

# Design, Format, & Structure Thesis and Dissertation

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UMES Writing Workshop

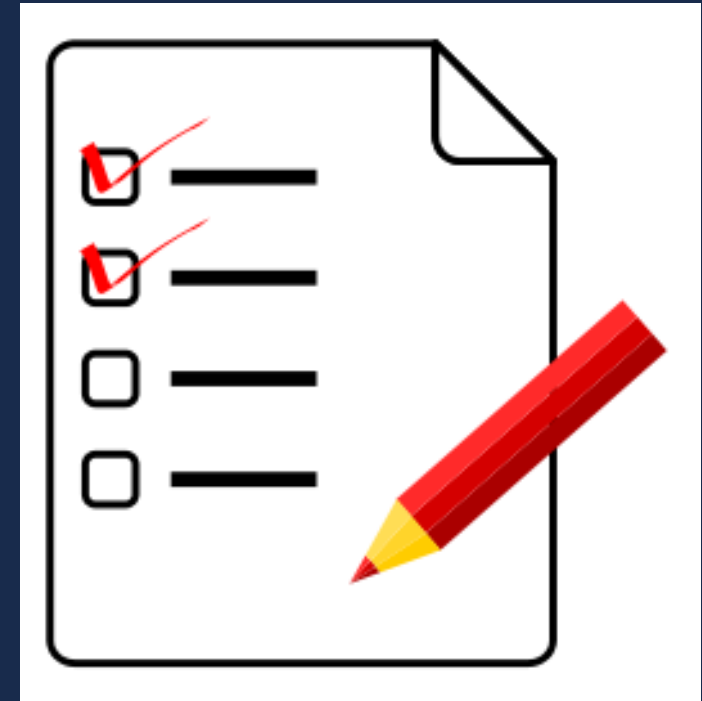
Dr. Celeste Raver Luning

March 6, 2020

# Agenda

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- Resources
- Getting Started
- Designing YOUR Study
- Format and Structure
- Final Thoughts

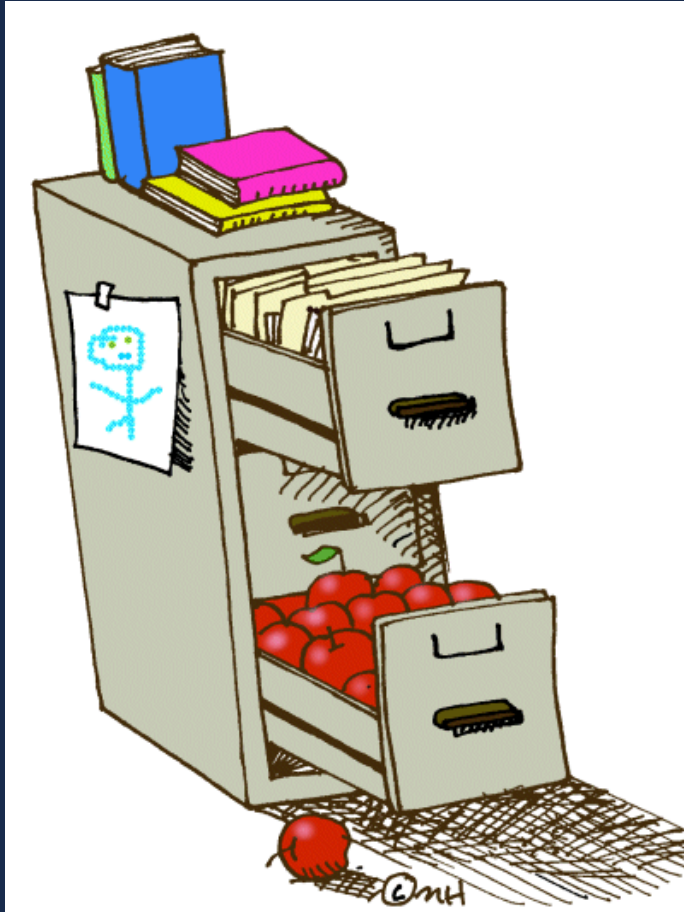


# Resources

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# Resources

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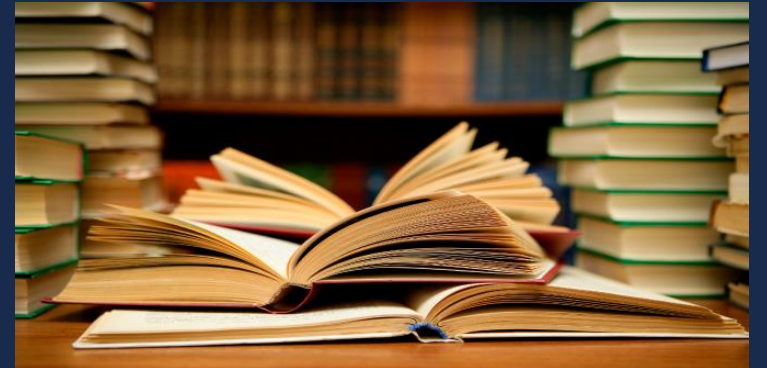
- Department
  - Chair
  - Advisor
  - Professors with specific expertise
- Department formatting guidelines
- [UMES Guide to Preparation of Theses and Dissertations](#)
- Peer mentors
- Books & articles

# Resources – Books & Articles

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## Writing & Literature

- Academic Story Telling
  - Pollock, T. G., & Bono, J. E. (2013). Being Scheherazade: The importance of storytelling in academic writing. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(3), 629 – 234. doi: 10.5465/amj.2013.4003
- Literature Review
  - Machi, L. A., & McEvoy, B. T. (2016). *The literature review: Six steps to success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.



