting Fair or Poor Self-rated			
Health for Males age 25 or older.....	193		
Longitudinal Model Predicting Fair or Poor Self-rated			
Health for Females age 25 or older.....	199		
Summary.....	207		
Are the Predictors of Fair or Poor Self-rated Health Different for			
Middle-aged Adults (age between 25 and 54) Compared to Older			
Adults (age 55 or older)?.....	209		
Longitudinal Model Predicting Fair or Poor Self-rated			
Health for Middle-aged Adults.....	209		
Longitudinal Model Predicting Fair or Poor Self-rated			
Health for Elderly Adults.....	217		
Summary.....	223		
Section IV: Factors Predicting Very Good or Excellent Self-rated health			
Variations Across Demographic Sub-populations.....	225		
Are the Predictors of Very Good or Excellent Self-rated Health			
Different for Men Compared to Women?.....	244		
Longitudinal Model Predicting Very Good or Excellent			
Self-rated Health for Males age 25 or Older.....	245		
Longitudinal Model Predicting Very Good or Excellent			
Self-rated Health for Females age 25 or Older.....	252		

Notice the increased length of chapters in a doctoral dissertation.

Once you have reviewed a few sample theses, you might find it helpful to sketch out a draft table of contents, which you may want to discuss with your advisor.

Acknowledgements.....	
Abstract	
List of Tables	
List of Figures.....	
Chapter I: Introduction.....	(8 - 10 pages)
Chapter II: Literature Review.....	(25 - 35 pages)
Introduction.....	
Discussion.....	
Chapter III: Methods (and Materials?).....	(10 - 40 pages)
Experimental Design.....	
Sampling.....	
Measures of response.....	
Data Analysis.....	
Chapter IV: Results.....	(30 - 80 pages)
Sampling.....	
Responses.....	
Chapter V: Discussion	(10 - 30 pages)
Effects of Treatments.....	
Chapter VI: Conclusion	(4 - 8 pages)
References.....	

Self-Management & Writing: Making Progress!

Pause and think for a moment: What do *you* do

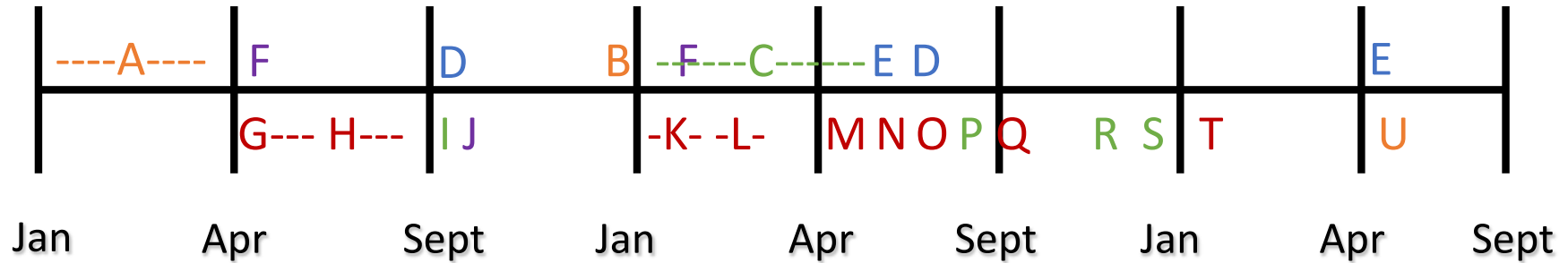
- to get started?
- to work through/past/around obstacles?
- to keep moving forward?

Common responses from graduate students in prior presentations



You might find it helpful to create a timeline with important dates and deadlines.

Self-Management & Writing: Making Progress!



