

**Dissertation Workshop for M.Phil. and Ph.D. Candidates
and for the Teachers who Plan to Guide Students for Research Degrees
An Online Course**

Instructor

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This online course is for scholars who have registered, or who plan to register, for their M.Phil. or Ph.D. degrees in India and other South Asian nations. It is also designed to help Teachers who plan to guide students for research degrees such as M.Phil. and Ph.D.

1. For all those who have not yet chosen any topic, the course will offer guidelines to choose an appropriate topic of research for early successful completion and acquisition of an advanced degree.
2. Assuming that you have already chosen your topic of research, this online course will help you to draft a suitably organized and structured proposal.
3. For all those who have already submitted their initial proposal, this online course will help you to understand, revise and redesign your prepared proposal for research so that your dissertation is focused well on the chosen topic.
4. Equipped with well-rounded rationale obtained through this course, you will be able to discuss the appropriateness and relevance of the contents, processes, and implications of your research proposal with your supervisor/s, research committees, other interested scholars, etc. Kindly note that nothing offered in any course, including this course, can be a substitute to your training under your supervisor/s. However this course will facilitate your quicker understanding and processes of dissertation writing through individualized instruction and individualized supervision.
5. The course will equip you with the necessary skills needed to do research (pertaining to your topic) and dissertation writing so that you can confidently look forward to early completion and acquisition of an advanced degree. You will gain confidence and you will be able to meet the requirements set by your supervisor/s and the University.
6. Kindly note that you have to do all the writing yourself. The Instructor will not write your dissertation. It is important that, in order to gain competence and confidence, the current practice of supervisors re-writing the chapters based on the draft submitted by their students, and the extensive corrections, additions and deletions at the supervisors' level should stop. You gain real competence by doing your work on your own. This course is intended to build that confidence and competence in you.

6. The course will provide you with models of writing, techniques of writing simple and error-free English, models of chapter outlines, examples of structures of dissertation, preparation of citation, preparation of references list, techniques of proofreading, thematic and structural outlining techniques, writing thesis statement, techniques to avoid plagiarism, skills in paraphrasing, annotation and summarizing, details of some relevant dissertations in your area of specialization available in the Internet, short writing exercises on a daily basis, skill to identify and increase coherence and cogency, pagination techniques, appropriate use of terms, words and phrases to match the topic of research, help in identification, collection, collation and correct use of terms, sentence construction, sentence connections in actual content related to the topic, description of parts of model dissertations, writing conclusions, use of idioms and idiom-like phrases from current language, use of metaphors, and developing a sense of continuity, relevance and appropriateness in everything you write as part of the dissertation.

The list provided above is only a partial list. The course is not a theoretical course. It is a practical course in its scope. So, only those who are interested in actually learning from what they do are encouraged to register for this highly practical course.

Course Duration

The Dissertation Workshop will run for 9 weeks, plus one week for the grading of the material submitted as final project in Week 9. The Week begins on Monday and ends on following Sunday. It is likely that participants may need additional time because of their other commitments. In such cases, you are asked to first discuss your specific needs and work out a schedule that is most suitable to you to complete the course.

Syllabus

Syllabus will be supplied on the Sunday just before the first day (Monday) of the First Week. The syllabus will provide the rules and processes of instruction, grading scale, week by week assignment details, etc. Every week on Sundays registrants will receive a Weekly Overview for the week that commences on Monday. This Weekly Review will give you adequate guidelines to complete the work for the week.

Registrants are advised to have a separate USB drive to download materials attached to the e-mails delivered to them. They may like to first write the assignments by hand and then word process these in their computers or in any browsing center near them and then e-mail the same using the link e-mail that delivered the materials to them.

Materials

1. A Handbook of Readings will be supplied. The material runs to more than 100 pages and forms the basis of our discussion and practical writing, etc. These will be delivered in the form of lessons in pdf format.

2. However, there are also other materials supplied to the individual students through e-mail, based on their specific needs identified. These materials help students to do their practical preparation for dissertation writing processes.

3. In addition to the *Handbook of Readings*, each registrant is supplied with summaries of some dissertations in electronic format relating to your topic of research available in the Internet. The structure followed in these dissertations will be sent to you and this structure will help you to decide on your own design. We'll discuss this issue in the course as well. Reading these dissertation summaries will enable registrants to redesign their own dissertation to international standards and also focus on current state of the art in their field of research.

4. A list of references, periodically updated, relating to the processes of dissertation writing skills and techniques will also be supplied.

5. Guidelines to obtain sources and resources relevant and appropriate to the topic of research will be offered, along with actual texts of sources wherever available.