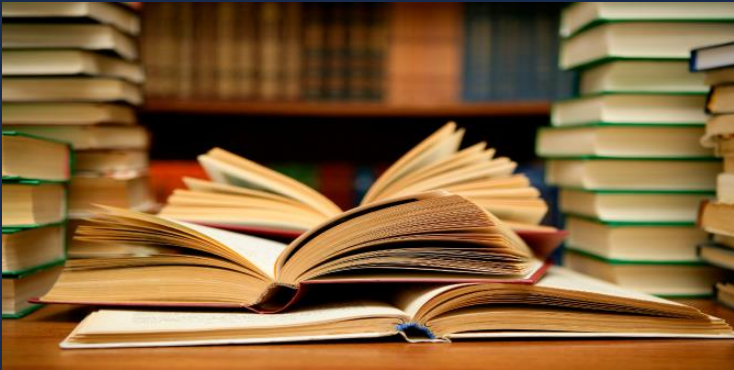
# Resources – Books & Articles

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## Methodology

(primarily social science)

- Research Design



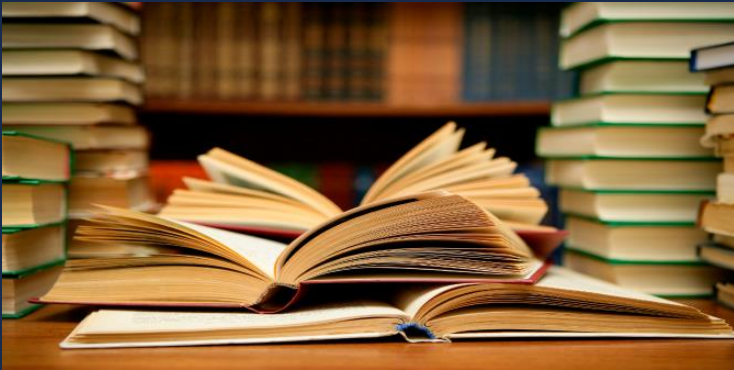
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# Resources – Books & Articles

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## Methodology

(primarily social science)



- Research Design

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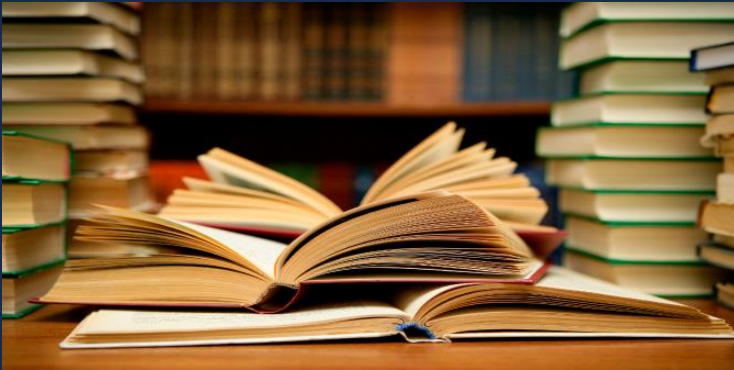
# Resources – Books & Articles

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## Methodology

(primarily social science)

- Understanding Research
  - Dane, F. C. (2011). *Evaluating research: Methodology for people who need to read research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.



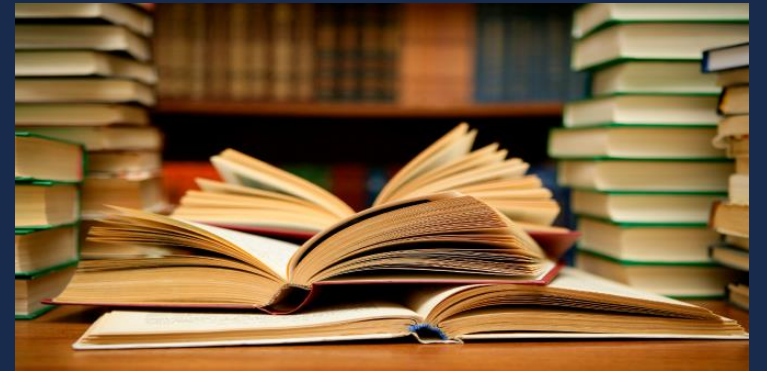


# Resources – Books & Articles

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## Translating Research to Words

- Morgan, S. E., Reichert, T., & Harrison, T. R. (2017). *From numbers to words: Reporting statistical results for the social sciences*. New York, NY: Routledge.



