

Disciplinary Differences in Thesis and Dissertation Writing

Speaker

Dr Brian Paltridge

Faculty of Education and Social Work
University of Sydney

8 Feb 2007 (Thur)
2:00pm– 4:00 pm
Room 205, Runme
Shaw Building

Abstract

While there are general expectations for thesis and dissertation writing, there are also discipline specific expectations for how theses and dissertations should be written in different areas of study. Many of these conventions and expectations, however, are subtle. As Parry (1998: 273) argues:

[these conventions] may not be readily identifiable to experienced scholars, yet doctoral students are expected to learn and master them, suggesting that discipline specific writing norms and conventions are learned largely by tacit means during doctoral study.

Among the discipline specific conventions listed by Parry are the structure of academic argument, the ways in which ideas are linked in a text, and conventions for citation and critique. Disciplines also often have their own preferred ways of doing things in terms of thesis organization. This, however, has not been extensively explored in the research literature. It is, thus, hard to tell students exactly what these differences are so they can take account of them in their writing.

This workshop will summarise previous research on thesis and dissertation organization. It will then invite workshop participants to comment on and discuss the extent to which different thesis and dissertation types are applicable in their own areas of study.

Reference

Parry, S. (1998). Disciplinary differences in doctoral theses, *Higher Education*, 36: 273-299.

Brian Paltridge is Associate Professor in TESOL at the University of Sydney. He is author of *Genre, Frames and Writing in Research Settings* (John Benjamins, 1997), *Making Sense of Discourse Analysis* (AEE Publishers, 2000), *Genre and the Language Learning Classroom* (University of Michigan Press, 2001), *Discourse Analysis* (Continuum, 2006), and with Sue Starfield, *Thesis and Dissertation Writing in a Second Language* (Routledge, 2007). He is a member of the editorial board for the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* and the *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*. With Diane Belcher, he is editor of the journal *English for Specific Purposes*. He is presently writing a book on teaching academic writing with colleagues from the University of Sydney, to be published by the University of Michigan Press.



All are welcome.
Enquiries: 2857 3470

Please register through the HKU Event Manager System (Login to
HKU Portal: <http://hkuportal.hku.hk/> -> click HKUEMS - > View
events from 'Graduate School')