Registrants are cautioned that they should show more interest in doing the exercises suggested every week, rather than reading the materials provided for acquiring information. Knowledge and information alone are not enough. Actual demonstration of the knowledge and skills through writing is emphasized in this course.

Indian scholars need to give up simply summarizing what others and textbooks have said and written, and they should move on to writing their own ideas, interpretations and analyses in an independent and critical manner using appropriate language. Dissertations are not repetitions of what other books present and what scholars have written. These are certainly essential elements of any dissertation, but the ultimate goal is to present an analysis from a sound thesis contemplated after surveying available resources and information. Originality in contribution and originality in interpretation are very important.

Course Fee

Indian rupees 4000 only for 10-week instruction, materials supplied, grading of papers submitted and constant availability for consultation during the course. Fees once paid will not be refunded or exchanged for tuition, etc. in other courses that may be offered. Enrollment is contingent upon payment of the entire course fee. Please write to dissertationworkshop@gmail.com for the payment of the course fee.

Mode of Delivery

All lessons, materials, consultations, etc. will be delivered through e-mail. In order to maintain the standard of individualized instruction, all materials will be delivered individually to each registrant's e-mail address. This enables individual registrants to raise questions in any fashion and get individual attention to their questions and suggestions. Confidentiality is also maintained in this

process as we do not offer a common discussion forum or make any reference to any individual student.

E-mail delivery is quicker and the links established for each delivered lesson or material will help registrants to focus on the particular week and particular material. Questions will be answered within 48 hours of the receipt of questions. Materials will be graded within 72 hours of receipt of the material. The e-mail is open all the time, as the instructor works from the United States and thus the difference in time zones is taken advantage of for prompt delivery and discussion.

Instructor's Background

As of now, only Dr. M. S. Thirumalai will handle all the classes. He has a Masters and Ph.D. in linguistics. He has been the Principal of the Southern Regional Language Center, Mysore, and Professor-cum-Deputy Director for 17 years at the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore 570006, India. In the United States, he was the Dean of Academic Affairs of a college for 13 years, in addition to his responsibility as Professor of Linguistics, TESOL, World Religions and Intercultural Communication. He had successfully guided 6 students for their Ph.D. in the fields of Linguistics and Speech Pathology in India. He has been an examiner for many Ph.D. dissertations in several disciplines in many reputed universities in India. He was also a consultant-writer for a workshop of the UNESCO on adult literacy. He also reviews manuscripts submitted to leading publishers for publication. Dr. Thirumalai has published many books both in Tamil and English in areas such as literary criticism, stylistics, linguistics, language teaching methods, sociolinguistics, anthropological linguistics and psycholinguistics. His recent publications in these areas are found in the volumes of an international online monthly journal Language in India www.languageinindia.com.

Dr. Thirumalai's goal in offering this course is to only help Indian and South Asian researchers to improve their research methodology and to present their findings in a manner that is readable and significant to the scholars around the world.

Enrollment

Enrollment is open now. Course will begin within one week of the payment of the course fee for individual candidates. Remember this course adopts individualized instruction model and thus registrants can start their course immediately. Thus each registrant may start his or her course on different dates.

Kindly Note the Following:

1. The Dissertation Workshop is intended to help you with the preparation of your thesis/dissertation. It will also help those who supervise and guide students for their research degrees. It will provide you with general and specific suggestions to follow in writing your dissertation. You have to write the dissertation, not anyone else. I can certainly help you to guide you to complete your thesis by imparting necessary technical skills, but the responsibility is primarily yours.

2. Also, as this is only an additional workshop to train you how to write your dissertation, you can send a copy of this document to your supervisor/s and get the opinion (and if necessary, the consent) of your supervisors. I have no objection to this at all. In fact, I would always encourage students to follow this procedure.

3. Kindly note that I have no desire or role to play as a guide in any official capacity to write your dissertation. I am like any teacher or scholar who you are free to consult with and even to acknowledge such help, if you so desire. But I do not insist on the participants to acknowledge my help. Also I have no need for such acknowledgement at this stage in my life.

4. Kindly note that you can join the workshop any time you choose to do so, on any day, as the workshop is designed to cater to individuals, not a group. It is individualized instruction based on your specific needs, as exemplified in your research proposal or design. You need to give me a few days, before your workshop begins. For example, if you choose to join the course and write to me on Wednesday, your course will be ready for you by the following Sunday and this will run for 9 weeks from that day.

5. The bank details to make the payment of the fee will be sent to you after you decide to join the course and write to me.

6. You will be required not to distribute or share the course materials, guidelines, etc., sent to you with others. It is a strict condition and you will be required to give a declaration. It is expected that you will abide by your own word, acting according to the conscience given to you.

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