# Getting Started

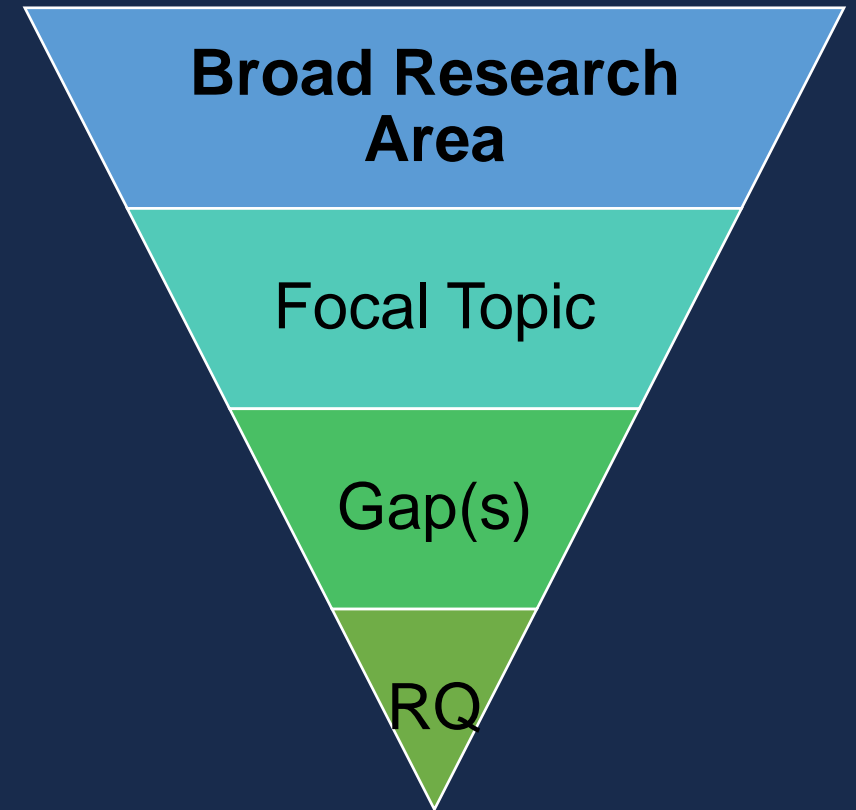
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# Getting Started

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## Identify Broad Research Focus

Examine the literature  
Identify areas of exploration



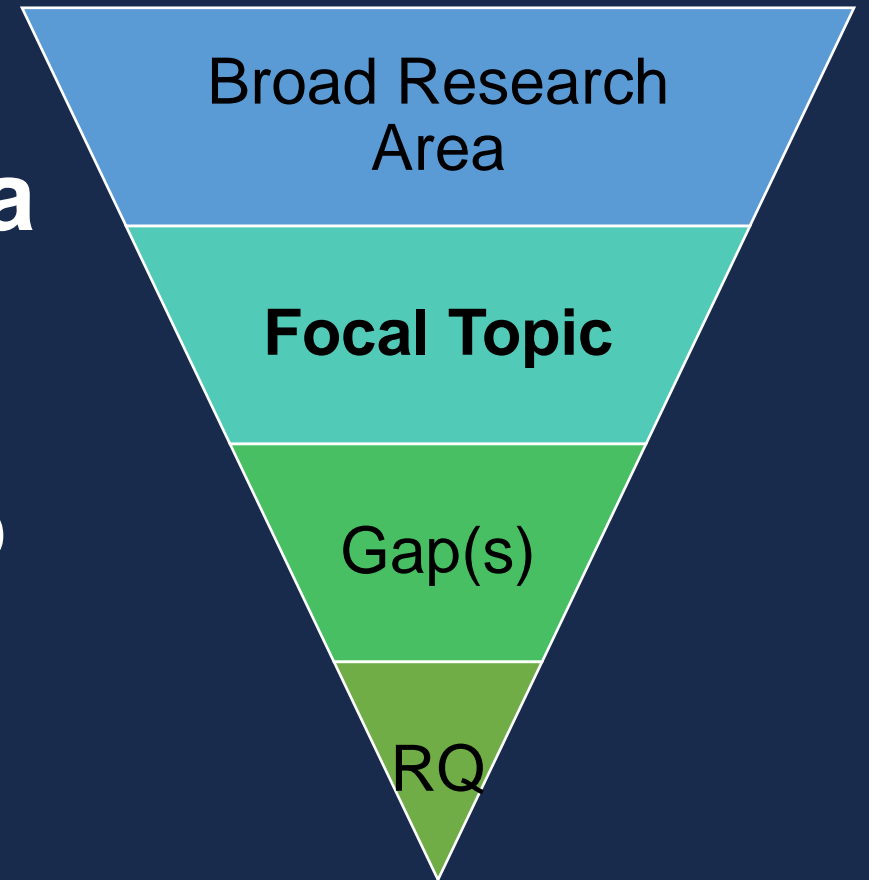
# Getting Started

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## Identify Your Focal Topic Area

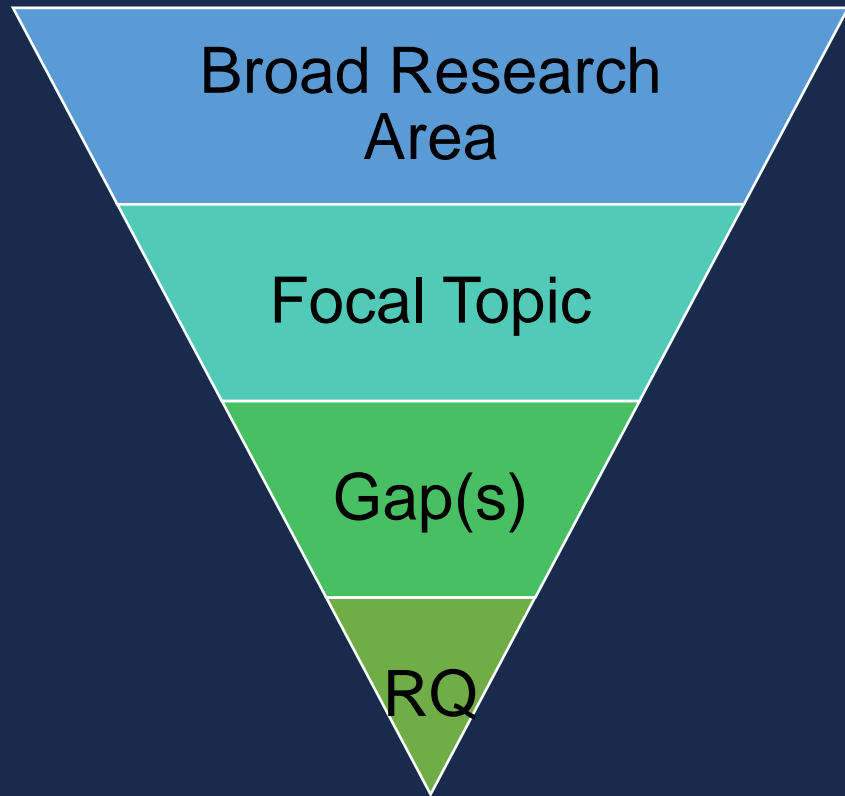
YOU MUST be of deeply interested in the topic!!!!

