Getting Organized: A Pragmatic Tool for Writing Graduate Papers

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This article describes the contents of a successful Teaching Assistant workshop. The workshop introduces a the "Notebook Method" of writing scholarly papers. The notebook method is viewed as a pragmatic tool of inquiry. It transforms writing a paper into managing a project. The project management aspects of writing a thesis or dissertation are emphasized. In addition, the method is linked to the pragmatic theory of inquiry developed by Charles Sander Peirce and John Dewey.

This article describes a new method for writing formal research papers. Both the technique and tool have been applied successfully by graduate students, faculty and students in continuing education programs. The technique (Notebook Method) marks success in publications, award-winning student papers [1], graduation rates, and dollars [2]. This method is particularly well suited for graduate students that are beginning large exit capstone projects such as theses or dissertations. Papers of this scale often test student's organizational skills. Since Teaching Assistants are generally busy juggling many roles, they are in particular need of a mechanism to get them started, keep them organized and focused.

At Southwest Texas State University, Teaching Assistants (TAs) are introduced to the Notebook Method in a university-wide two-hour workshop entitled "Kick-Start and Organize Writing Projects: A Practical Tool for Writing Your Thesis or Dissertation." The workshop is cosponsored by the Graduate College and the Faculty Advancement Center. All TAs receive notice of the workshop through campus mail. This article gives a brief history and describes key elements of the workshop.

The Notebook Method transforms writing a paper into managing a project. Project management involves organizing time, materials and ideas. The notebook method is designed to address all three organizational issues. The technique is also powerful because it is grounded in "Pragmatism" as a philosophy of inquiry. Hence, the notebook method is an application of educational principles developed by John Dewey and Charles Sanders Peirce.

A Little History: Defining the Problem

Although TAs are now introduced to the method at a university wide workshop, the notebook method began as a tool to keep me (new Assistant Professor) organized as I prepared conference papers. When I began to see that my success in publication was tied to this tool, I shared the method with colleagues who also found it useful. The application of the "notebook method" to student papers began in response to a problem with the quality of papers written by graduate students in public administration. Every Master of Public Administration (MPA) student is required to complete an Applied Research Project (ARP). The ARPs usually contain five to seven chapters and must be empirical. Students address an existing public administration problem as well as collect and analyze data.

In 1988, an accrediting body site visit team[3] identified several problems with the 50 to 100 page, required capstone project. The quality of the ARPs was mixed because the literature review chapters were unfocused and seldom analytical. Conceptual frameworks of any kind were missing. Data analysis sections were poorly written and disorganized. Perhaps most importantly, the ARP was identified as an obstacle to graduation because, on average, students took two to three semesters to complete the three-credit requirement.

Both the site visit team and the faculty recognized the poor literature review chapters as a critical weakness. Without adequate knowledge of the topic/literature, students were unable to craft a feasible/useful research question. Also, the analytical element was often missing. After reading one particularly bad paper a faculty member commented, "It seemed like the student went to the library and got the relevant literature. Then, he threw the materials down the stairs. Starting at the top of the stairs the articles were picked up and summarized one by one. The literature review chapter was completed at the bottom of the stairs." The poorly focused literature reviews also made it difficult for the students to develop an acceptable research question.

A two-course sequence was initiated to address the ARP problems. The first course (research methods) gets the student ready to write their ARP. Among other assignments, the students are required to write a first draft of their ARP Literature Review chapter and develop a research prospectus. I was assigned responsibility for the new course. With the encouragement of colleagues[4], I began to assign the notebook as a requirement of the course. After supervising over 180 ARPs, I have found that the best papers are always supported by a carefully constructed notebook[5].

Dr. J. Michael Willoughby, Dean of the Graduate College, was introduced to the notebook method when he served as second reader and as part of an ARP Oral Examination committee. He saw the utility of introducing the method to Graduate Students university-wide. He sponsored the TA Workshop because "many students enter the Graduate College with limited research experience. [The Notebook Method] crosses

many disciplines and helps build a strong research foundation"[6]. Evaluations of the workshop by TAs testify to the Notebook Method as a useful tool that crosses disciplinary boundaries and fills a gap in their understanding.

