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# ***Practical Guide to Write a PhD Thesis***

***and publish papers based on the thesis***

# ***Practical Guide to Write a PhD Thesis***

***and publish papers based on the thesis***

**Nader Ale Ebrahim, Ph.D**

Independent Researcher

Technology Management Consultant

"Research Tools" Advisor

Web site: <http://aleebrahim.info/>

# Abstract

This presentation is a practical guide on how to write a PhD thesis based on personal experiences and existing literature. It is aimed at all PhD students. A thesis writing may be falling into six rules:

- Identifying the research problem
- Start thesis writing from a day after registration
- Writing a Thesis Plan
- Ask your supervisors: What are their expectations? and maintain regular contact with your supervisors directly/indirectly
- Expand networking
- Continuously write/revise and Publish

Besides of the six rules, the thesis structure, logical coherence and style are also important. This presentation lead how to consider reader's expectations during the writing procedure. In order to assist the researchers to reduce the writing procedure, the relevant "Research Tools" will be introduced.

# Background

1

You have been recommended by your faculty to be a part of the Upskill Program team of presenters to offer sessions on **'Thesis Writing'**.

2

[Issue #9 Newsletter of the Society of Collaborative Networks \(SOCOLNET\)](#)

3



4

[User profiles for Luis M. Camarinha-Matos](#)

[Luis M. Camarinha-Matos](#)

Full Professor, New  
University of Lisbon  
Verified email at  
uninova.pt  
Cited by 5080



Sitting in a 3.8-metre sea  
kayak and watching  
a four-metre great  
white approach you is  
a fairly tense experience

# MOTIVATION

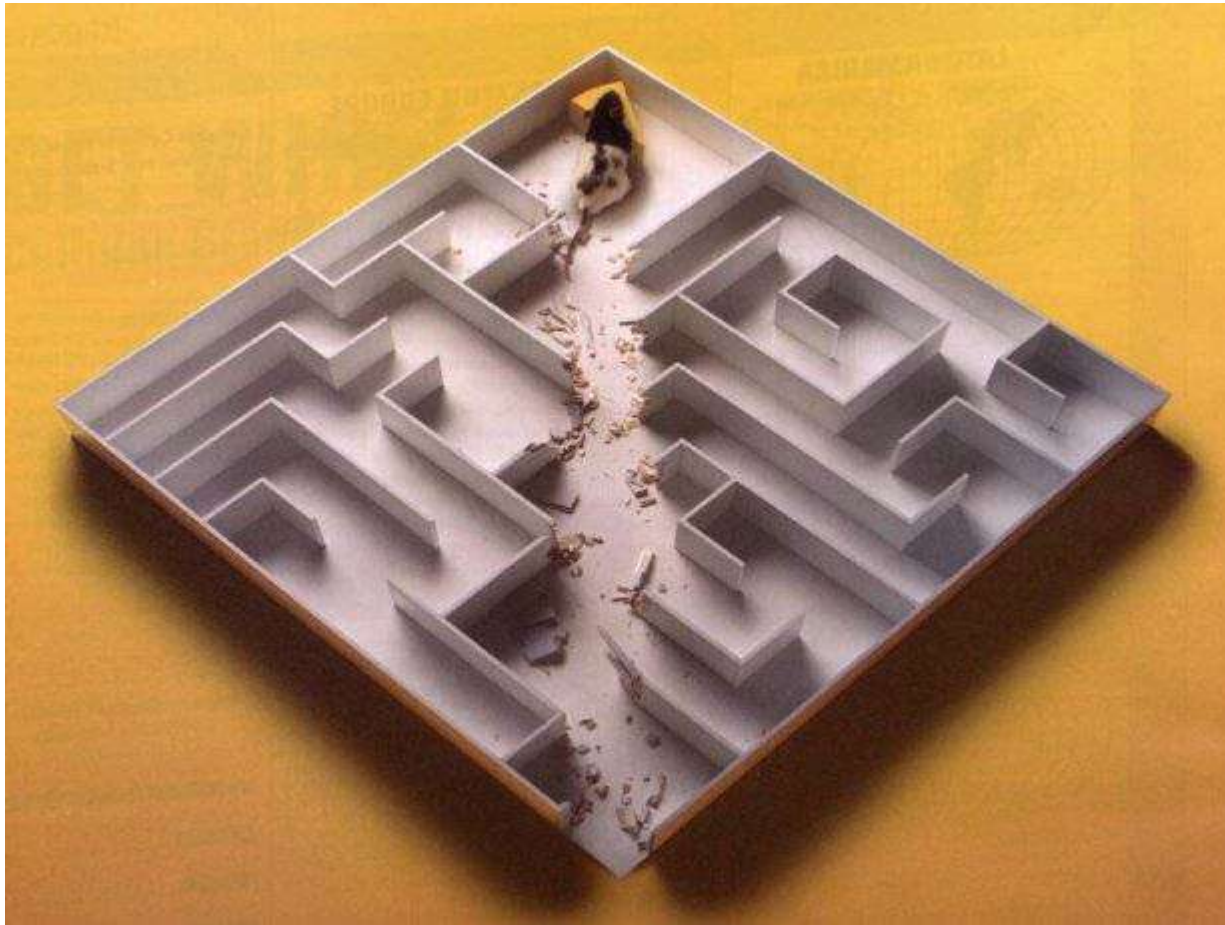
If there is a better reason to paddle, I don't know what it is.



# MOTIVATION

If there is a better reason to paddle, I don't know what it is.

# No Shortcuts to a PhD!



Source: Priya Narasimhan, (2006), How To Write a Good (no, Great) PhD Dissertation

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## Use forcing functions well to speed up the thesis process

- Competing with someone else
- Family pressure
- Financial pressure
- A job is waiting
- Advisor is leaving or project is over
- Equipment is retiring

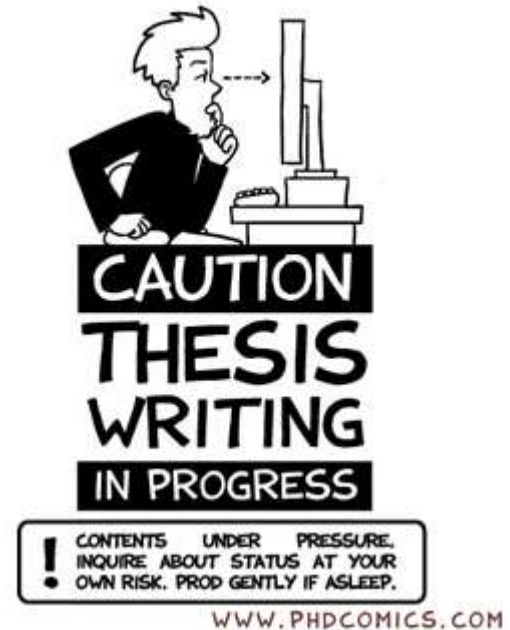
[Source: Useful Things to Know About Ph. D. Thesis Research, by: H.T. Kung](#)





# Questions? What is your thesis:

- Research background
- **Problem statement**
- **Research objectives**
- Research scope
- Research methodology
- Data collection
- Analysis
- **Results and discussions**



[More info. The Three Minute Thesis \(3MT\) Competition](#)

# Questions? What is your thesis:

- Research background (Importance/need/rationale)
- Problem statement (Gap analysis (difference between presence and desired performance))
- Research objectives (Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, Time-based)
- Research scope (Area should be covered)
- Research methodology (Steps to achieve objectives)
- Data collection (Why this data, method)
- Analysis (Information generated toward analysis)
- Results and discussions (Drawing conclusions on the objectives)

# What is a Thesis?

“A thesis is a formal and lengthy research paper, especially a work of original research, written in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a higher degree in a university”

Source: [http://www.awc.metu.edu.tr/handouts/Thesis\\_Writing.pdf](http://www.awc.metu.edu.tr/handouts/Thesis_Writing.pdf)

# What's in the thesis?

- **Addresses a problem or series of problems**
- **Describes what was known about the problem(s)**
- **What you did to solve the problems**
- **What you think the results means**
- **How further progress can be made**