Get to know the literature – **YOU NEED TO BE AN EXPERT IN THE LITERATURE**



# Getting Started

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## Identify the Gap(s) in the Literature

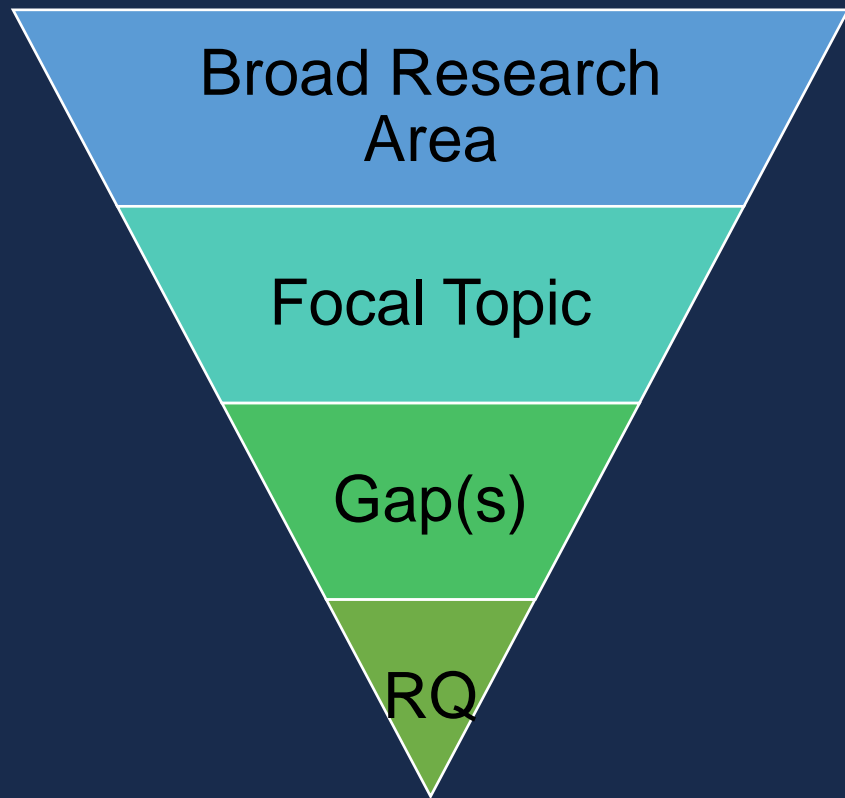
Use the literature

Is this a gap worthy of exploring?

Will studying this help contribute to furthering knowledge in your field?

# Getting Started

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## Create Your Research Question(s)

What questions will help to address the identified gap in the literature?

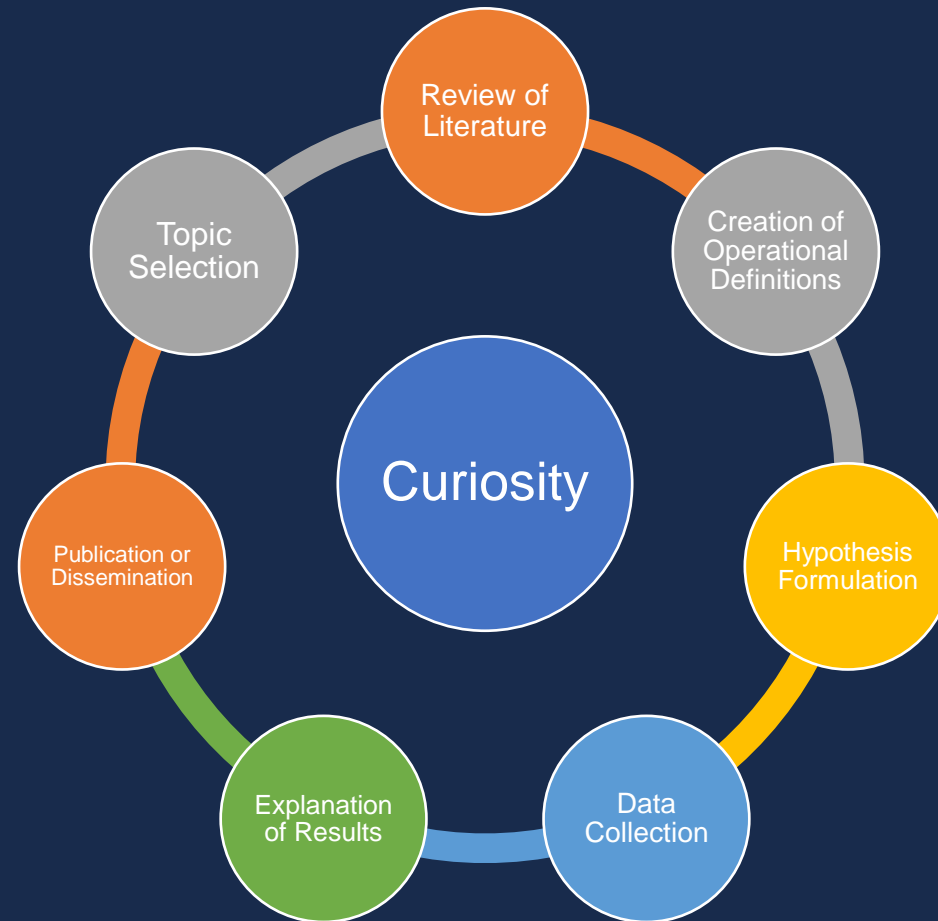
What methodological approach is appropriate?

