Tools for Writing Excellent Papers

American Society for Public Administration
Student Summit

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Tools of Scholarly Research

1. Step by Step Notebook

   Project Management
   Time, Materials, Ideas

2. Conceptual Frameworks

   Organize Ideas and Data
Steps in Research Process

Write a book?

Purpose → Theory → Method → Data Analysis

Project to Manage

Conceptual Frameworks

Role of Theory

Connections between Steps
Tools – cover today

- Conceptual Frameworks
- Project Management
Football Metaphors
– doing empirical research

Scout

Coach

Training

Play
Astonishment
Why?

Organizes
- Time
- Materials
- Ideas

In Process Builds:
- Reading skills
- Thinking skills
- Writing skills
Organizes Materials

- Three-ring binder
- Things to do lists
- Calendar
- Things to find lists
- Notes
- Outlines
- Drafts

Called notebook
“my Playbook”
Steps in Research Process

Project to Manage

Conceptual Frameworks

Role of Theory

Connections between Steps
What is Theory?

“What theory can be defined as a coherent group of general propositions or as a verified explanation accounting for known facts or phenomena (theory of relativity or gravity) Theories are used to explain reality or make predictions.” Johnson, 2010, p. 17
Theory:

summarizes a hypothesis or group of hypotheses that have been supported with repeated testing. A theory is valid as long as there is no evidence to dispute it. Hence, theories can be disproven. If evidence accumulated to support a hypothesis, then the hypothesis can be accepted as a good explanation of a phenomenon. **One might say a theory is an accepted hypothesis.**
Steps in Research Process

1. Purpose
2. Conceptual Framework
3. Method
4. Data Analysis

How do I communicate??

Conceptual Framework

Type of theory
Plays do not make sense without a purpose.

Plays are mental images/ideas that organize what players do on the ground in a particular situation.

Plays are a kind of close to the ground Theory.
purpose

Long or short yardage

Play
ideas that organize player actions

How men move on ground
Movement of players on ground

Results
Actual yardage gained
Conceptual framework – close to the data theory
Steps in Research Process

1. Purpose
   - Emphasizes finding crafting research purpose/question

2. Conceptual Framework
   - Emphasizes building a Framework – literature review

3. Method
4. Data Analysis

A Playbook for Research Methods
Integrating Conceptual Frameworks and Project Management
By Patricia M. Shields & Nandini Rangarajan
Purpose

Conceptual Framework: Organization of ideas to achieve a Purpose

Explanation

Hypotheses

Most common – def of theory
What Explains the level of Wages?

**Explanations**
- What explains wages?

**Hypotheses**
- Education
- Intelligence
- Job tenure

**H1:** As education increases wages increase
**H2:** As intelligence increases wages increase
**H3:** As job tenure increases wages increase
What explains wages

Hypotheses

- Education
- Intelligence
- Tenure

Method

- Operationalize variables
- Survey

RESTATE HYPOTHESES

Dependent variable – Wages (Hourly rate of pay $)

Independent variables
- Education (years of school completed) H1
- Intelligence (IQ score) H2
- Tenure (months on the job) H3
Purpose

Explanation (what explains wages)

Hypotheses

1: education
2: Intelligence
3: tenure

Method

Operationalize variables

survey

Statistics

Statistics used to test H1; H2; H3 (Regression; Correlation..)
PA has many types of purposes -- and Frameworks

Many Plays

**Purposes**
- Explanation
- Description
- Exploration
- Decision making
- Gauging

**Conceptual Frameworks**
- Hypotheses
- Categories
- Working Hypotheses
- Models of operations research
- Practical Ideal Type
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Conceptual framework</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>Hypotheses</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Multivariate statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Existing data</td>
<td>Regression, t-tests, correlation, ...</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Experimental design</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Content Analysis</td>
<td>Mean, median, mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td>Working Hypotheses</td>
<td>Mostly Qualitative Case study, interviews,</td>
<td>Evidence analyzed by working Hypotheses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>focus groups, direct observation...</td>
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<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>Models of operations</td>
<td>Cost benefit analysis, cost effectiveness</td>
<td>Depends on the technique used</td>
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<td>analysis, linear programing</td>
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<td>focus groups, direct observation...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>Hypotheses</td>
<td>Survey Existing data Experimental design</td>
<td>Multivariate statistics Regression, t-tests, correlation, …</td>
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<td>Description</td>
<td>Categories</td>
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<td>Descriptive Statistics Mean, median, mode</td>
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<td>Exploration</td>
<td>Working Hypotheses</td>
<td>Mostly Qualitative Case study, interviews, focus groups, direct observation…</td>
<td>Anything goes Evidence analyzed by working Hypotheses</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Practical ideal type</td>
<td>Mostly Qualitative Case study, interviews, focus groups, direct observation…</td>
<td>Evidence analyzed by practical ideal type category</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Traditional Methods Texts**
Examples of Quality Student Research