Source: <http://www.slideshare.net/akarim717/how-to-write-a-thesis>

# Building the thesis



# Six Rules of Thesis Writing

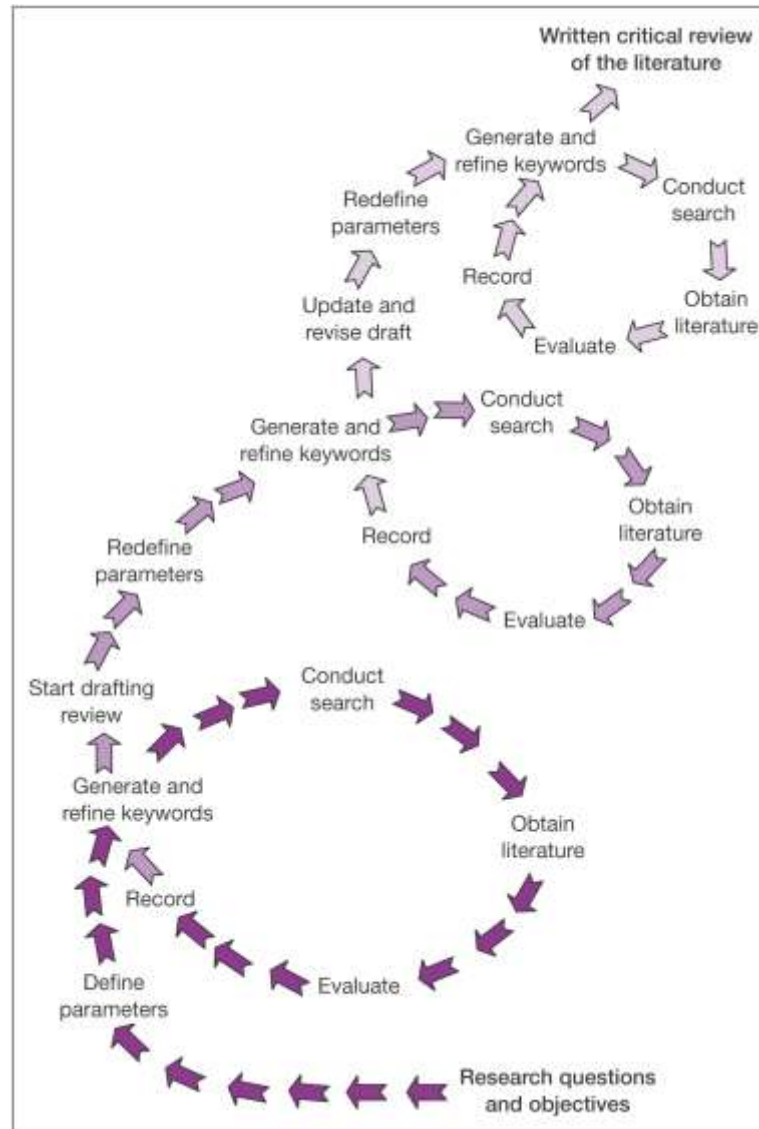
1. Identifying the research problem
2. Start thesis writing from a day after registration
3. Writing a Thesis Plan
4. Ask your supervisors: What are their expectations? and maintain regular contact with your supervisors directly/indirectly
5. Expand networking
6. Continuously write/revise and Publish



# 1- Identifying the Research Problem

*Researchers begin a study by identifying a research problem that they need to address. They write about this “problem” in the opening passages of their study and, in effect, give you as a reader the rationale for why the study is important and why you need to read their study.*

Reference: Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (4th ed. ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.



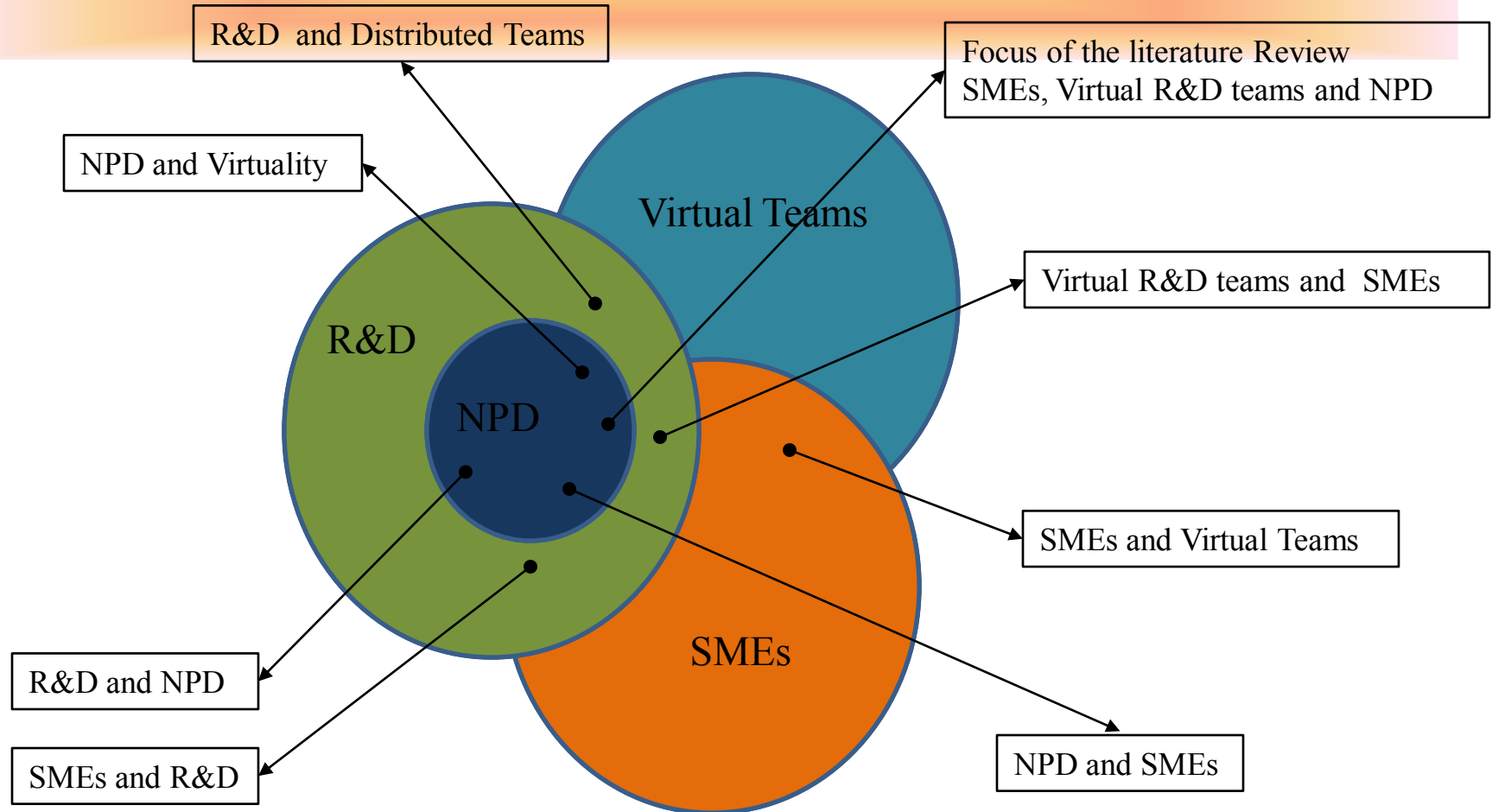
## The literature review process

Source: © Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis, Adrian Thornhill and Martin Jenkins 2003