# Getting Started - Goal of Research

Goal of Research	Description	Abstract Question
Exploratory Research	Seeking to determine if a phenomenon exists	Does it exist?
Descriptive Research	Differentiating phenomenon from other phenomenon or attempting to characterize it in a more complete manner	What are its characteristics?
Predictive Research	Identifying relationships to provide knowledge about some thing by knowing about another thing	To what is it related?
Explanatory Research	Seeking an explanation by examining a cause-effect relationship between two or more phenomena	What causes it?
Action Research	Research to solve a social problem	Can this be used to solve a problem?

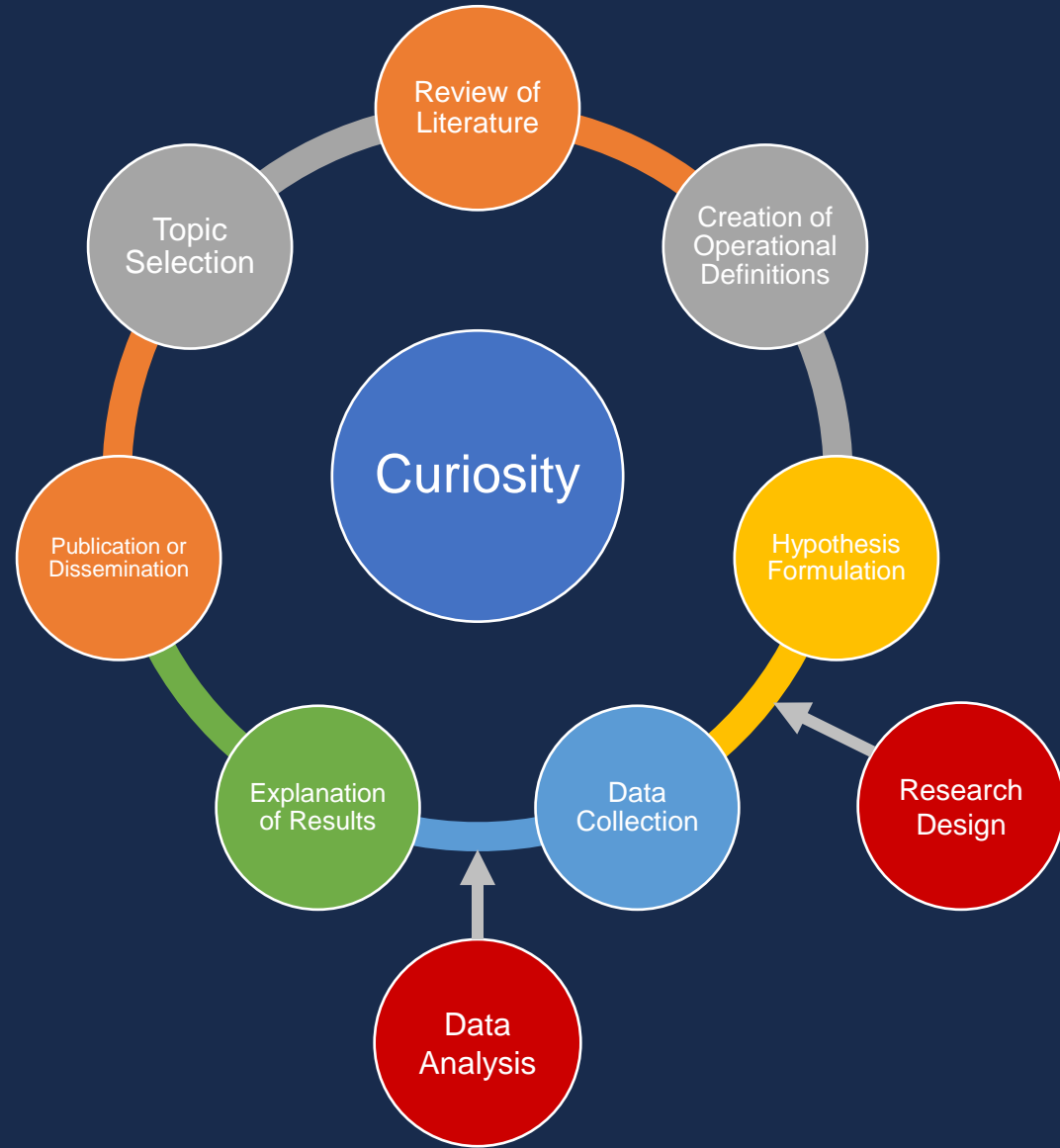
# Cyclical Nature of the Practice of Science

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(Dane, 2011)







