

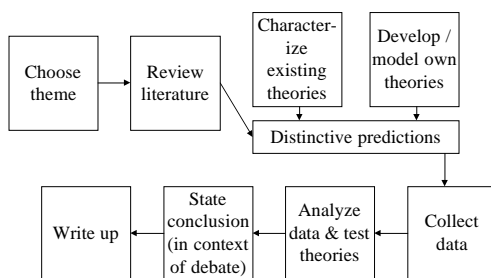
Planning and Documenting Ongoing Research

for EC3400 Dissertation students

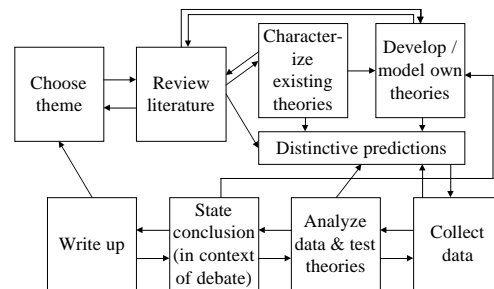
The Research Process

- Steps in research: planning a project
- Documenting ongoing research & ideas
- Literature review
- Proposal
- To learn from this session

Break Research into Steps



Circulate between Steps



Estimate Time Requirements

- Multiply by 3.
- Attach projected times to each step.
- Allow for circulation between steps.
- Draw up a schedule with deadlines.
- Know when you fail to meet your deadlines.
- Make reasonable goals, then ratchet up.
Don't let goals keep slipping further away.

Revision is Essential

- Reflect on your conclusions:
 - What did you learn? Why is it of interest?
 - How to make your results more convincing?
 - How to extend your study for greater interest?
- Improve the writing:
 - Succinct, clear, compelling, to the point.
- Get feedback from advisor and others.

Choose a Worthwhile Issue

- New
- Catchy
- Focused
- Non-obvious conclusion
- You can get the data
- Do-able in only 5 months

The What-to-Do Problem

- Not knowing what to do, so doing nothing (or nothing particular useful)
- Catch yourself!
- What are (or can be) your goals?
- Divide up the problem
- Write down the steps, and prioritize

Document Research & Ideas

- Record & date your work, in a notebook or file.
- Keep a diary of ideas and thoughts.
- Time-spent sheets may help.

Be Methodical

- Don't lose track of what you've done.
- Be thorough.
- Be systematic:
 - Choose appropriate systems.
 - Make sure your systems are appropriate.
 - Record them precisely.
 - Write them up so others can duplicate your work exactly.

Review the Literature

- Know your focus.
- Systematically search EconLit.
- Supplement with relevant library sources (Handbooks may be useful).
- If necessary, use the Social Science Citation Index to search citations of a book/article.
- Keep a record of your searches & results.

Use EconLit

- Available from Computer Centre; see Library Research handout.
- Think hard to choose search terms that find most of what you need, but little else.
- Know how to use search operators: and, or, with, (parentheses), in.
- Record the date you searched, exact search, and results (or number of results).

Keep Track of References

- Any literature cited must be listed properly in a References section.
- Record the full references as you go!
 - Author, title, journal, volume and date, page numbers, book publisher & location, date
- Always record page numbers. Give page numbers for all information, not just quotations.

Proposal Due 31 October

- Theme / point / thesis
 - What? Why study it? Questions / debate?
- Theories (others & yours)
 - Know the relevant literature.
- Testing theories
 - How? Using what data? Can you get the data?
 - Statistical methods? Your theoretical work?

More in Proposal

- Timeline with your own deadlines
- Sections of the dissertation: tentative, based on good articles
- Critics' points of view; what is the debate?
- Any special concerns / goals / needs for your advisor
- Give a copy to your dissertation advisor!!!

You Should

- Know key steps in research, and be able to prepare a projected timeline.
- Know relevant methods to document your ongoing research and ideas.
- Know relevant methods for literature review.