In my life as a scholar, I apply the philosophy of pragmatism to Public Administration. Slowly, I began to realize that Pragmatism provided a philosophical foundation for the notebook (the notebook became a tool of inquiry). As I consciously began to apply the ideas of Peirce and Dewey to assignments and class discussion the literature reviews and the ARPs improved. Further, the students began to struggle with higher order issues.

The TA workshop, originally focused on the notebook method as a useful research tool. The pragmatic logic of inquiry that underscores the method was briefly incorporated. Because the TA response to the theory portion of the workshop was so overwhelmingly positive, the discussion of the theory behind the notebook has been greatly expanded (approximately 35%). The expanded theory discussion has been well received because it enriched their understanding of both the nature of research and the notebook.

Essential Elements of the Notebook Method

The Notebook Method is designed to manage elements of the paper writing process. There are three overall steps to this process. First, a three-ring-binder is obtained. Second, relevant materials, particularly notes on articles and books, are organized in the binder. Third, an outline that integrates references from the notes is prepared.

One: Three Ring Binder

Often students work on their paper in different places (library, home office, kitchen table, parents home, TA office, hotels while traveling) and different times. They also have to keep track of a variety of information (names of articles to get, people to contact, books to read, notes to take, outlining, first draft, editing, paper deadlines, computer disks, web addresses). At a basic level, the notebook keeps all this "stuff" in one place—in a portable, three ring binder with flaps on the side. When all the necessary "stuff" is in one place, it is relatively easy to put the project aside for a week or several months and then pick it up again when time permits. This is particularly useful for TAs who must interrupt their research and grade papers or prepare lectures. When the notebook is well organized the start-up time is minimal.

Two: Organizing the Binder

Much of the remaining discussion involves how to organize the binder. It is important to note that the organization is suggestive. The notebook is a tool of inquiry. The product (or final paper) of the inquiry is the point. The notebook is an instrument that can be modified to fit each project and scholar's idiosyncrasies, strengths and weaknesses. The organization below works for me and has been used successfully with countless graduate students. It is also possible to apply the principles in an electronic or virtual setting.

Time Management

In the first part of the notebook a things-to-do list is developed. As students develop their things-to-do or task list they are *planning* the necessary steps to complete the paper. The things-to-do list dissects the project into smaller manageable blocks of time and tasks. Possible tasks on the list include locating titles of books or articles, doing a web search, finding the articles in the

library or the web. *Most importantly, the list keeps track of the articles, web documents or book chapters that must be read and written up as notes.*

The things-to-do list is a project-planning tool because it forces the scholar to specify the activities/tasks that must be accomplished in the near future. When the student/scholar has some extra time they can be directed by the list. Valuable time is saved because they do not have to rethink where they are in the process each time they begin working on the paper. Twenty minutes at lunch can be used to read a short journal article.

The heart of an effective literature review is doing the background reading and taking careful notes over the relevant literature. Most items on the things-to-do list should be reading and note taking of particular articles/ chapters. Ninety percent of my things-to-do list headings begin with either "read" or "write" (take notes). I number the items on the things-to-do list and when the task is accomplished cross out and date the item. This practice results in a record or work log.

Students can also keep a calendar in this section. The calendar connects to events in their larger life and includes important paper deadlines.

Articles/Books to Find

In another section of the notebook keep a list of the articles-books or documents that need to be found. In this section, include the references that are found through various sources such as citation indices. If there is a print-off of sources put that in the notebook and circle the best sources. The bibliography of an existing article is another likely source for references. Just jot down the reference in the "to find" section.

Other Related Material

Another section of the notebook can be devoted to miscellaneous, useful information.

This may include important phone numbers, e-mail or correspondence. I keep all conference and panel information in this section.