Curiosity

Review of Literature

Creation of Operational Definitions

Hypothesis Formulation

Research Design

Data Collection

Data Analysis

Explanation of Results

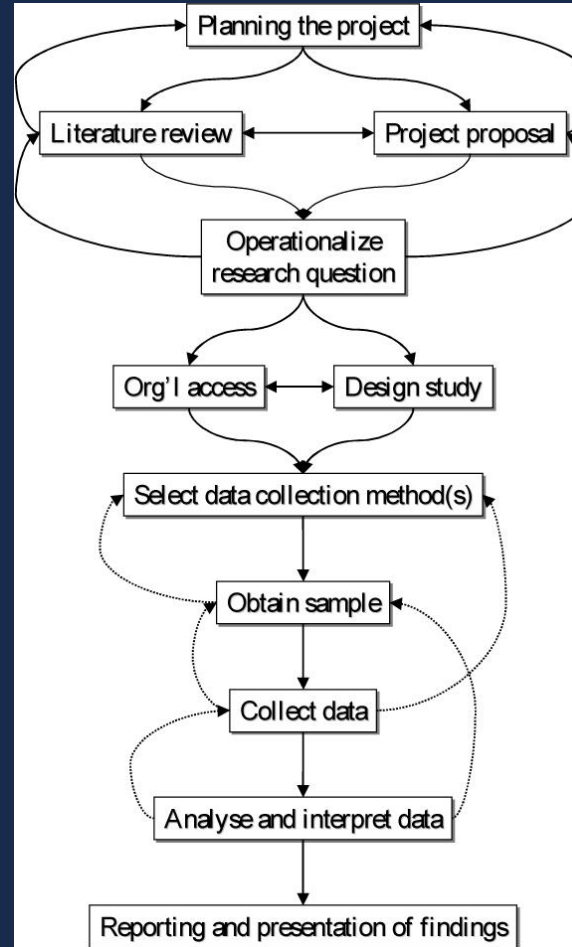
Publication or Dissemination

Topic Selection

# Designing Your Study

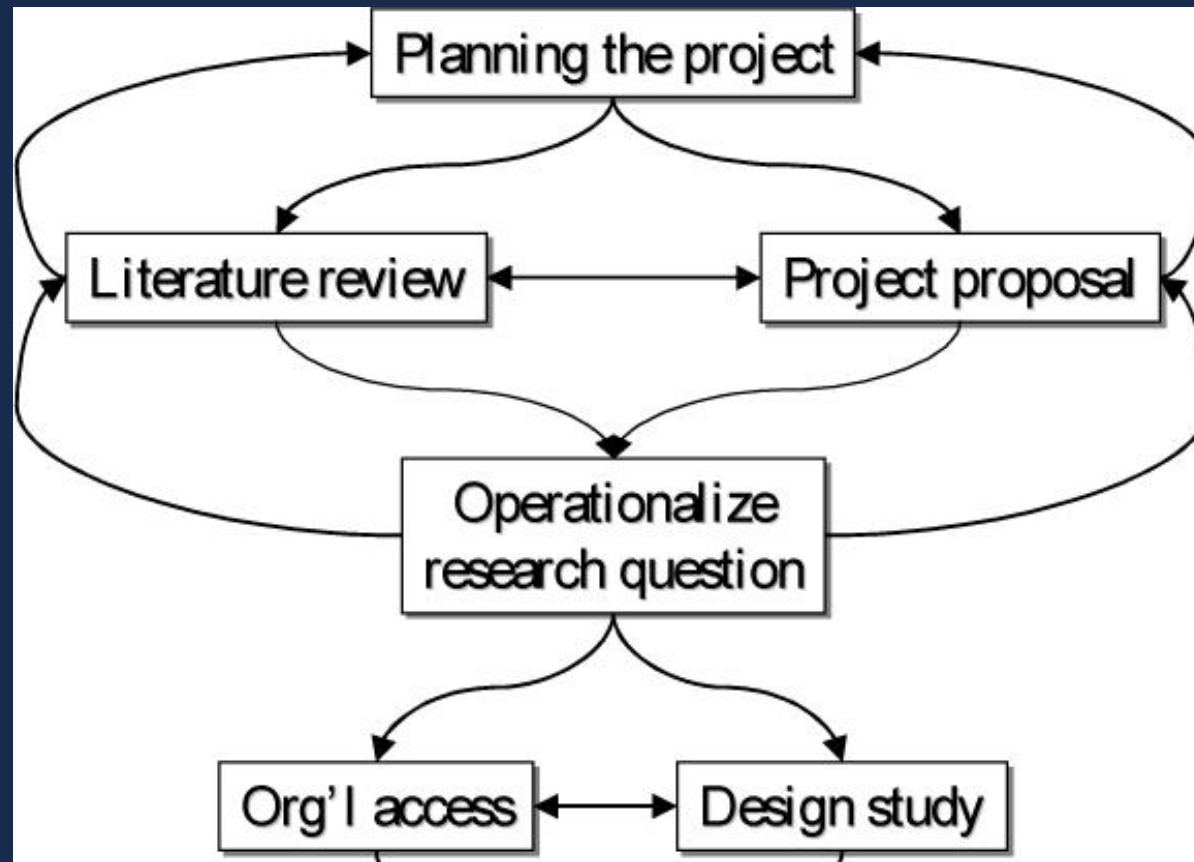
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# Designing Your Study - The Research Process



(Brewerton & Millward, 2004, p. 3)

# Designing Your Study – Proposal



# Designing Your Study

## Having a Research Mindset

- Literature guides your study
- **YOU ARE NOT PROVING ANYTHING!**
  - The hypothesis is supported or not supported
- Be cautious and conscientious with words



# Designing Your Study

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## Start with Alignment

- **Title**
- **Purpose**
- **Research Question(s)**
- Hypothesis(es)  
(Quantitative)
- Synthesizing Question(s)  
(Qualitative)

# Designing Your Study

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**What does alignment mean?**

- Title, purpose, and research question(s) utilize similar wording
- ***Should be able to identify purpose of study by reading the title***