A – Course

B – Student away

C – Advisor away

D – Conference CFP

E – Conference

F – Grant Application

G – Literature review

H – Thesis proposal

I – Thesis defense

J – REB submission

K – Data collection

L – Data analysis

M – Results chapter

N – Discussion chapter

O – Figure preparation

P – Chapter(s) to advisor

Q – Revisions

R – Thesis to committee

S – Thesis defense

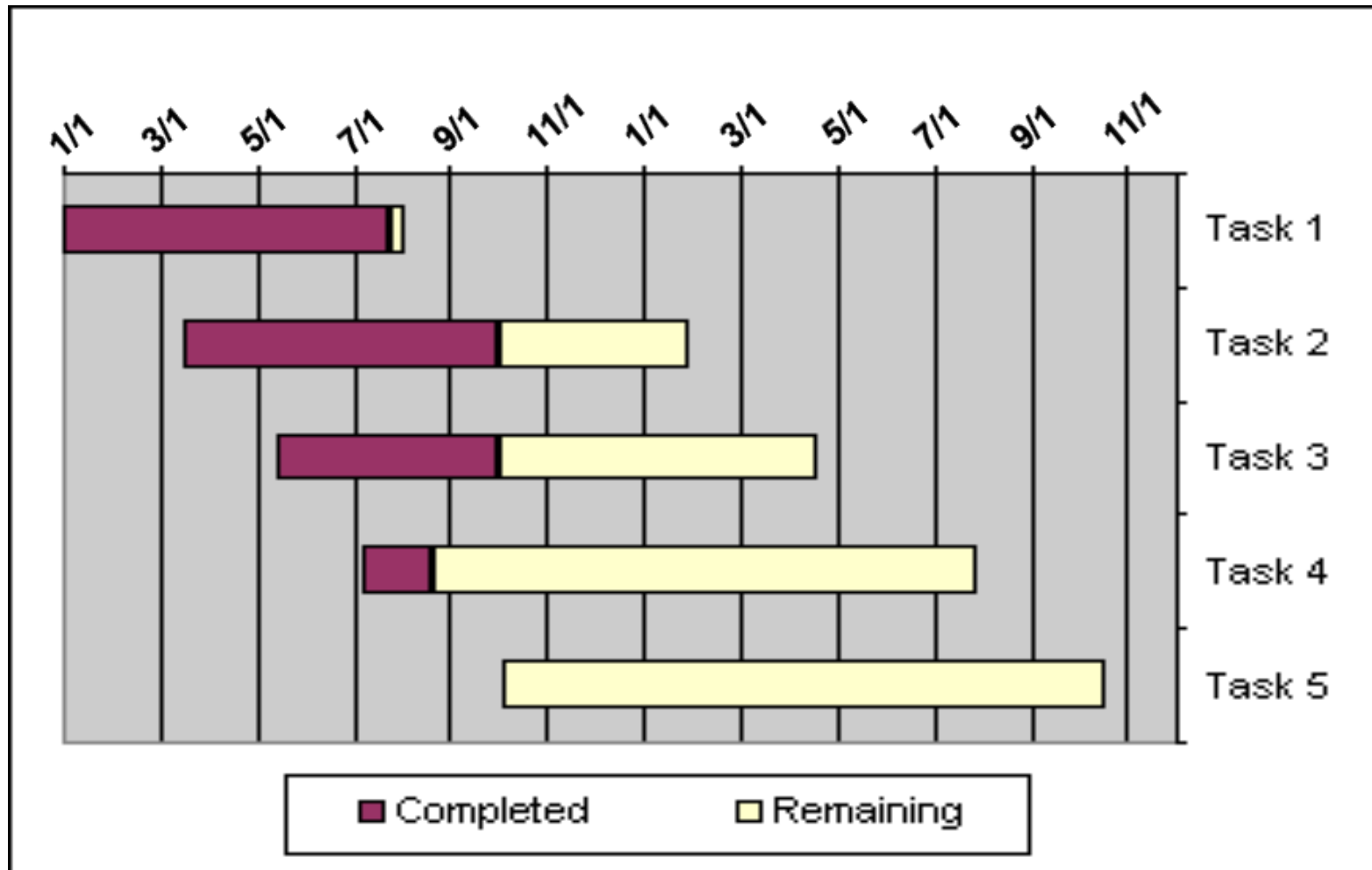
T – Submission to FGS

U – Convocation

Name	Description	Status	Term	Amount	Location	Deadline	Ad. source	Further info.
ASECS – Kolb Trav. Fell	younger 18c scholars inc. "adv doct. cand"	"doct. can."	TRAVEL	\$500	us/intl TRAVEL	01.01	ASECS	
ASECS – Williams Trav	18c English LIT. – documentary research	diss	TRAVEL	\$700	TRAVEL	01.01	ASECS	
ASECS – Popkin Travel	travel to collections	open	TRAVEL	\$250	us/intl TRAVEL	01.01	ASECS	
Penn. Hist & Mus Comm "Scholars in Residence"	PA Historical & Museum Commission mss. & artifact collection	open	1 – 3 mo.	1,500 / mo	Harrisburg, PA	01.16	OAH 29:4	phmc.state.pa.us
AAS: K&H Peterson Fel.	strong AAS holdings	"doct. cand."	1 - 3 mo.	1,000 / mo.	Worcester, MA	01.15	US #111	csloat@mwa.org
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John Carter Brown Lib. include. Ekstrom Fell. & Ctr. NewWrld Comp	short-term Research Fell. -- Lib. holdings Ek: "cultural influ. on gender formation" Comp: "definite comparative dimensions"	exams by 1/15	2 - 4 mo.	1,400 / mo.	Providence, RI	01.15	JCBL 7/03	jcbl.org
U. of Michigan Library Price Visiting Res. Fell	research grants for UofM collections (specialization: 16 th – 19 th c. America)		1 wk +	500	Ann Arbor, MI	01.15	OAH 29:4	clements.umich.edu
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Council for Euro. Studies	pre-Diss	PRE-DISS	2-3 mo.	4,000	Europe	02.01	email	europenet.org
N.E. Regional Research	use coll's of at least 3 NE inst's--2 wks ea.		8 wks	5,000	New England	02.01	Pers. 40:1	masshist.org
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IU Summer PreDiss Trav.	Pre-Diss. Travel Grant	PRE-DISS	TRAVEL 6-8 wks	1,000 + travel	int'l TRAVEL	02.15	email	C. Bankart - OIP
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APS Lib. Resid. Res. Fel	"need to work in Society's collections"	post-exams	1 - 3 mo.	2,000 / mo.	Philadelphia, PA	03.01	US #111	amphilsoc.org
Lib. Co. Phil./ Hist. Soc. Penn. short term diss.	Col. Am.: Atl. World; Mid-Atl. regional; immigrant/ethnic hist. ***for diss. res.***	"diss. res."	1 mo.	1,750	Philadelphia, PA	03.01	h-net (h-oieahc)	librarycompany.org hsp.org
Lib. Co. Phil.: diss. fell.	"research at the Lib. Co. & Phil. region" esp. "early American economy & society"	"diss. res."	9 mo.	15,000	Philadelphia, PA	03.01	US #111	librarycompany.org