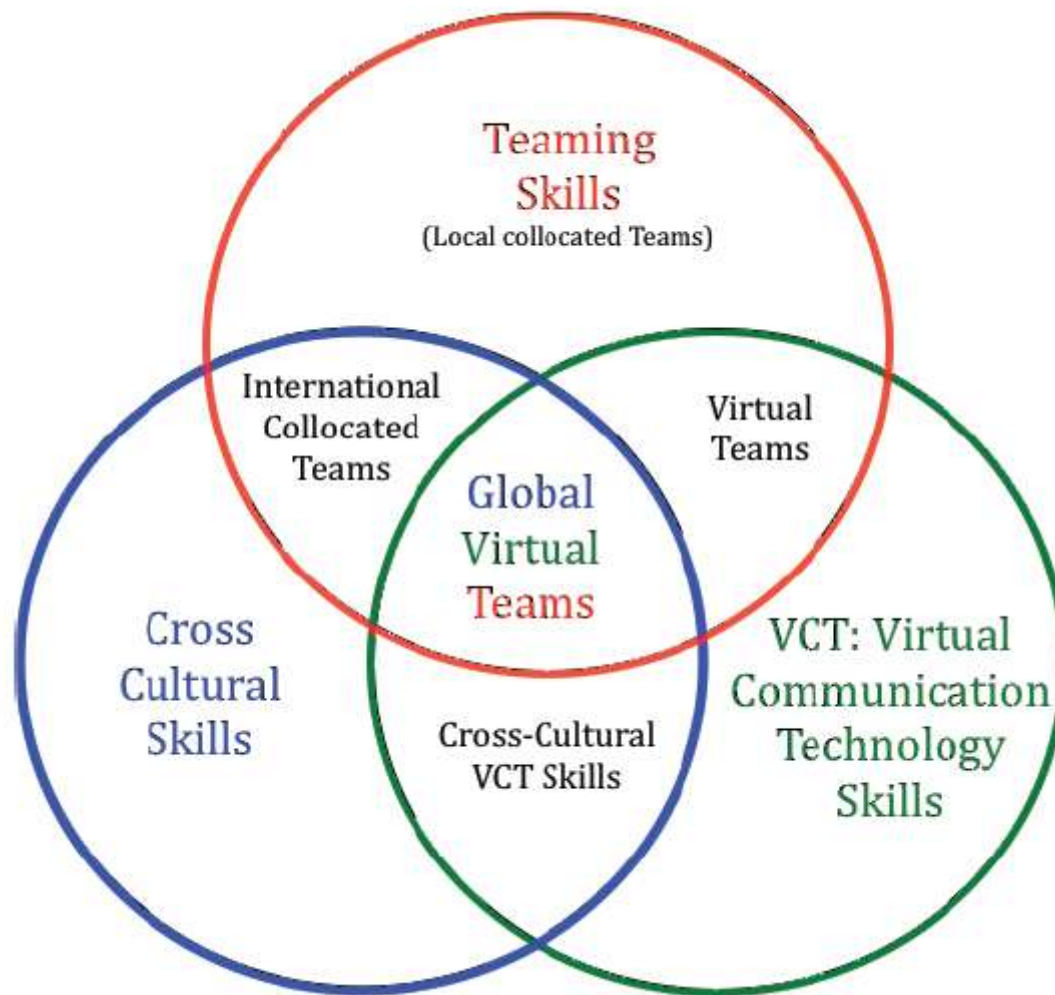
Research methods for business students / Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis, Adrian Thornhill, —5th ed.

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# Narrow the area of research



Ale Ebrahim, N., Ahmed, S., & Taha, Z. (2009). Virtual R & D teams in small and medium enterprises: A literature review. [Review]. Scientific Research and Essay, 4(13), 1575–1590.

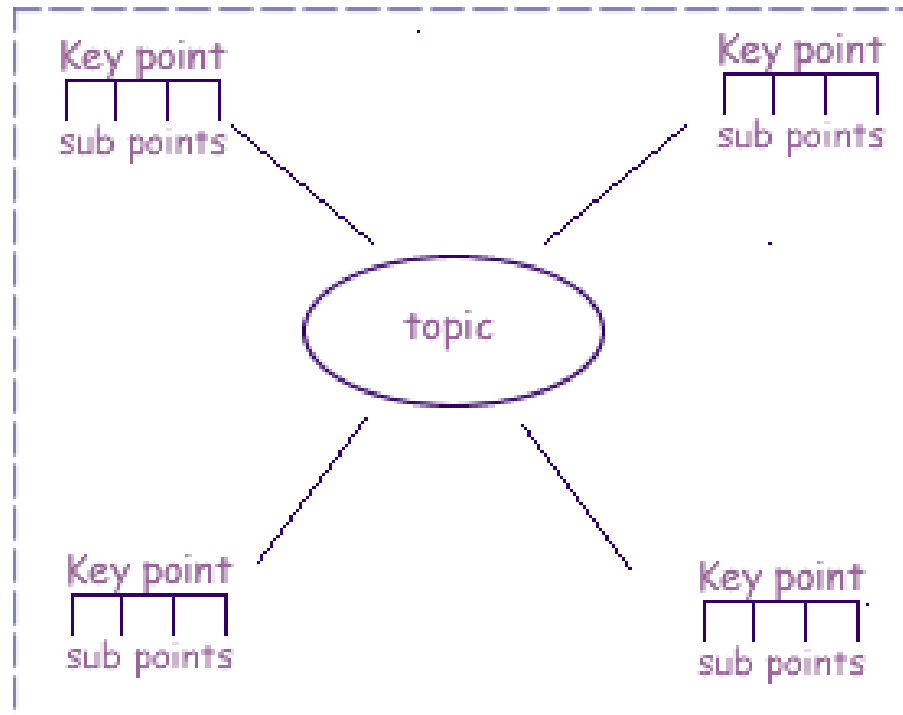


[The interactions between teaming, cross-cultural and virtual communication skills to create new engineering interactions.](#)

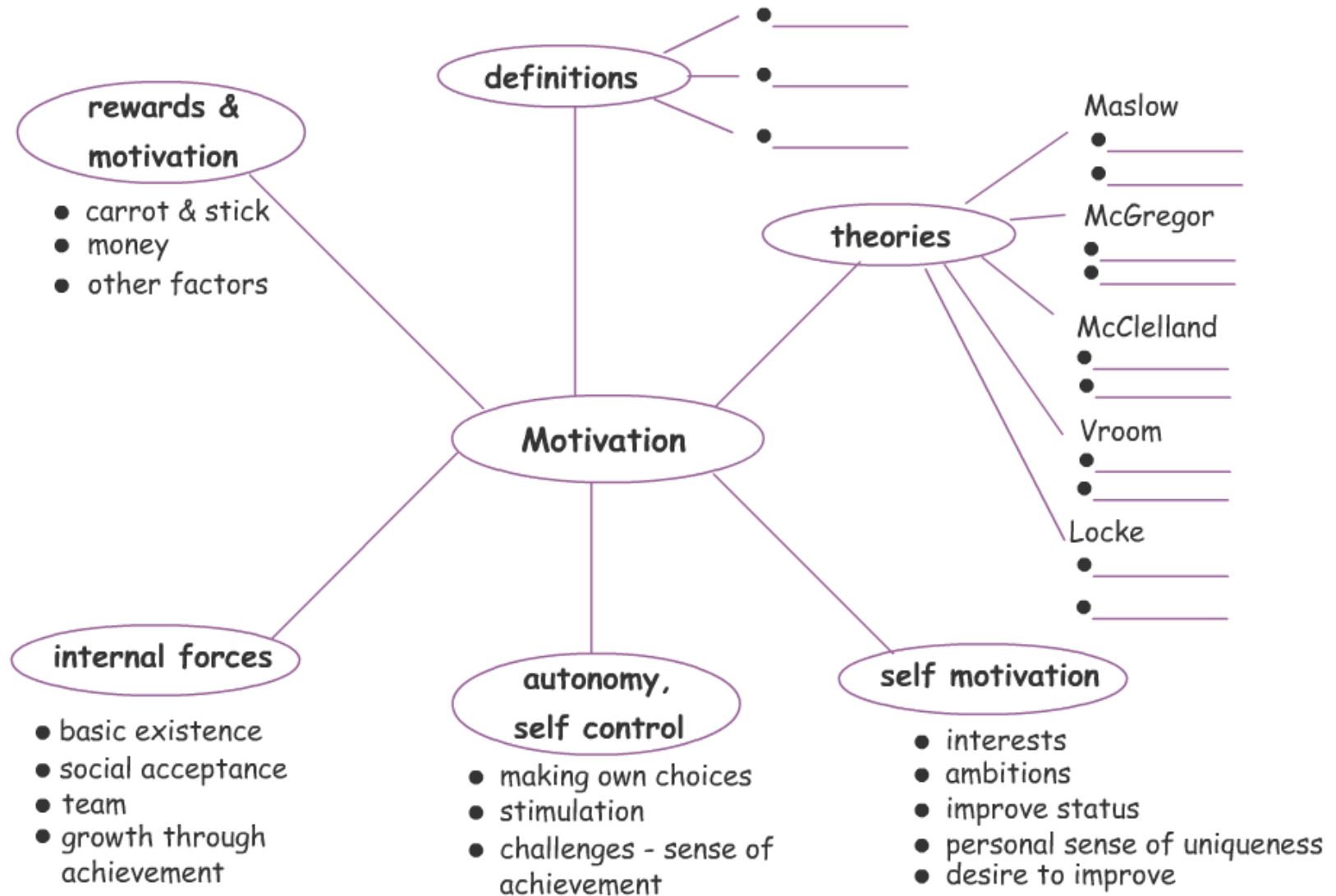
# Structure & planning your writing - MindMaps

MindMaps are a visual map to link and organise key concepts of your research. They also show links and relationships between ideas. Sometimes it is a good idea to number key ideas in the order that you are going to place them in your literature review.