- Award Winning (national, regional)
- Cited (Journals, Books, United Nations Reports, Dissertations, Policy documents)
- Widely Downloaded

Larry Douglas

Lamar Collins
Applied Research Project Downloads
By Year

Texas State Top five Download Categories
Handouts

What explains home fires?

College graduates attitudes Toward high stakes testing.
Where do Conceptual Frameworks come from?

- Literature Review Chapter
  Project Management skills
- Creativity Chapter

Like coach that creates
Plays
You will be judged by how well you write because nobody really knows how well you think  

(Gray, 1998, 140)

Critical Thinking
 ✓ Application
 ✓ Analysis
 ✓ Evaluation
 ✓ Creating
Steps in Research Process

Purpose → Theory → Method → Data Analysis

Conceptual Frameworks

Role of Theory

Connections between Steps
Common Problems

• Can’t find time to work on it for more than an hour

• After a while I lose my place and forget what I originally wanted to do
Project Management **System**

Organizing

- Materials
- Time
- Ideas

Build Skills
Addresses Binge Writing

- Common Form of Writer’s Block
- Wait till the last minute to do the paper
- Stress, sleeplessness
- Poor quality work
Organizes Materials

Tabs
• Things – to – do
• Notes
• Calendar
• Outline
• draft

Like a Playbook
Things-To-Do List — Tab

- Project oriented - tasks for paper only
- Breaks the many tasks into small manageable pieces (15 minutes - hour)
- Keeps track of book chapter, articles etc.
- Links to notes
- **Emphasizes scholarly reading**
- Addresses procrastination - easy to return to work after a break
Things-To-Do List Emphasizes Reading and Thinking

Important to read widely.
Important to comprehend deeply.

Ideas for paper come from the literature and thoughts of scholar.

A person's writing ability is constrained by their reading comprehension.

It is impossible to write clearly about a subject you do not understand.
# Things-to-do list

reinforces author’s name

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Date completed</th>
<th>Task</th>
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<tr>
<td>2/3/04</td>
<td>6. Read Feaver</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/10/04</td>
<td>7. Take notes Feaver</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/4/04</td>
<td>8. Read Cottey et al</td>
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<td>2/9/04</td>
<td>9. Take notes Cottey et al</td>
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<td>2/6/04</td>
<td>10. Read ch.1 Wilson</td>
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<td>2/18/04</td>
<td>11. Take notes Ch.1 Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/6/04</td>
<td>12. Skim Ch2. Wilson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes - Tab

- Keep detailed notes in this section.
- Organize alphabetically by last name of author.
- Develops habit of writing.
- Builds reading comprehension.
- Ties directly to the integrated outline.
- Essential part of process - this is where the student really learns the new material.
Tips on Note-taking

• Be self-reflective when taking notes.
  ✓ Do you really understand what the material?
  ✓ Less you understand the more detailed the notes should be.
  ✓ Notes can be take on computer or by hand.

• Be sure the author’s last name, year and page are on every page of the notes.
Says too concerned in lit about “threat of praetorian military intervention in domestic policies.”

Should “reconceptualize in terms of democratic governance of the defense & security sector.”

Shifts focus to “the wider problem of the democratic mgt and implementation of defense & security policy.”

PART OF BUREAUCRACY - job to implement policy
Organizes Ideas - Innovation

Integrated Outline
- Before writing begins the outline incorporates the reading, notes, interviews
- Entire notebook builds to create the outline
- Conceptual Frameworks (p. 85 playbook)
Outline - Tab

Integrated Outline

✓ Outline that incorporates all of the notes.
✓ Begin drafting paper after integrated outline is complete
✓ Fewer frantic searches.
Integrated Outline example

Chapter - The Bureaucracy in Military Sociology (8 -10 pages)

Purpose: “This chapter examines the intersection of military sociology and bureaucracy.”