If your field has many funding options, such as archival research funding, you might find it helpful to create a table to keep track of fellowship requirements and applications deadlines.

Self-Management & Writing: Making Progress!



Gantt Chart

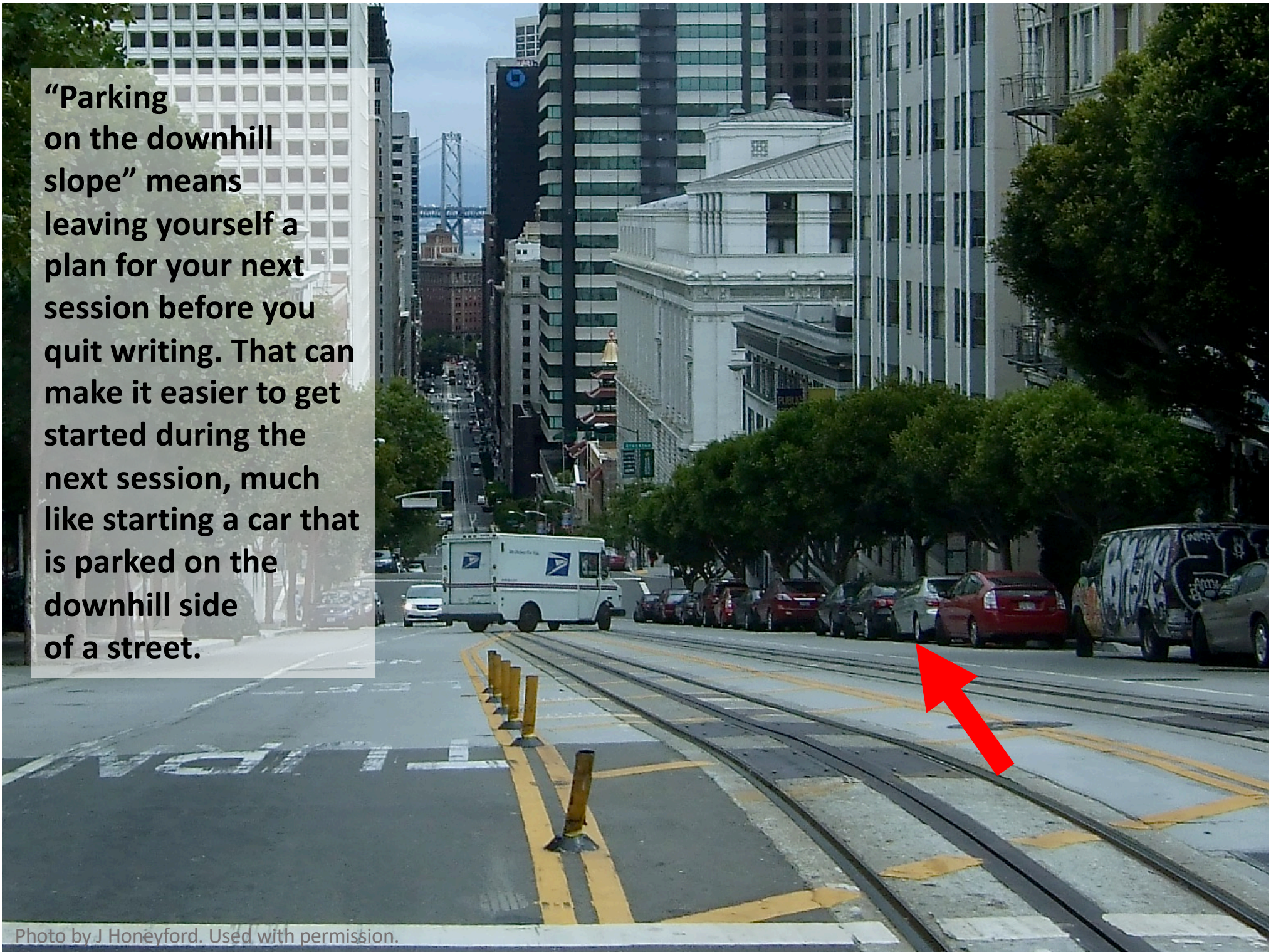
allows you to track your progress toward multiple goals

