

Seminar on Master's Thesis Writing

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Parts of Master's Thesis

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Main Chapter
- Conclusion
- References
- Appendix (pl. Appendices)

Literature Review Example

- Introduction
- Main Concepts
- Approaches + Main Analysis
 - Or one chapter on comparison and analysis
- Conclusion

Empirical Research Example

- Introduction
 - (what is the goal?) Main concepts and theories
- Related research
- Experiment and Results
 - Material, Methods, Results, Discussion
- Conclusion

Example Abstract

- Background/setting the scene:
 - Icons are used increasingly in interfaces because they are compact “universal” pictographic representations of computer functionality and processing.
- The focus and innovation:
 - Animated icons can bring to life symbols representing complete applications or functions within an application, thereby clarifying their meaning, demonstrating their capabilities, and even explaining their method of use.
- The problem:
 - To test this hypothesis, we carried out an iterative design of a set of animated painting icons that appear in the HyperCard tool palette.
- The method:
 - The design discipline restricted the animations to 10 to 20 second sequences of 22x20 pixel bit maps. User testing was carried out on two interfaces – one with the static icons, one with the animated icons.
- The results:
 - The results showed significant benefit from the animations in clarifying the purpose and functionality of the icons.

Paper Structure

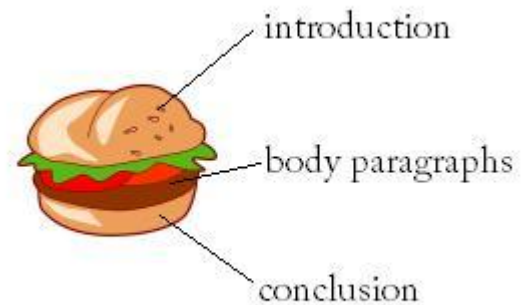
- Introduction
 - Context/motivation
 - Background/literature review
 - Hypothesis/thesis/problem statement
 - Goals/methods
 - Thesis overview

Paper Structure

- Introduction
 - sets the scene
 - background
 - motivates
 - provides definition of terms and concepts
 - describes problem and argues for the approach taking
 - references other existing work
 - summarizes the structure of the paper
 - “The next section details the experimental methodology, which is a 2x2 Anova design. The subsequent section describes the results, the most notable being...”

Paper Structure

- Main body
 - organization important -> reflects how you present your argument
 - each section should have a main point
 - each paragraph should have a main point



Paper Structure

- Summary / Conclusions
 - summarize the paper
 - some people only read abstract, intro and conclusions
 - talk about connections to the general area
 - discuss future work

Paper Structure

- Figures and Tables
 - should help the reader
 - needs to be **large enough** to be visible in print
 - tables:
 - summarizes data
 - collects main points described in text
 - figures
 - system snapshots
 - conceptual diagrams
 - should be legible, instructive, adequately labeled and titled

Paper Structure

- Figures and Tables
 - should always refer to both in text
 - provide a description of the figures and tables
 - bad:
 - “...animated icons contain movies (Figure 1).”
 - better:
 - “...The several images in Figure 1 illustrates an example of an animated icon, which represents a printer. Each image is actually a key frame of a “movie” that, when played, would show the user what would happened if the icon were selected. We see a document being moved on top of the printer, and the printer putting out some paper...” should assist the reader

Plagiarism

- 1) Using someone else's ideas without acknowledging the source
- 2) Paraphrasing someone else's argument as your own.
- 3) Presenting someone else's line of thinking in the development of an idea as your own.
- 4) Presenting an entire paper or a major part of it developed exactly as someone else's line of thinking.
- 5) Arranging your ideas exactly as someone else did – even though you acknowledge the source in the parenthesis.
 - Qtd. in Day 145.

Plagiarism

- Original text:
 - In the secondary and 16-19 education sectors in England and Wales some form of action planning, in which a teacher or tutor sits down with a student and discusses their progress and negotiates learning targets with plans to achieve them, has emerged to become a recognizable feature of teaching practice within the last 25 years (Day and Tosey, 2011, p. 515).
- Student text:
 - In secondary and further education, action planning has become a recognizable feature of teaching practice within the last 25 years (Day and Tosey, 2011, p. 515).
 - PLAGIARISM
 - Day, 145-146.

Common Formatting Issues

- Font – use a serif font
 - Illumination vs Illumination.
- Apostrophes and quotation marks
 - Czech versus English – „Ježek“ vs. “Hedgehog”
 - Format – “Hedgehog” vs. "Hedgehog."
- A dash (–) is different than a hyphen (-)
 - Dash **separates** elements of a sentence
 - The study – not taken seriously at first – had eventually lead to a major breakthrough.
 - Hyphen **connects** words (Post-WIMP interface)

References

- Saul Greenberg , University of Calgary, AB, Canada: Grad Tips , <http://saul.cpsc.ucalgary.ca/saul/>
- Trevor Day. *Success in Academic Writing*. New York: Palgrave, 2013.