## **Example**

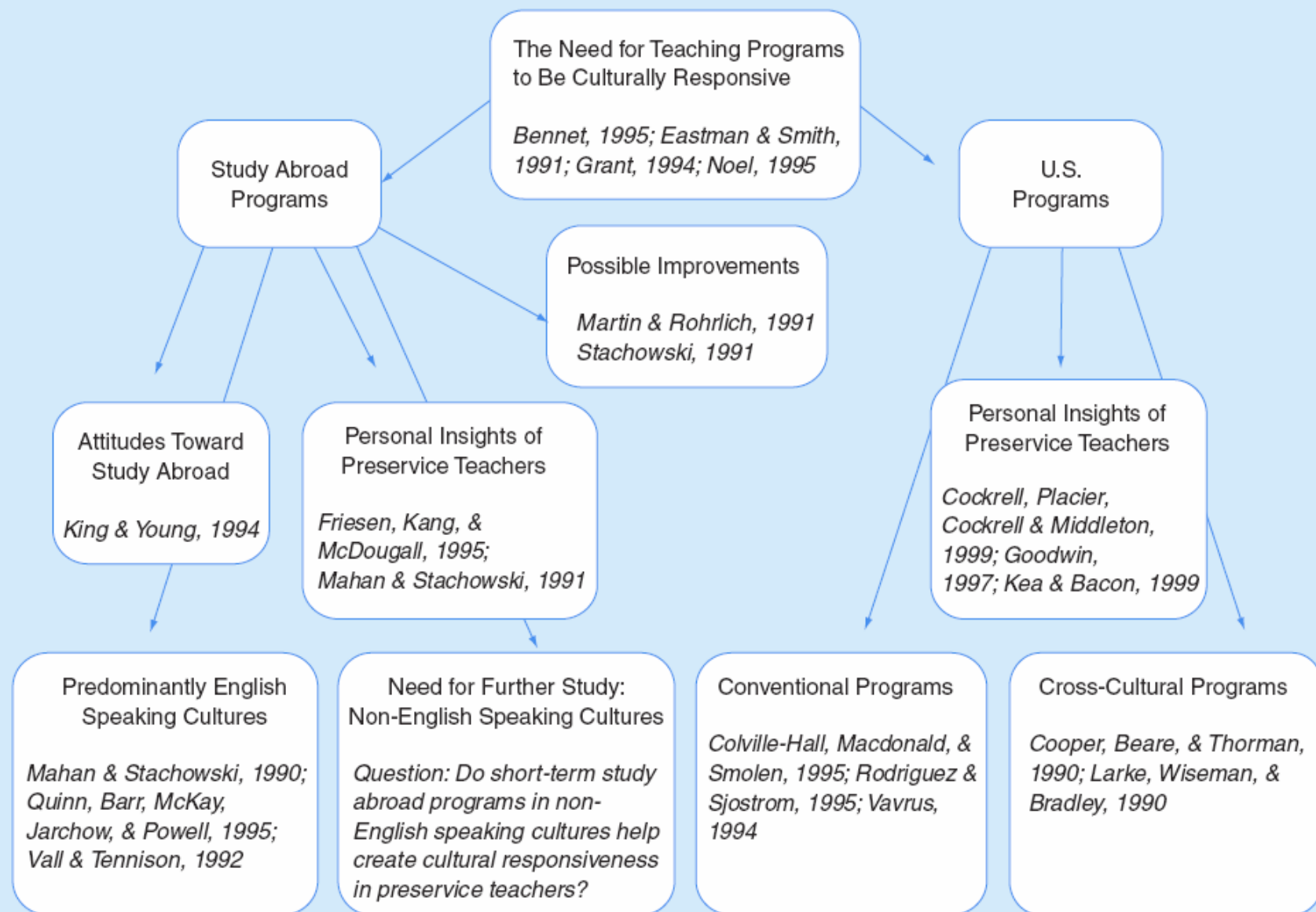


# Example of a MindMap



# A Literature Map, Hierarchical Design

## Literature Map





## A Literature Map, Circular Design

Need for Further Study:

Non-English Speaking Cultures

Question: "Do short-term study abroad programs in non-English speaking cultures help create cultural responsiveness in preservice teachers?"

### Study Abroad Programs

Personal Insights of Preservice Teachers (Friesen, Kang, & McDougall, 1995)

Attitudes Toward Study Abroad (King & Young, 1994)

Predominantly English Speaking Cultures (Mahan & Stachowski, 1990)

### U.S. Programs

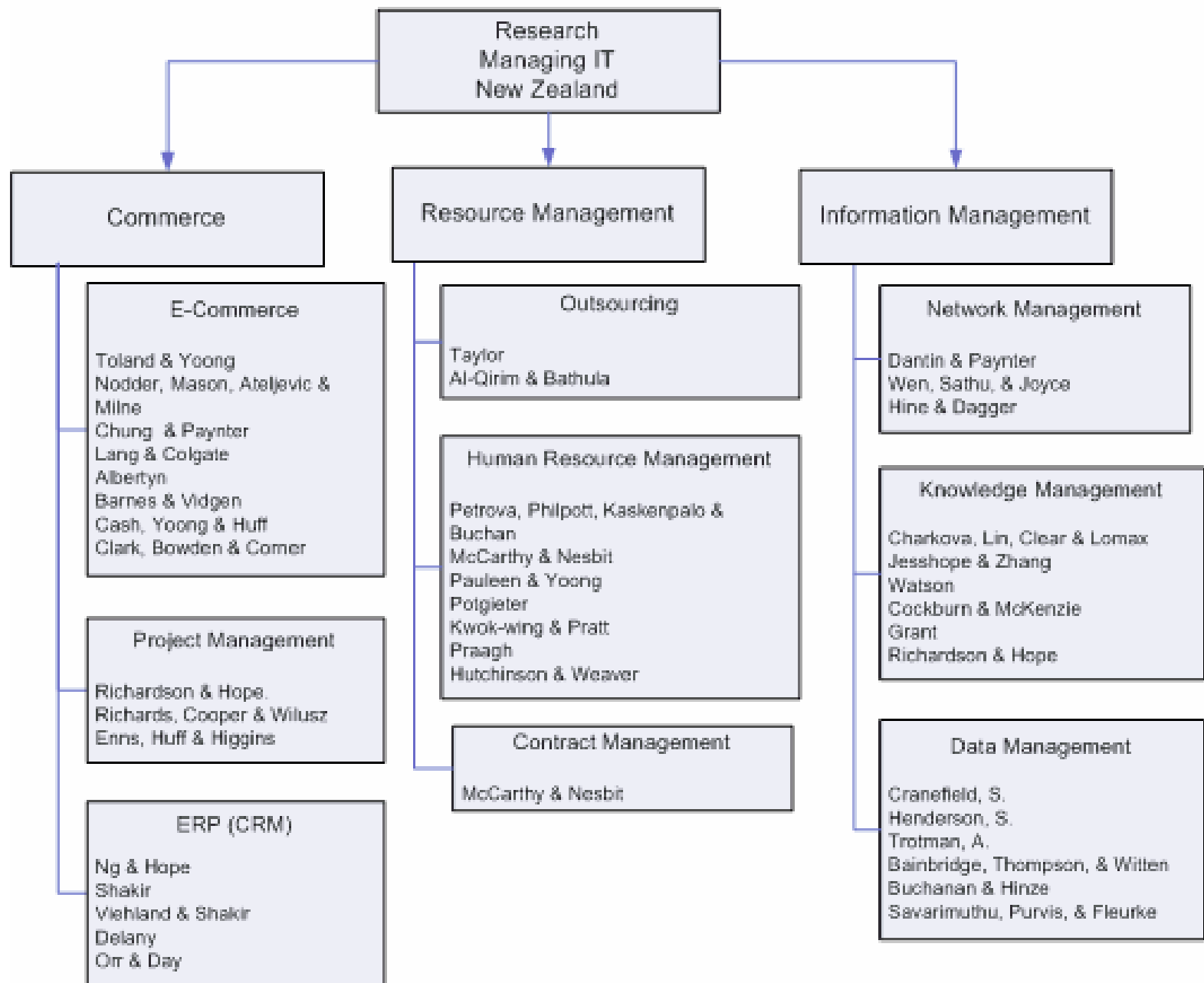
Personal Insights of Preservice Teachers (Cockrell, Placier, Cockrell, & Milleton, 1999)