Running Bibliography

As the paper progresses keep track of the references. Work on the bibliography as the notebook builds. Keep a computer file labeled "Bibliography" which lists the bibliographic entries as they progress. I often include "enter five references on the bibliography" as an item on my things-to-do list.

Organizing Notes

In another section, keep the notes on the articles and books read. The notes can be written by hand or taken on the computer. If taken on the computer, they can be cut and pasted directly into the draft paper. Each page of notes should include the last name of the author, the year the article was written and the page number. The article page numbers are in the margin and correspond to the relevant material. The author(s) name(s) and article date should be placed at the top of the page (See Appendix 1 for examples of note format). If copied word for word quotations should also be indicated. Finally the notes should be sorted in the notebook alphabetically by the last name of the author(s).

As the literature search progresses, the character of the notes often changes. For example, if the topic is very new, notes are often detailed. The less an individual knows about a subject the more notes they need to take. Early in the process the research question is seldom formed. The extensive detailed notes enable a search for focus. As the note taking process continues, it is easier to decipher what is relevant for the paper at hand. Also, as a student is further along in the process, the student may begin to make connections or have useful insights. When this happens, it is helpful to distinguish the journal article information from the student/scholar

thoughts. I use a different color pen or a different font within the notes themselves. Some students create a new section labeled "journal" where they log this kind of information.

I usually copy journal articles themselves and file the article away when the notes have been taken. Students often create a separate section for the copied journal articles. Articles are again sorted in alphabetical order by author's last name. It must be emphasized that a well-highlighted article is no substitute for careful notes.

Three: Integrated Outline

Outlining is a critical element of professional writing. (See Appendix 2 for an example of an outlining technique.) There are many ways to prepare and brainstorm to create an outline for a paper. The key activity that connects the notebook method to the outline is the *integration of the notes into the outline*. Once the outline is finished, the student should read through all the notes that are sorted alphabetically by last name of the author. When a reference is useful, it should be inserted (author, year, page) into the outline. This ensures that all of the literature has been reviewed before the writing begins. It is best to leave lots of space to insert the references. Also, the process should be flexible. Often while reviewing the notes, it becomes obvious that the outline is incomplete. If so, revise the outline. The outline like the notebook is a tool of inquiry and should be modified as needed.

I have an image that resonates with workshop participants when I discuss the notebook method. It is of a student in front of a computer with lots of books and articles all over the place. Piles are everywhere- on the floor, on the table. Books are on top of books that are on top of articles. The frantic student is muttering, "Where is that reference anyway?" The systematic integration of the literature into the outline reduces the likelihood that this scene will occur (at least as often and with as much panic). Also, the integration of the articles into the outline can be done in relatively small bits of time.

When all the notes have been integrated into the outline the student scholar is ready to write the paper. The actual writing process often goes smoothly because the paper is organized and the necessary sources located.

Over the last decade I have made several adaptations to the notebook assignment. Currently, students can buy an already organized notebook at the bookstore (*Scholarly Paper Project Organizer*) for about 15 dollars. The reception to the "ready-made" notebook has been positive. Students are able to begin the paper organizing and note taking immediately. The principles of the methodology are easier to conceptualize because they are laid out in a concrete manner. It should be noted, however, that the notebook methodology is independent of the ready-made tool (*Project Organizer*) that I now assign.

Colleagues in other departments have begun assigning the *Project Organizer* in their courses and capstone projects. It is particularly well suited when students are required to read and take notes on original texts. Also, some faculty encourage graduate students to start thinking about their thesis early as they write papers for courses. The notebook gives graduate faculty a concrete tool for class discussion. The notes in the notebook developed for a class paper can be saved for the thesis "project organizer". The notebook also facilitates thesis (or dissertation) advising. In the early stages of a thesis, if a student hits a stumbling block, a quick review of a student's notebook often makes it easy for graduate advisors to diagnosis the problem.