2003
The Bureaucracy in Military Sociology

I. Intro
   A. Set the stage/Weber ideal
   B. Purpose statement: This chapter examines the intersection of military sociology and bureaucracy
      1. Define mil sociology
      2. Interdisciplinary study of bureaucracy

II. Military Bureaucracy
   A. Unique Definition-War
   B. Authority
   C. Leadership decisions

III. Recent Trends
   A. Bureaucracy and civil-military relations
      1. Mature democracies
      2. Emerging democracies
   B. New Roles

IV. Conclusion
Cottey et al 2002

 Says too concerned in lit about “threat of praetorian military intervention in domestic policies.”

 Should “reconceptualize in terms of democratic governance of the defense & security sector.”

 Shifts focus to “the wider problem of the democratic mgt and implementation of defense & security policy.”

 PART OF BUREAUCRACY - job to implement policy
Integrated Outline Step 2

The Bureaucracy in Military Sociology

I. Intro
   A. Set the stage/Weber ideal (Weber, Merton)
   B. Purpose statement: This chapter examines the intersection of military sociology and bureaucracy
      1. Define mil sociology (Siebold, H-J & Moskos)
      2. Interdisciplinary study bureaucracy
         Socio- (Mills)
         Political Sci (Allison)
         Policy science (Wilson)

II. Military Bureaucracy
   A. Unique Definition - War (Janowitz & Little p.27-28)

B. Authority (J&L p.27-28)
C. Leadership decisions (Allison)

III. Recent Trends
   A. Bur & Civil-military relations
      1. mature democracies (Feaver)
      2. emerging democracies (Cottey et al pp31-32)*
   B. New Roles
      (Mora, Parchomenko)

IV. Conclusion

*Paragraph slide 28 “Example”
Cottey et al. (2002) examine civil-military relations in the emerging democracies of post-communist Eastern Europe. Like Feaver (1996) they believe there is too much concern in the literature over the “threat of praetorian military intervention in domestic policies” (Cottey et al. 2002:31). They call for a reconceptualization of civil-military relations “in terms of the governance of the defense and security sector” and the “wider problem of the democratic management and implementation of defense and security policy” (Cottey et al. 2002:32).
Figure 7.4 The Shape of an outline incorporating the Conceptual Framework

Big Picture Structure of a Chapter outline that would build a Conceptual framework

- Purpose of section
- Introductory Material
- Key definitions
- History
- Problem that needs framing

Elements of Framework

- Category 1
  - Element 1.1: add literature
  - Element 1.2: add literature
  - Element 1.3: add literature
- Category 2
- Category 3
- Category 4
- Category 5
Table 7.1 Factors Explaining Residential Fire across Eight Studies (Huang 2009, p. 26)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Residential Fire Rate</th>
<th>Independent Variables that achieved statistical significance used in studies on residential fire*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schaanman et al</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karter &amp; Donner</td>
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<td>Intra-city</td>
<td>+ - + - +</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donnell</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Intra-city</td>
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<tr>
<td>Munson &amp; Oats</td>
<td>1977</td>
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<td>+ + - - + + - +</td>
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<td>Intra-city</td>
<td>+ - +</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennings</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Intra-city</td>
<td>+ - +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Independent variable codes: 1 = Poverty rate; 2 = Parental presence; 3 = Under-Education; 4 = Family Stability; 5 = Crowdedness; 6 = percent owner; 7 = Vacancy Rate; 8 = Income; 9 = Unemployment rate; 10 = Percent of non-white; 11 = Housing Conditions; 12 = Temperature; 13 = Property Value; 14 = Age of Structure; 15 = Population under age 5
Drafts - Tab

- Early drafts are kept here.
- Sculpture example.
- Edit on hard copy and then make the corrections.
- Aesthetic, calm location
Path of learning or understanding while doing a paper
As scholar confronts the unexpected while doing the reading—confusion—doubt
Notebook is a tool to manage the ‘doubt and confusion’ stage

Step notebook is a tool that brings order to the outer world while the inner world changes

Transformations of Inquiry
Order and content allows space for
Drawing

Questions????