Conventional Programs (Colville-Hall, Macdonald, & Smolen, 1995)

Cross-Cultural Programs (Cooper, Beare, & Thorman, 1990)



Source: Ross' PhD Literature Review Mind Map



## 2- Start Thesis Writing From a Day After Registration

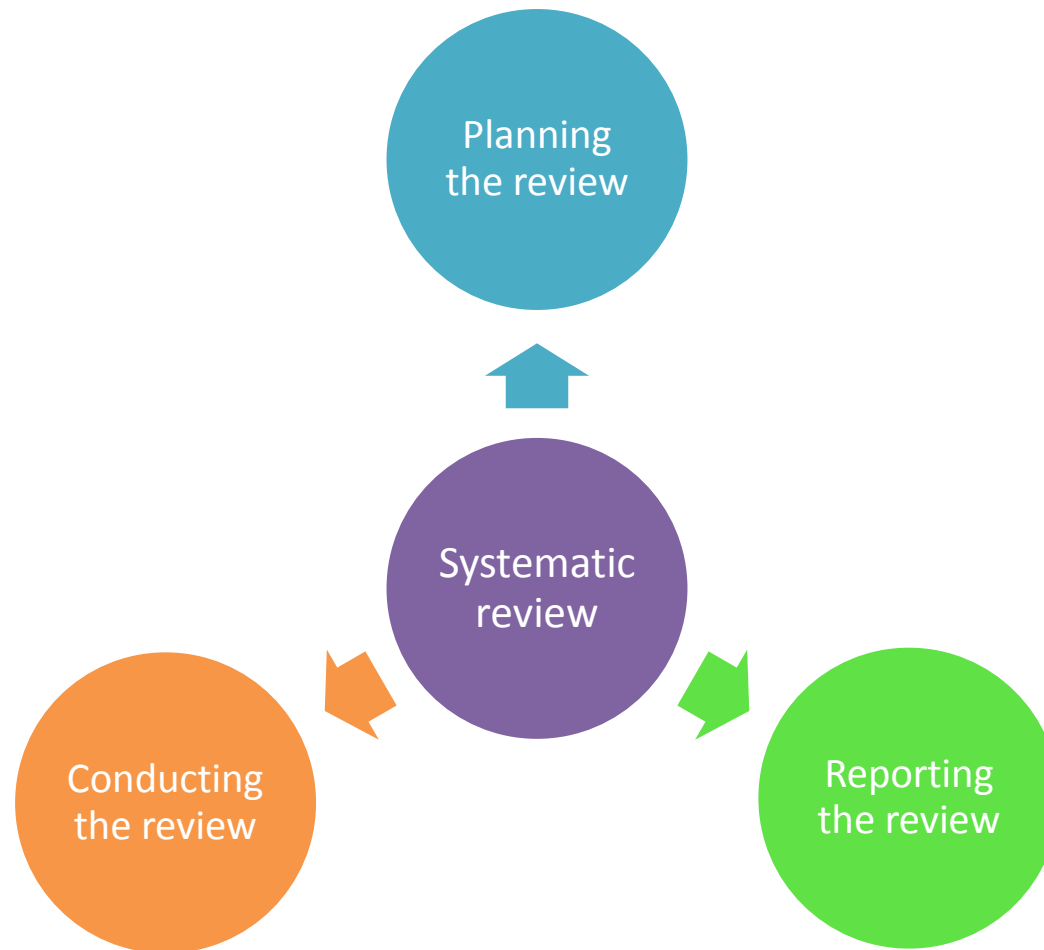
- Write down a tentative thesis title, even if your thesis is murky in your mind.
- Write down a first cut at your thesis abstract, even if you have not done the work yet!
- .....

Source: Priya Narasimhan, (2006), How To Write a Good (no, Great) PhD Dissertation

### Example

- Write a journal/conference paper while you are writing the thesis.

# The Systematic Review Process



Source: Adapted from [Systematic Review](#)

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# Planning the review

1. Identification of the need for a review
2. Development of a review protocol. (The most important activity during the protocol is to formulate the research question.)

# Conducting the review

1. Identification of research
2. Selection of primary studies
3. Study quality assessment
4. Data extraction & monitoring
5. Data synthesis.



## Reporting the review

*Reporting the review  
is a single stage  
phase.*

## 3- Writing a Thesis Plan

- **Write down the road-map of your thesis today**
  - What is the ideal thesis that *you would wish for*?
  - What results would it contain?
  - How would you evolve the story from start to finish?

Source: Priya Narasimhan, (2006), How To Write a Good (no, Great) PhD Dissertation

- Write each Chapter of the thesis deliverable items
- Write a checklist for each Chapter

[Example 1](#)

[Example 2 \(Thesis Checklist\)](#)

# Checklist for reading a review paper

- What are the review's objectives?
- What sources were searched to identify primary studies? Were there any restrictions?
- What were the inclusion/exclusion criteria and how were they applied?
- What criteria were used to assess the quality of primary studies and how were they applied?
- How were the data extracted from the primary studies?
- How were the data synthesised? How were differences between studies investigated? How were the data combined? Was it reasonable to combine the studies? Do the conclusions flow from the evidence?

## 4- Ask your supervisors: What are their expectations?

### Ask your supervisors for continuous feedback

- Your advisor is your biggest champion, your biggest promoter
- This person *wants to see you succeed and will rave about you and your work* enthusiastically to everyone
- Discuss your thesis layout, problem definition, goals of the month, etc.
- For sticky issues, your advisor will find you the right “connections” to fill in the gaps in your thesis

Source: Priya Narasimhan, (2006), How To Write a Good (no, Great) PhD Dissertation

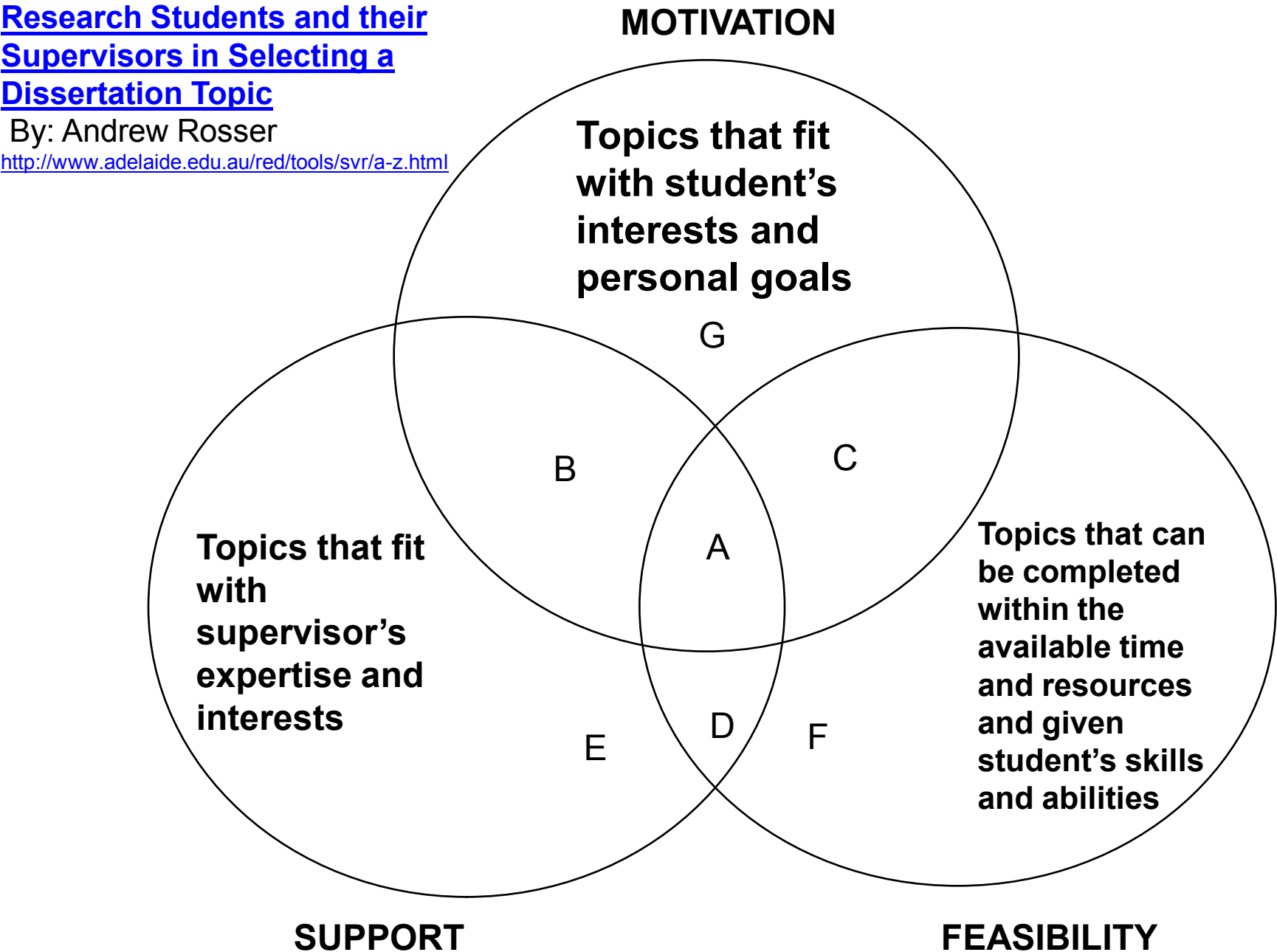
### Keep good relationship with your advisor (even after you graduate).