Pragmatism as Philosophy of Inquiry

One of my research interests is the application of the philosophy of pragmatism to the field of public administration. When I began studying pragmatism, I was unaware of the link between my teaching and scholarship. Gradually, I recognized the applicability of my formal scholarship to the student papers required in my research methods course. When I consciously began using the ideas of pragmatism, the quality of the papers improved as well as the ease of their supervision. The next section applies the logic of pragmatism to the notebook method.

What is Pragmatism?

"Pragmatism is the philosophy of common sense. It uses purposeful human inquiry as a focal point. Inquiry is viewed as a continuing process that acknowledges the qualitative nature of human experience as problematic situations emerge and are recognized. Recognition involves the doubt associated with questioning existing belief systems. Doubt is resolved through critical reasoning and ultimately tested in action. It is the philosophy of common sense because actions are assessed in light of practical consequences. Finally, inquiry is not necessarily limited to individual effort, rather it often incorporates a 'community of inquirers'" (Shields, 1998, 197). The applicability of pragmatism to the inquiry process associated with writing formal research papers flows from the above definition.

The theory portion of the TA workshop focuses on the transformations associated with doing inquiry. In particular the "community of inquiry" and the issues associated with the questioning of existing belief systems are stressed[7].

John Dewey (1938) defines inquiry as *"the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole"* (p.104). The remainder of this article explores how the notebook method enables the "transformations" of inquiry associated with writing a literature review.

Pragmatic Principles Found in the Notebook Method

For Peirce the scientific method represents the opposite of individualism. "What distinguishes it from all other methods of inquiry is its cooperative or public character" (Buchler, 1955: x). The classic example of the three blind men trying to describe an elephant is illustrative. Each describes the elephant from his own limited perspective (small tail, big ears, etc.). The story's moral is that we are all trapped inside our limited selves, and can not know the truth. If, however, we allow the three blind men to talk to each other, to compare perspectives, to argue, to test new hypotheses, to behave like a community of scientific investigators, it is possible to imagine that the blind men will eventually overcome their limited perspectives. They will come to a truer sense of the elephant. They are what Peirce refers to as the "community of inquiry."

Peirce maintained that over a long time horizon (hundreds of years) it was possible to discover scientific truth (nature's eternal laws). At any point in time, however, results using the scientific method are provisional. Understanding (a better sense of the elephant) proceeds over time. Ideally, the dialogue of the community of inquiry (for science, social science, applied sciences and humanities) is recorded in the scholarly literature.

When students begin to do a large research paper they are in essence dropping in

on the conversations of a community of inquiry. Their *problem* is to make sense of the conversation and ultimately to contribute to the dialogue. As students identify and digest the literature they are often confronted by new ideas that challenge their belief systems.

The new ideas found in the literature evoke real doubt and thus disequilibrium. The notebook is a tool that enables the movement toward the unified, more *complex* equilibrium (it came together in the end). It does this through intensifying the student's doubt stage, clarifying the problematic situation and enabling the transformation essential to pragmatic inquiry.

Charles Sanders Peirce (1958a) emphasized that inquiry begins with doubt. Inquiry is a movement from something already known to "something else which we do not know." He describes a cycle that begins with belief then moves to doubt and returns to belief.

> Belief is not a momentary mode of consciousness; it is a habit of mind essentially enduring for some time, mostly unconscious; and like other habits, it is (until it meets with some surprise that begins its dissolution) perfectly self-satisfied (p. 95).

Thus, authentic inquiry cannot occur when habits of mind are 'fixated' in belief a state of mind where people are "impervious to fresh evidence" (Weiner, 1958, p. 91).

Doubt is the "uneasy and dissatisfied state from which we struggle to free ourselves and pass onto the state of belief" (Peirce, 1958a, p. 99). Doubt is associated with Dewey's indeterminate situation. Dewey uses terms like "lost our heads," "panic," "confused," "disturbed," and "troubled" to describe the "personal side" of the doubt stage (Dewey, 1938, p. 105). For Peirce (1958a) doubt must be "real and living" for inquiry to happen (p. 101). "Genu-

ine doubt always has an external origin usually from surprise" (Peirce, 1958e, p. 207). Peirce also maintains that people who employ the pragmatic philosophy of science invent "a plan for attaining doubt, and put it into practice although this may involve a solid month of hard work." (Peirce, 1958e, p. 214). The activities associated with *making* the notebook are part of Peirce's "plan for attaining doubt."