# Designing Your Study

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**What does alignment mean?**

- Hypotheses (quantitative) ***must*** support research questions
- Synthesizing questions (qualitative) ***must*** support research questions

# Designing Your Study

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**Why is  
alignment  
important?**

- Generates cohesion
- Clearly identifies what the study is regarding
- Keeps the researcher(s) on track
- Provides the foundation

# Designing Your Study

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## How to Check

## Alignment Assessment

- Title
- Purpose
- Research Question(s)
  - Hypotheses (Quantitative)
  - Synthesizing Question(s) (Qualitative)

# Designing Your Study

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## Tips

1. Find the gap (READ LITERATURE)
2. Brainstorm ideas
  - Generate initial purpose and RQ(s)
3. Design theoretical framework
4. **ASSESS** and **ADJUST** purpose and RQ(s)
5. Create hypotheses or synthesizing questions
6. Identify context of study and general research design

# Designing Your Study

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## Tips

7. Write title and purpose
8. Align title, purpose, and RQ(s)
9. Write the background to the problem
- 10. ASSESS and ADJUST** title, purpose, and RQ(s)
11. Write literature review
- 12. ASSESS and ADJUST** title, purpose, and RQ(s)

# Designing Your Study

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## Practice

### Create an Alignment Assessment

- Title
- Purpose
- Research Question(s)
  - Hypotheses (Quantitative)
  - Synthesizing Question(s) (Qualitative)

# Designing Your Study - Methodological Thinking

## Deductive Logic

Using what is already known to determine what data to collect and what it will mean

## Inductive Logic

Using data to develop concepts and theories

- Hypotheses must come from existing literature – deductive logic
- If not much is known about topic, study primarily utilizes inductive logic
- Many studies utilize a combination of both types of logic

# Format and Structure

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# Format and Structure

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## Primary Instruction

Follow the guidance provided  
by your specific department  
and advisor



# Format and Structure - General

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- Chapter 1
  - Introduction to the Study or Statement of the Problem
- Chapter 2
  - Review of the Literature
- Chapter 3
  - Methodology of the Study
- Chapter 4
  - Results of the Study (quantitative)
  - Findings of the Study (qualitative)
- Chapter 5
  - Discussion and Conclusions



# Format and Structure - ORLD

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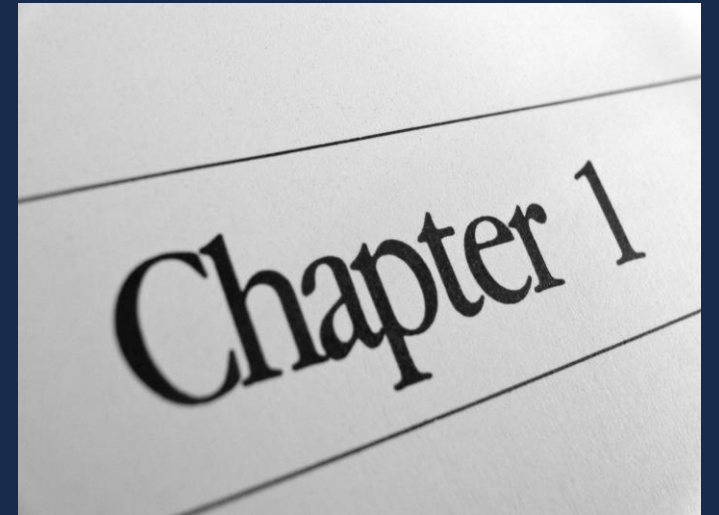
- Chapter 1
  - Introduction
- Chapter 2
  - Literature Review
- Chapter 3
  - Theoretical Framework (quantitative)
  - Conceptual Framework (qualitative)
- Chapter 4
  - Research Design and Methodology
- Chapter 5
  - Results of the Study (quantitative)
  - Findings of the Study (qualitative)
- Chapter 6
  - Discussion and Conclusions



# Format and Structure – Chapter 1

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- Broad Introduction to the Study
- Background of the Problem
- Trends in the Literature
- Significance of the Study
  - Scientific
    - Methodological
    - Theoretical
  - Practical Significance
    - Relevance to Organizational Leadership (ORLD)
- Scope of the Study
- Definitions and Key Terms
- Summary and Organization of the Study



# Format and Structure – Chapter 2

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- Overview of the Chapter
- Review of the Literature
  - Should organize in a manner that “tells a story”
  - Highlight what is known
  - Point to what is missing
    - Explain why that missing knowledge is a problem

# Format and Structure – Chapter 2

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- Theoretical or Conceptual Framework (***ORLD students see next slide***)
  - How does theory inform this study?
  - What is missing from theory that this study may help to explain?
- Gap in the Literature
  - Final points as to why this study is necessary
- Summary of the Chapter

# Format and Structure – Chapter 3 (ORLD students)

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- ORLD utilizes a distinct chapter for the theoretical/conceptual framework
- Overview of chapter
- Theory(ies) or concepts from which study is derived
  - How does theory inform this study?
  - What is missing from theory that this study may help to explain?
- Conceptual or theoretical model of the study
- Research questions
- Hypotheses or synthesizing questions
- Summary of the chapter

# Format and Structure – Chapter 3 (ORLD – Chapter 4)

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- Overview of the Chapter
- Methodology and Research Design
- Context (if relevant)
- Sample
- Ethical Practices – IRB Protocols
- Data Collection
- Data Analysis
- Reliability and Validity
- Role of the Researcher (Qualitative)
- Limitations and Delimitations of Methodology and Research Design
- Summary of the Chapter



# Format and Structure – Chapter 4 (ORLD – Chapter 5)

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- Overview of Study
- Results of the Study (quantitative)
  - Demographic and/or descriptive analysis
  - Reliability and validity analyses
    - Instrument analysis, reliability analysis, assumption testing, construct validity
  - Hypothesis testing
    - Results should be relative to each hypothesis



# Format and Structure – Chapter 4 (ORLD – Chapter 5)

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- Findings of the Study (qualitative)
  - Demographic and/or descriptive analysis (if applicable)
  - Findings relative to synthesizing questions
  - Findings relative to research question(s)
- Summary of Chapter



## NOTE:

This chapter ***IS NOT*** for interpretation!!