[Source: Useful Things to Know About Ph. D. Thesis Research, by: H.T. Kung](#) , Harvard University

**Find a proper Table Of Content (TOC) according to your supervisor expectation. If you could not find it, follow the following slide structure:**

**A Tool to Assist Postgraduate  
Research Students and their  
Supervisors in Selecting a  
Dissertation Topic**

By: Andrew Rosser  
<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/red/tools/svr/a-z.html>



# Thesis structure

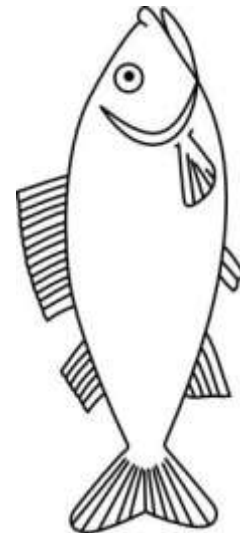
## **Materials preceding the text**

- Title Page
- Original Literary Work Declaration
- Abstract
- Acknowledgements
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures , List of Tables, List of Symbols and Abbreviations, List of Appendices

## **The main text**

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Literature Review
- Chapter 3: Methodology (or Materials and Methods)
- Chapter 4: Results (or Experimental Results)
- Chapter 5: Discussion
- Chapter 6: Conclusion

## **References and Appendices**



# WRITING YOUR THESIS OUTLINE

NOTHING SAYS "I'M ALMOST DONE" TO YOUR ADVISOR/ SPOUSE/PARENTS LIKE PRETENDING YOU HAVE A PLAN

**STEP 1** Aim for a respectable number of chapters:

## THESIS OUTLINE

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

↖ chapter #s

5 = "That's IT??"  
6-7 = "Not bad"  
8+ = "Are you crazy??"

**STEP 2** Fill in the "freebies":

## THESIS OUTLINE

1. INTRODUCTION
2. LIT REVIEW
3. METHODOLOGY
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. CONCLUSIONS

You're half way done!

**STEP 3** Make up titles for the "meat" chapters:

2. LIT REVIEW
3. METHODOLOGY
4. (THAT STUFF YOU DID YOUR FIRST YEAR)
5. (STUFF YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING NOW)
6. (MAKE STUFF UP)
7. CONCLUSIONS

(It'll be years before you actually have to work on that later chapter, and by then your thesis topic will have changed anyway)

**STEP 4** Voilà! You just bought yourself another two years



JORGE CHAM © 2006

www.phdcomics.com



## 4- (Con.) Present your activity indirectly

- Dear Nader Ale Ebrahim:

Your paper, "Virtual R&D Teams in Small and Medium Enterprises: A Literature Review", was recently listed on SSRN's Top Ten download list for ORG: Contemporary Organizational Structures (Topic) and Structural Dimensions & Organizational Behavior eJournal. As of 06/16/2010, your paper has been downloaded 107 times. You may view the abstract and download statistics at <http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1530904>.

Top Ten Lists are updated on a daily basis. Click on the following link to view the Top Ten list for the journal [ORG: Contemporary Organizational Structures \(Topic\) Top Ten](#) and [Structural Dimensions & Organizational Behavior eJournal Top Ten](#).

Click on the following link to view all the papers in the journal [ORG: Contemporary Organizational Structures \(Topic\) All Papers](#) and [Structural Dimensions & Organizational Behavior eJournal All Papers](#).

To view any of the Top Ten lists, click the TOP button on any network, sub network, journal or topic in the Browse list reachable through the following link: <http://www.ssrn.com/Browse>

Your paper may be listed in the Top Ten for other networks or journals and, if so, you will receive additional notices at that time.

If you have any questions regarding this notification or any other matter, please email [AuthorSupport@SSRN.com](mailto:AuthorSupport@SSRN.com) or call 877-SSRNHelp (877.777.6435 toll free). Outside of the United States, call 00+1+585+4428170.

- Sincerely,

Michael C. Jensen  
Chairman  
Social Science Research Network

# 5- Expand networking



1. **Attending conferences for networking and making contacts**
2. **Build an academic network around yourself outside your university**
3. **People should get to know you, not just your advisor**

## **6- Continuously write/revise and Publish**

- your published papers, as a permanent record of your research, are your passport to your community
- Publishing is one of the necessary steps embedded in the scientific research process. It is also necessary for graduation and career progression.
- You need a **STRONG** manuscript to present your contributions to the scientific community

# Lindsay's laws

1. Research is finished only after it is written up. What you write must communicate and persuade.
2. The hallmarks of scientific writing are precision, clarity and brevity, in that order.
3. Try to write as if you were speaking to someone: “see a face”. This way you get to say it directly and clearly.
4. Write (your chapters) in four drafts:
  - (a) First: putting the facts together
  - (b) Second: checking for coherence and fluency of ideas
  - (c) Third: readability
  - (d) Fourth: editing

Source: D. Lindsay, A Guide to Scientific Writing. Melbourne, Australia: Addison Wesley Longman Australia, 2nd ed., 1997.

# Paragraphs

A paragraph is a group of connected sentences that develop a single point, argument or idea. Paragraphs need to link to other paragraphs so that the themes, arguments or ideas developed are part of a coherent whole rather than separate bits.

A paragraph should include:

- **a main statement / idea that you are putting forward, ie topic sentence**
- **evidence from research to support / argue your idea, showing where the writers agree and / or disagree**
- **student analysis of the research literature where appropriate**
- **summing up and linking to the next idea (paragraph).**

In the literature review, you will need to show evidence of integrating your readings into each paragraph and analysis of the readings where necessary.

Source: [https://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/lsu/content/2\\_AssessmentTasks/assess\\_tuts/lit\\_review\\_LL/writing.html](https://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/lsu/content/2_AssessmentTasks/assess_tuts/lit_review_LL/writing.html)

# Introduction

This is a good example of an introduction because it has a topic sentence which indicates what will be covered and also tells the reader the specific focus of the literature review in the concluding sentence.

*Topic sentence - identifies five major themes as the scope of this review*

Many theories have been proposed to explain what motivates human behaviour.

Although the literature covers a wide variety of such theories, this review will focus on five major themes which emerge repeatedly throughout the literature reviewed. These themes are: incorporation of the self-concept into traditional theories of motivation, the influence of rewards on motivation, the increasing importance of internal forces of motivation, autonomy and self-control as sources of motivation, and narcissism as an essential component of motivation. Although the literature presents these themes in a variety of contexts, this paper will primarily focus on their application to self-motivation.

*5 major themes to be covered*

*Concluding sentence - specific focus*

# Integrating arguments in paragraphs

## Integration of multiple sources

To develop an integrated argument from multiple sources, you need to link your arguments together. The model below is a guide.