One might note that Dewey and Peirce's emphasis on the role of doubt is unusual in social science scholarship. Social scientists are rewarded when they find a widely applicable explanatory theory. Successful theories become beliefs and (using Kuhn's (1962) insight) paradigms. Paradigms are applied with certainty and confidence. Using "belief" as a frame of reference, one would expect the doubt stage to be viewed as a stumbling block to truth and/or a trivial, occasional, element of inquiry. The norm of certainty (belief) is reinforced in the traditional lecture classroom. In class, students are usually introduced to a topic at the confident "belief" state. The doubt stage that preceded the material in the textbook is unacknowledged. When students begin a paper, they may interpret the doubt stage as a signal that their efforts are misplaced. Rather, doubt should be embraced as a sign they are beginning the process of reflective inquiry.

Clearly the reading and writing components of the notebook method enable doubt. The real linchpin of doubt is the reflective thought which enables synthesis and connections between sources in the literature.

Graduate students stimulate 'real', 'felt' doubt by applying the readings to their experiences. My hope is that the juxtaposition of experience and the literature will stimulate critical thinking or reflective thought. In *How We Think*, John Dewey (1910) examined the role of thought in in-

quiry. According to Dewey (1910) "to think means ...to bridge a gap in experience, to bind together facts or deeds otherwise isolated" (p. 80).

"The essence of critical thinking is suspended judgment; and the essence of this suspense is inquiry to determine the nature of the problem before proceeding to attempts at its solution" (Dewey, 1910, p. 74). Peirce (1958b) refers to this process as reflective thought. A reflective person is naturally open to consider facts that don't correspond to their belief system.

Another way of describing suspended judgment is in Peirce's (1958d) words the "experimenter or laboratory mind" (p. 180). The cardinal rule of experimentation is that "we must accept the outcome whether or not it is to our liking." When we submit "to the judgment of experiment we correct the presumption of the demand that the world conform to our expectations" (Kaplan, 1964, p. 145).

Dewey (1938) noted that the indeterminate situation itself has rhythms or stages. There is first the search for the problematic situation. This is really the point of the notebook method. "The indeterminate situation becomes problematic in the very process of being subjected to inquiry. ...To see that a situation requires inquiry is the initial step of inquiry" (p. 107). Reflective thought which connects to experience should enable an individual to focus and *see* that a "situation requires inquiry."

Reflective thought combines what Dewey (1910) describes as concrete and abstract thinking.

> When thinking is used as a means to some end, good or value beyond itself, it is concrete; when it is employed simply as a means to more thinking, it is abstract (p. 138).

In a discussion that mirrors the theory-practice debate found in a variety of academic disciplines, Dewey (1910) maintained that the "truly practical man" uses both types of thinking. It is important to give the mind "free play about a subject matter without asking to closely ...for the advantage to be gained." If concrete thinking is used exclusively the horizon becomes too narrow and in the long run is self defeating. "It does not pay to tether one's thoughts to the post of use with too short a rope" (p. 139). The purpose of the notebook method is to lengthen the tether and in so doing encourage the student to suspend their judgment and "escape the limits of the routine and custom" (p. 139).

Reflective thought is a critical ingredient for 'felt' or 'real' doubt to emerge. When students suspend judgment, their preconceived beliefs seldom fit perfectly with the literature. I often refer to my research methods class in the workshop. In class, I begin to observe manifestations of the 'real', 'felt' doubt among the students after about a month. They express their confusion and panic in the first 15 minutes of each class. To the surprise of the class, I am pleased about the general state of confusion because I know that real inquiry is progressing. We discuss the role of doubt in inquiry vis-a-vis Pierce and Dewey. I ask them to separate the confusion from anxiety. Building the notebook also helps the student to cope with the anxiety because they see and feel it grow. The are able to mark progress tangibly. Finally, I stress it should all come together in the end if they give the notebook a good faith trial.