It is ***merely*** reporting the results or findings of the study.

# Format and Structure – Chapter 5 (ORLD – Chapter 6)

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- Summary of the Study
- Discussion
  - Discuss the results/findings relative to the literature
  - Each hypothesis or synthesizing questions discussed relative to the literature
    - INTERPRET WHAT YOUR STUDY REVEALED!!!
  - RQ(s) discussed relative to the literature
  - ADDRESSING what **YOUR** study indicated in comparison to what was known in your scientific field prior to your research

# Format and Structure – Chapter 5 (ORLD – Chapter 6)

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- Limitations and Delimitations of the Study
- Significance of the Study
  - Scientific
    - Methodological and Theoretical
  - Practical Significance
- Relevance to Organizational Leadership (ORLD)
- Implications for Future Research
- Summary
- Conclusion

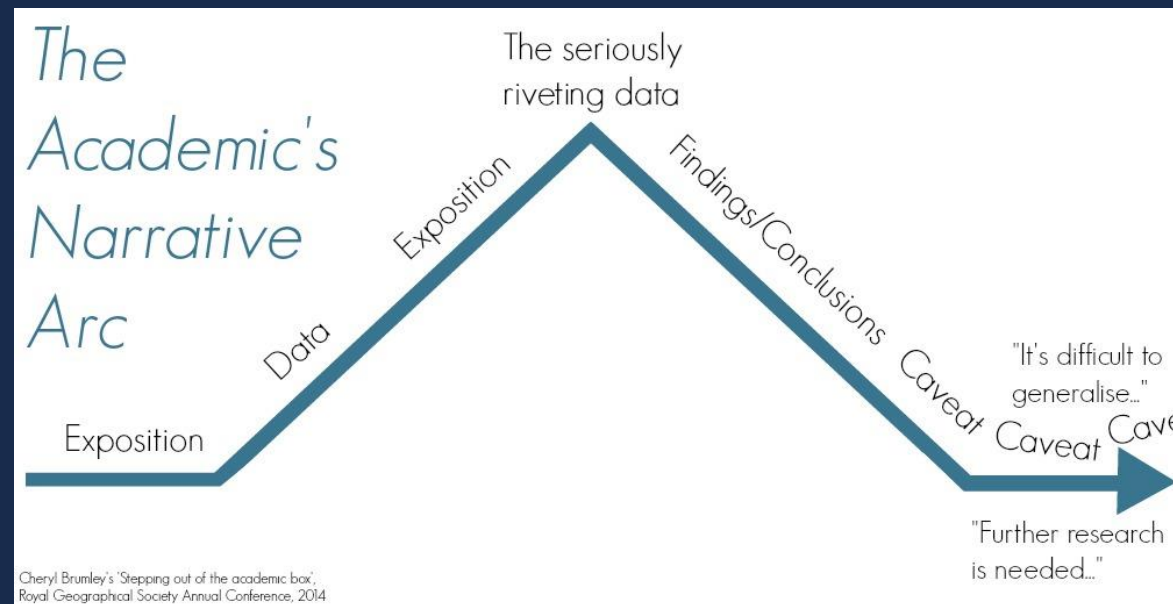
# Format and Structure – Final Pieces

- References
- Appendices



# Format and Structure

- Utilize UMES guidelines
- Citation and reference format dictated by your program
  - APA common in social sciences



# Final Thoughts

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# Final Thoughts

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- Prior research informs your study
- Be flexible
- Remain open to other options
- ***Listen to feedback***
- You must be ***passionate*** about the topic
- IT WILL NOT BE PERFECT



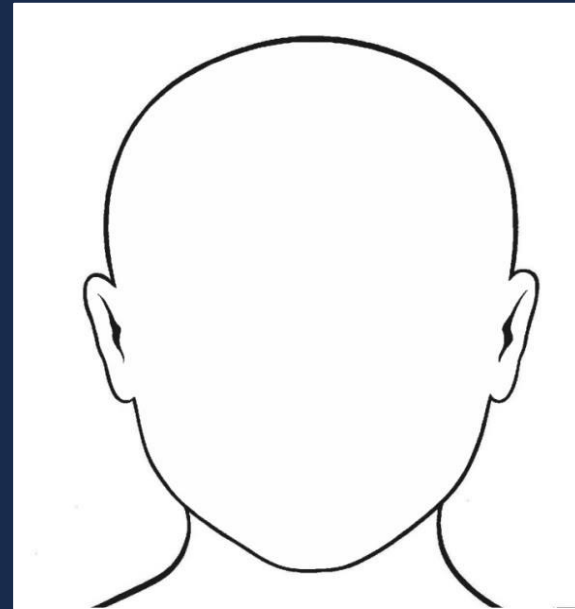
# Final Thoughts

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Your thesis or dissertation is an academic story  
(based on research)

“Every story, even the driest, has a human face. Draw it well and put it on display, for to readers it is a mirror and a magnet”

(Flaherty, 2009, p. xv)



# References

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