*Topic sentence - outlining your main claim or key point for that paragraph*



*Most early theories of motivation were concerned with need satisfaction.* Robbins, Millett, Cacioppe and Waters-Marsh (1998) argued that motivation relies on what a person needs and wants. Similarly the early theories of Maslow and McGregor (Robbins et al. 1998) focused on personal needs satisfaction as the basis for motivational behaviour. However, recent studies outlined by Leonard, Beauvais, and Scholl (1999) suggest that personality and disposition play an equally important role in motivation. Current thinking does not discount these theories, but simply builds on them to include a self-concept.

*Supporting evidence from the readings*



*Contrasting theories from research*



*Concluding sentence - linking to the next paragraph*

# Integrating arguments in paragraphs

## Integration of student analysis

It is important to integrate your analysis and interpretation of the literature in your literature review. Read the following paragraph and see how the arguments have been integrated into the paragraph along with student analysis. Analysis is not just student opinion, it needs to be supported by the literature.

*Topic sentence - outlining your main claim or key point for that paragraph*

*First statement of evidence from the literature*

By its very nature, motivation requires a degree of individual satisfaction or narcissism. Robbins, Millet, Cacioppe, and Waters-Marsh (1998) suggest that motivation has as its very basis the need to focus on, and please the self. This is supported by Shaw, Shapard and Waugaman (2000) who contend that this narcissistic drive is based on the human effort to find personal significance in life. It can be argued that the desire to improve one's status is a highly motivational force, and is central to the idea of narcissistic motivation. The narcissistic motivational strategies put forward by Shaw et al. (2000) are concerned with motivation for life in general, but may also have applications in the context of work. These strategies, with their focus on personal needs, demonstrate that narcissism is an essential component of motivation.

*Second statement of evidence from the literature*

*Student analysis*

*Concluding statement*



# Table

## Appendix B: Data Tables

Source Information			Search Results		Subjects		Performance Effects					Analysis Results							Research Methodologies				
No	Author(s)	Year	Modularity	Commonality	Product	Process	Organization	Innovation	Quality	Variety	Cost	Time	Other	Theory-Building	Framework	Process Model	Math. Modeling	Simulation	Experiment	Empirical (large n)	Case Study (small n)	Review	Notes: Product / Industry / Application
1	Akçay and Xu	2004		1	1					1						1							Non-product specific assemble-to-order systems
2	Alfaro and Corbett	2003		1	1					1							1				1		Chemical films for the automotive industry
3	Anderson and Parker	2002	1		1					1			1					1					Automobiles as examples
4	Baker et al.	1986		1	1					1							1						Non-product-specific inventory model
5	Balakrishnan and Brown	1996		1	1	1				1											1		Aluminum tube manufacturing
6	Balakrishnan et al.	1996		1	1					1	1					1	1						Non-product-specific assemble-to-forecast systems
7	Baldwin and Clark	1997	1		1	1				1	1				1								Examples from computer and auto industries
8	Baldwin and Clark	2000	1		1	1		1	1					1				1				1	Computer
9	Bartezzaghi and Verganti	1995		1	1	1							1					1					Telecommunication equipment
10	Bi and Zhang	2001	1		1	1				1	1	1				1						1	Several conceptual products as descriptions
11	Blackburn et al.	1996	1		1				1	1	1					1							Software
12	Browning	2001		1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1		1							1	Automobile climate control
13	Cetin and Saitou	2004	1	1	1				1	1	1					1	1					1	Bicycle frame example
14	Cetin and Saitou	2004	1		1				1	1	1						1	1				1	Automotive space frame
15	Cetin and Saitou	2005	1		1				1	1	1						1	1				1	Automotive space frame
16	Cheung	2002		1	1					1							1						Non-product-specific inventory model
17	Cheung and Hausman	1995		1	1					1							1						Aircraft engine repair
18	Choobineh and Mohebbi	2004	1		1					1	1	1							1				Non-product-specific inventory (kit preparation) model
19	Collier	1982		1	1					1							1						Non-product-specific inventory model
20	Desai et al.	2001		1	1				1	1	1						1						Model balancing cost savings and revenue decrease; examples from the auto industry
21	Deshpande et al.	2003		1	1					1							1						Non-product-specific inventory model
22	Djelic and Ainamo	1999	1		1		1						1									1	Luxury fashion industry
23	Dong and Chen	2005		1	1					1					1				1				Non-product-specific supply chain model
24	Du et al.	2001	1	1	1					1	1				1	1						1	Power supplies
25	Duray	2004	1		1								1								1		Manufactured products
26	Duray et al.	2000	1		1								1									1	Manufactured products
27	Ethiraj and Levinthal	2004	1		1		1						1						1				Non-product-specific simulation study
28	Ethiraj and Levinthal	2004	1		1	1			1										1				Microchip
29	Evans	1983	1		1					1	1						1						Screw assortment for creating kits
30	Eynan and Fouque	2003		1	1					1								1					Non-product-specific demand reshape model
31	Eynan and Rosenblatt	1996		1	1					1							1						Non-product-specific Inventory Model
32	Farrell and Simpson	2003		1	1					1		1				1							Yokes used to mount valve actuators
33	Fellini et al.	2005		1	1				1	1							1						Automotive body side frame
34	Ferrer and Whybark	2001		1	1					1		1						1				1	Automobile component remanufacturing
35	Fine et al.	2005	1		1	1	1			1	1							1					High-level example from the auto industry
36	Fisher et al.	1999		1	1					1	1										1		Automotive Brakes
37	Fixson	2005	1	1	1								1		1							1	Automotive Doors
38	Fleming and Sorenson	2001		1	1			1	1						1								Walkman as illustration
39	Fleming and Sorenson	2001		1	1			1	1													1	Patents
40	Fujita and Yoshida	2004		1	1					1		1					1	1					Family of aircrafts
41	Galvin	1999		1	1			1		1			1		1							1	Bicycles
42	Garud and Kumaraswamy	1995		1	1		1			1	1				1	1							Microcomputers, automobiles as examples

# Figure

Web of Science<sup>SM</sup>

[<< Back to previous results list](#)

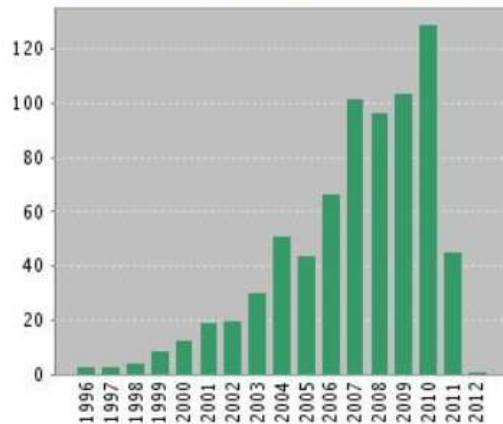
## Citation Report

Topic=("virtual Teams")

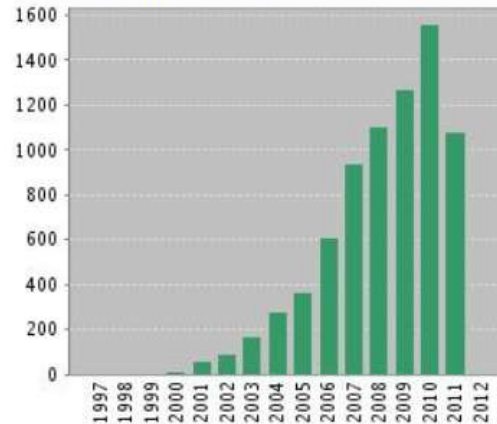
Timespan=All Years. Databases=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH.

This report reflects citations to source items indexed within Web of Science. Perform a Cited Reference Search to include citations to items not indexed within Web of Science.

Published Items in Each Year



Citations in Each Year



Results found: **741**

Sum of the Times Cited [?] : **7561**

Sum of Times Cited without self-citations [?] : **4771**

Citing Articles[?] : **3928**

[View Citing Articles](#)

[View without self-citations](#)

Average Citations per Item [?] : **10.20**

h-index [?] : **42**



# Getting published

## Why publish?

Apart from the final thesis, you should also consider publishing your work as you go along. There are various reasons for this:

- publications assist in final preparation of your thesis disseminating your knowledge and experience,
- it gives you an academic profile and raises the profile of your institution,
- research publications generate income for the University,
- publications enhance your CV and may help in gaining employment, and
- you may even become rich and famous - but don't count on it!