The notebook method is a tool of reflection/inquiry. Reflection involves going outside the immediate situation to find a lever for understanding.

> There is a search for a tool with which to operate on the unsettled situation. The tool becomes part of the active produc-

tion skill brought to bear on the situation. The purpose of the tool is to reorganize the experience in some way that will overcome its disparity, its incompatibility, or its inconsistency. (Hickman, 1990, p. 21).

This is the purpose of the Notebook Method. Hickman (1990) noted that philosophy is usually concerned with human doing and has paid little attention to human making. Dewey, on the other hand, always sought the "connections and continuities between humble and quotidian technological practices and their refined, enriched manifestations" (p.8).

Conclusion

The point of the above discussion is to highlight first-stage-of-inquiry issues. The Notebook Method is one of many possible tools to facilitate inquiry during the early stages. This method helps the student to focus the topic as well as to find and refine the research question/problem. How a particular scholar copes or recognizes these first stage issues probably depends on host of factors such as the maturity of the scholar, learning style and personality type. I use the notebook method for every article I write. My sense is busy TAs and worried assistant professors also would benefit from using this tool.

Appendix 1

Example Notes

Segal and Verdugo   (This is an article)
1994 *Armed Forces and Society*

"Demographic trends and Personnel Policies as Determinants of the Racial Composition of the Volunteer Army"   (title not always necessary)

619   This is an important article because it suggests that the Army is not really dependent on demographic trends when one considers its composition

Rather Personnel policy is the key

Hence in the paper I could argue that fatherlessness is a big society problem which may not be a big problem for the Army because the army will be able to screen out many of the problems through personnel policy.

"The composition of the army from year to year is more responsive to military personnel policy than to these labor force changes."

620   "We suggest that organizational personnel policies and practices are more influential in shaping the racial composition of the army than are demographic changes."   KEY FINDING

621   Interesting chart which looks at the phases of the AVF by conditions of recruitment vbls included recruitment resources, educ benefits, pay etc.

624   useful charts that link the accessions by race and compares it with labor force participation by race 73-92. Different rates of accessions (Bl v Wh) are clearly unrelated to labor force participation— they make arguments that they are related to personnel policies. or phases that have a constellation of policies associate with them.

625   Note in 1973 &1992 the % of black accessions were virtually the same 20%

627   this is not the case when examining end strength   31% This is because blacks are more likely to reenlist and make the military a career.

GOOD tables lots of demographic data for reference purposes\

628   Discusses what Gilroy Phillips and Blair later discuss... "Enlistees of average mental aptitude are more likely to enlist for skill training, while above average enlistees join for ed benefits...the army segments its recruiting on this basis."   They worked out a strategy to allure the college bound..if go for 2 years and go into combat arms then get money for college — result of this policy has been blacks moving out of the combat arms specialities since they are less likely to be college bound. *(EX of personal policy that worked)*

IMPT ARTICLE!!!

Dewey 1938
Logic the theory of Inquiry (title not always necessary: BOOK)

iii   PREFACE   This book is linked to *How We Think* which briefly summarized
       many of the themes and applied them to educ.

       "attention is called particularly to the principle of the continuum of inquiry, a
       principle whose importance, as far as I am aware, only Peirce had previously
       noted."

       "The basic conception of inquiry as determination of an indeterminate situation
       not only enables the vexed topic of relation of judgement and propositions to
       obtain an objective solution, but, in connection with the conjugate relation of
       observed and conceptual material, enables a coherence account of the different
       propositional forms to be given."

