Lab 09: Third Year Dissertation Preview

The Cherry on the Sundae

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## Your Dissertation Journey Starts Here

* **Purpose of the Dissertation**:
  + Demonstrate the culmination of your research skills.
  + Transition from guided learning to independent inquiry.
  + Apply theoretical knowledge to a practical research question.

## Key Timeline and Milestones

1. **November**:
   * Third-year students deliver their project presentations.
   * Presentations assess rationale, hypotheses, and methodology.
   * (Note: You will not attend these presentations.)
2. **Mid-April**:
   * Final dissertation submission deadline (6,000–8,000 words).

## Third-Year Dissertation Overview

* **What is Expected?**
  + Conduct original empirical research, guided by a supervisor.
  + Engage in all research phases: design, ethical approval, data collection, analysis, and reporting.

## Third-Year Dissertation Overview (cont.)

* **Key Deliverables**:
  1. **Oral Presentation** (10% of grade):
     + Short presentation of project rationale and plan.
     + Constructive feedback from supervisors and peers.
  2. **Written Dissertation** (90% of grade):
     + Formal submission in APA journal-style format.
     + Includes literature review, methodology, results, and discussion.

## Core Learning Outcomes 1/3

* **Research Skills**:
  + Translate theoretical questions into testable hypotheses.
  + Design robust and ethical research studies.

## Core Learning Outcomes 2/3

* **Critical Thinking**:
  + Identify gaps in existing literature.
  + Interpret data meaningfully in the context of theoretical frameworks.

## Core Learning Outcomes 3/3

* **Communication**:
  + Articulate your findings effectively through writing and presentations.

## How Your Mini-Dissertation Prepares You

* **Skills Building**:
  + Apply second-year research experience to larger, more complex projects.
  + Practice ethical and methodological rigor.
* **Lessons Learned**:
  + Reflect on challenges faced during your mini-project.
  + Use feedback to refine your research and writing techniques.

## Tips for Preparing in Your Second Year 1/3

1. **Choose a Potential Topic**:
   * Start identifying areas of interest related to your studies.
   * Discuss ideas with mentors, tutors, or third-year students.

## Tips for Preparing in Your Second Year 2/3

1. **Engage with Literature**:
   * Read extensively to familiarize yourself with research trends.
   * Identify key gaps or questions that inspire curiosity.

## Tips for Preparing in Your Second Year 3/3

1. **Master APA Formatting**:
   * Practice structuring reports according to APA guidelines.
   * Familiarize yourself with citation and formatting rules.

## Looking Ahead: Key Success Strategies 1/3

* **Supervisory Guidance**:
  + Build strong communication with your future supervisor.
  + Use meetings to seek feedback and refine your project plan.

## Looking Ahead: Key Success Strategies 2/3

* **Time Management**:
  + Develop a timeline for data collection and analysis.
  + Set interim deadlines to avoid last-minute rushes.

## Looking Ahead: Key Success Strategies 3/3

* **Feedback Loop**:
  + Treat November presentations (even if you don’t attend) as a model.
  + Be open to constructive critique for improving your work.

## Motivation: Why This Matters

* **A Transformational Experience**:
  + Your dissertation is more than a grade; it is a demonstration of your growth as a researcher and thinker.
* **The First Step to Expertise**:
  + Skills learned here will set the foundation for your academic and professional pursuits.
* **Your Journey**:
  + Embrace the challenges and celebrate your progress!

## What it means in reality

* **This is yours and yours alone**:
  + You will be an expert in your field.
  + This is likely the thing you will talk about in any interview or job application.
  + This is the thing that will make you stand out from the crowd - so be strategic in your choices.
  + This is a large-scale project that you will be able to talk about and **demonstrate** Project Management abilities.

# You can enjoy it! And we hope you do!