# Paper Structure

- Title
- Affiliation
- Abstract
- Keywords
- Nomenclatures
- Introduction
- Materials and methods
- Results and Discussions
- Conclusions
- References



# Abstract

Abstract should **not exceed 300** words (**without reference**).

## **Abstract must include following sections:**

Problem Statement: This section should include answers of the questions:

- **Why was research needed?.**
- **What was the context of the work?.**
- **Introduce the problem or provide background for what you will address.**

Approach:

- **What did you do and how did you go about solving or making progress on the problem.**
- **Describe the method of research, study, or analysis applied to the problem.**

Results:

- **What results did you get?**
- **State what you found and relate it to the problem.**
- **Summarize the major results in numbers, avoid vague, hand waving results such as “very small” or “significant”.**

Conclusions/Recommendations:

- **What are the implications of your answer?**
- **State the relevance, implications, or significance of the results or conclusions, to the business.**
- **Significance of work is often implied by the recommendations or implications for future work.**

# A Structured Abstract

<b>Purpose of this paper</b>	<b>What are the reason(s) for writing the paper or the aims of the research?</b>
<b>Design/methodology/ approach</b>	<b>How are the objectives achieved? Include the main method(s) used for the research. What is the approach to the topic and what is the theoretical or subject scope of the paper?</b>
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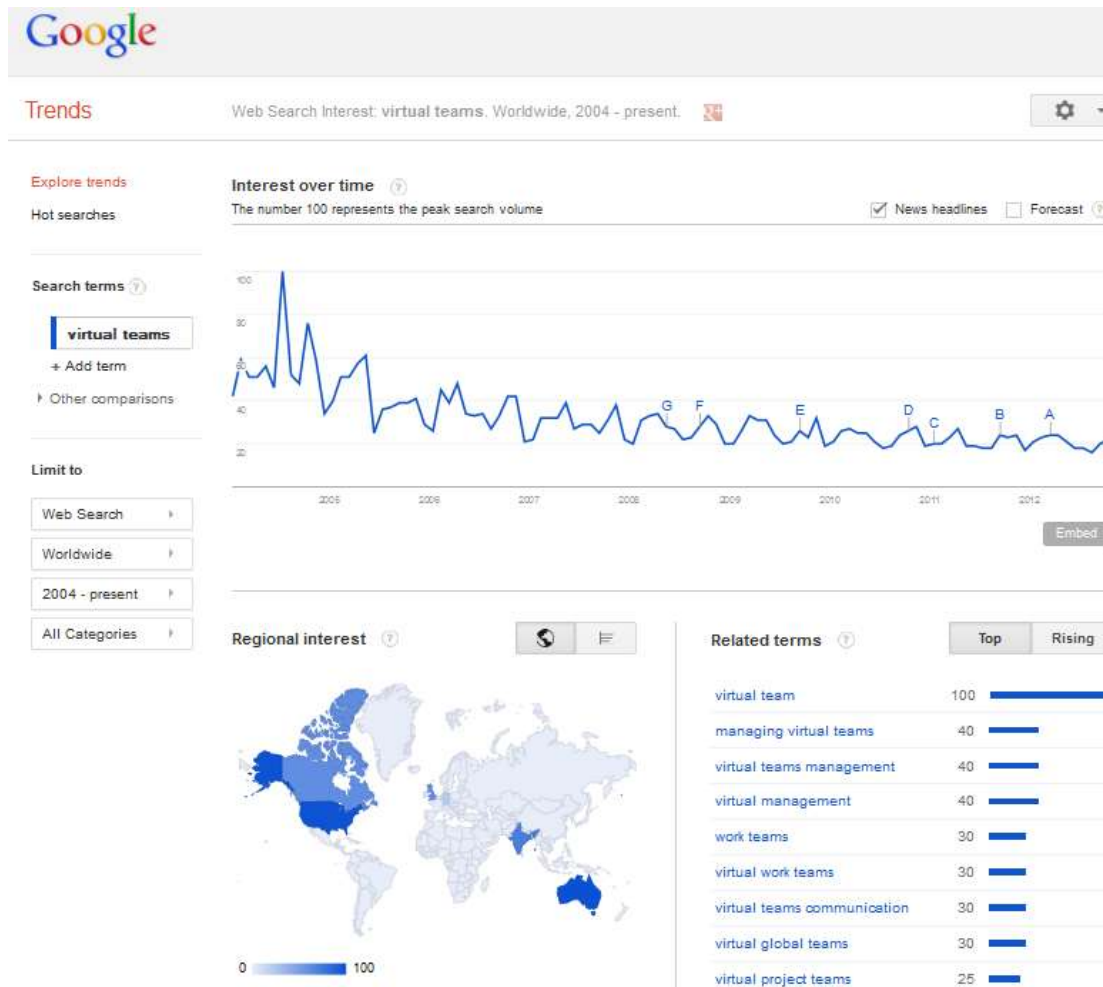
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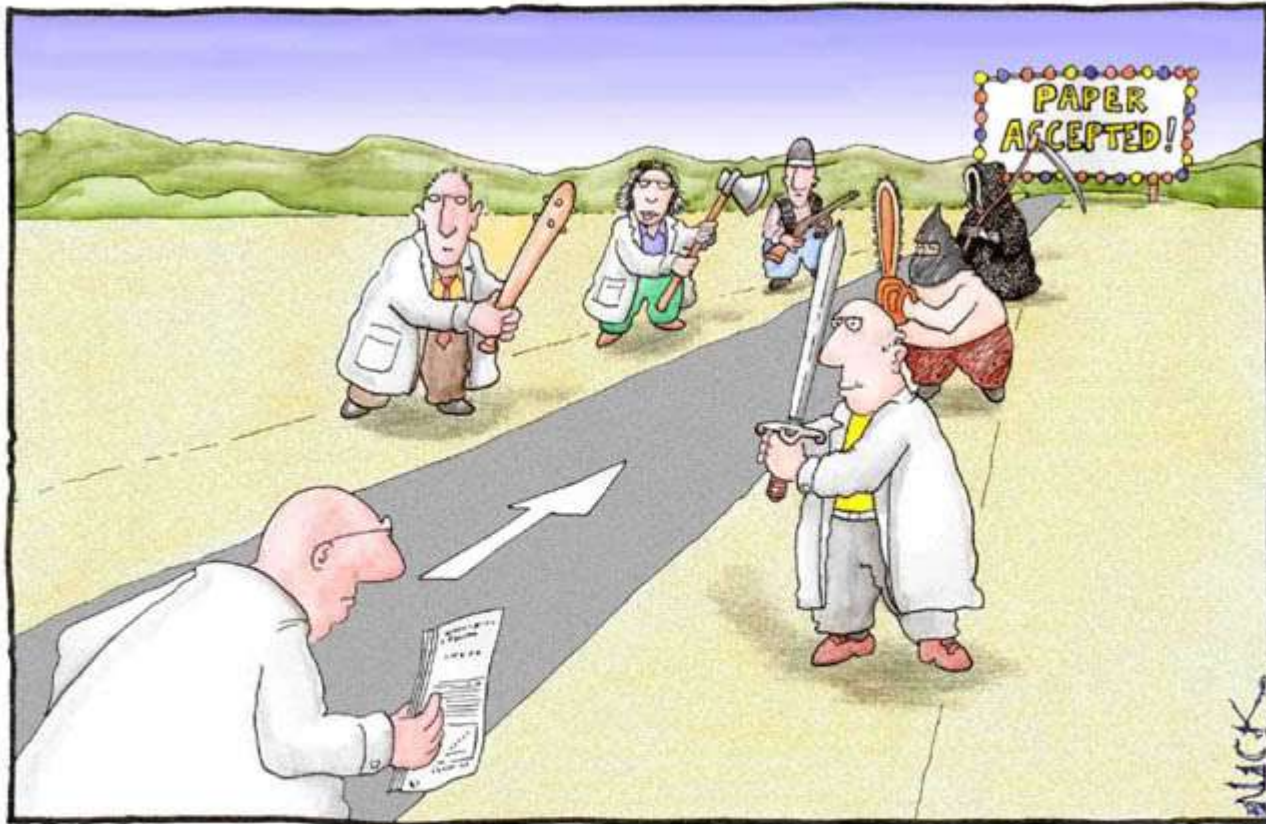
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