       **Key specifies early the connection between the observed and the conceptual
       and how this approach to inquiry enables coherence**

       "The word 'Pragmatism' does not, I think occur in the text. Perhaps the word
iv   lends itself to misconception....But the proper interpretation of 'pragmatic,'
       namely the functions of consequences as necessary tests of the validity of
       propositions, provided these consequences are operationally instituted and are
       such as to resolve the specific problem evoking the operations, the text that
       follows is thoroughly pragmatic."

       **Here Dewey clearly states that although "pragmatism" is not used in the
       text this approach is pragmatic**

       Gives explicit credit to Peirce

I   CHAPTER I THE PROBLEM OF LOGICAL SUBJECT-MATTER

       **Spends time justifying why what he is developing is "logic" discusses tradi-
       tional logic.**

3   "any statement that logic is so-and-so, can, in the existing state of logical theory,
       be offered only as a hypothesis and an indication of a position to be developed."

       conditions that the hyp must satisfy 3 conditions

Appendix 2

Developing an Outline

Make at least two outlines of the paper. Begin the outline with a brainstorming list. What ideas, facts, critical points, concepts, hypotheses, should be included in the paper? Let your mind run free. Be creative. Then, review the list. Write a sentence or two that **indicates the purpose of your paper**. Review the list in light of the purpose. Adjust the list to take into account your purpose. Now, begin the first draft of the outline (major headings).

A pattern should emerge from the list. There will be natural groupings of topics. The first and last major heading are obvious; Introduction which includes the paper's question or purpose and Conclusion or Summary. The other major headings will be developed from the groupings in the brainstorming list. Try and come up with a broad category that will describe the groupings. The broad categories become the subheadings of the first draft of the outline. Consider the order of the subheadings in light of the purpose.

The second draft is more detailed. It should include the items from the brainstorming list that fit together. Leave plenty of room between items on the outline. When the second draft is complete begin integrating material from the notes into the outline.

Notes

(1) Kevin Baum won the 1998 Phi Alpha Alpha (National Honorary for Public Affairs and Public Administration programs) for the "best Masters level paper." This is a national, yearly award. In addition, Ralph Revello (1997) and Rebecca Short (1998) won the McGrew Policy Research Award from the Central Texas chapter of the American Society for Public Administration. Carey Welebob won the Southeast-ern Conference on Public Administration student research award (1999) and the 1999 McGrew Policy Research Award. All are recent graduates of the Southwest Texas State University Master of Public Administration Program

(2) For example, after The Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas, Graduate Management Institute, Sam Houston State University began applying this technique their paper completion rate rose dramatically (32 in 1995 to 88 in 1996). Before implementation of the Notebook Method, the institute spent approximately $250,000 a year on the research component of their program. After instituting this method, the cost dropped to about $45,000 per year.

This information was obtained through personal correspondence with Brian Withrow, faculty, The Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas, Sam Houston State University, Jan. 27, 1998. Brain Withrow learned about the notebook method as a Master of Public Administration student at Southwest Texas State University

(3) The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) is the accrediting body for the Southwest Texas Master of Public Administration (MPA) program

(4) Many thanks to Kay Hofer, the late Frank Rich, the late Dan Farlow and Cynthia Opheim for their encouragement

(5) I have also been amazed at the variety of ways students have applied the principles of the notebook method to their personal and professional life. The most common use is project management. In addition, I have seen it used to solve crimes, organize testimony before legislators, write reports, organize employee recruiting, buy homes and plan weddings. Two job related benefits of using the notebook method at work are greater organization and the ability to answer the questions of superiors quickly and correctly.

(6) J. Michael Willoughby e-mail communication, October 11, 1999. I also gave a brief introduction to the Notebook Method at a Graduate Council Meeting. Council members enthusiastically endorsed the proposed workshop.

(7) Although four individuals (Charles Sanders Peirce, John Dewey, William James, and Jane Addams) are often noted as the founders of pragmatism, for purposes of this paper, the closely related ideas of Dewey and Peirce are most relevant. Both explicitly dealt with inquiry. The ground work was laid by Peirce (1958) [first published 1877] and was later used and expanded by Dewey in *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938).

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