Self-Management & Writing: Making Progress!

- Write every day and do it at an established / fixed time
- Pair writing with something you enjoy
- Build rewards into your schedule
- Use small blocks of time
- Break down thesis writing into small, manageable tasks
- Create deadlines for each task, chunk, and section
- Develop a support group
- Park (your writing brain) “on the downhill slope”

Adapted from Bolker, J. (1998). *Writing your dissertation in fifteen minutes a day: A guide to starting, revising, and finishing your doctoral thesis*. Henry Holt and Company.

“Parking on the downhill slope” means leaving yourself a plan for your next session before you quit writing. That can make it easier to get started during the next session, much like starting a car that is parked on the downhill side of a street.



The last full paragraph completed during a writing session.

Woodward's role as both participant in and first historian of the religious societies and SRMs has perhaps led many English social and religious historians to accept Woodward's explanations of the origins for both and to elide the two societies on occasion. The claim of primacy appears justified with respect to the SRMs, and even, at first glance, for the religious societies. A letter from Boston printed in *A Help* alludes to the "orders" for the religious societies, presumably those of Woodward's Poplar parish, seemingly suggesting that the societies in Boston had copied their rules from those of the Poplar society:
Every day having heard and read some Accounts of the Religious Societies of Young Men in London, they were encouraged to endeavour the like among them. And beyond their Expectation (God working with them) prevailed with the greatest part of the Youth to form themselves into Societies for Religious Exercises, signing some good Rules to be observed by them therein, much like the Orders of the Societies of young Men in London.

Before ending a writing session, write the first sentence of the next paragraph, and list the main points that you want to cover in that paragraph.

Perhaps on account of this interpretation, English historians have tended assume that the religious societies and SRMs on both side of the Atlantic . . .

- Overton
- Simon
- Portus
- Bullock
- Curtis and Speck
- Walsh?

You can also list some ideas for any subsequent paragraphs that you anticipate writing.

American religious historians, however,...

- antinomianism
- Lovelace
- vs- Levin

My argument . . .

Self-Management & Writing: Making Progress!

- Use “free writing”
- Create diagrams or other schematics
- Begin anywhere / Move to a new section
- Go back to your notes – look for insights that you have forgotten about
- Give up striving for perfection in your writing; remember, writing is a process.
- Take a break

Self-Management & Writing: Making Progress!

- Be organized from the start (as organized as you can be)
- Be systematic and consistent
- Be thorough - better to be safe than sorry
- Know the rules of your department, faculty, and the university
- Leave out paraphrases/data/images/figures/quotes if you can't verify them or get permission to use them
- **Ask! Ask! Ask!**

Additional Campus Resources

- Your advisor and other faculty and students in your department
- Your department's supplementary regulations (if any)
- Faculty of Graduate Studies Thesis Guidelines
http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate_studies/thesis/index.html
- Libraries, Reference Librarians and library subject guides
<http://libguides.lib.umanitoba.ca/>
- Academic Learning Centre writing tutors <https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/academic-supports/academic-learning>
- Student Advocacy <http://umanitoba.ca/student/advocacy/>
- U of M Copyright Office <http://umanitoba.ca/copyright/>

Select Print and Electronic Resources

Bolker, J. (1998). *Writing your dissertation in fifteen minutes a day: A guide to starting, revising, and finishing your doctoral thesis*. Henry Holt.

Boyle Single, P. (2010). *Demystifying dissertation writing*. Stylus.

Elbow, P. (1998). *Writing with power: Techniques for mastering the writing process* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Glatthorn, A. A. (1998). *Writing the winning dissertation: A step-by-step guide*. Corwin Press.

Ridley, D. (2008). *The literature review*. Sage Study Skills.

Proquest [U.S. theses and dissertations]:

<http://proxycheck.lib.umanitoba.ca/libraries/online/proxy.php?http://search.proquest.com?accountid=14569>

Theses Canada: <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/services/theses/Pages/search.aspx>

UofM Libraries' MSpace: <http://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/index.jsp>

Thesis: Structure & Organization for Graduate Students

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