



University of Malta
Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences

DISSERTATION Information Meeting for 3rd Yr Hons students

Friday November 18th 2011



Dissertation Committee 2011-2012

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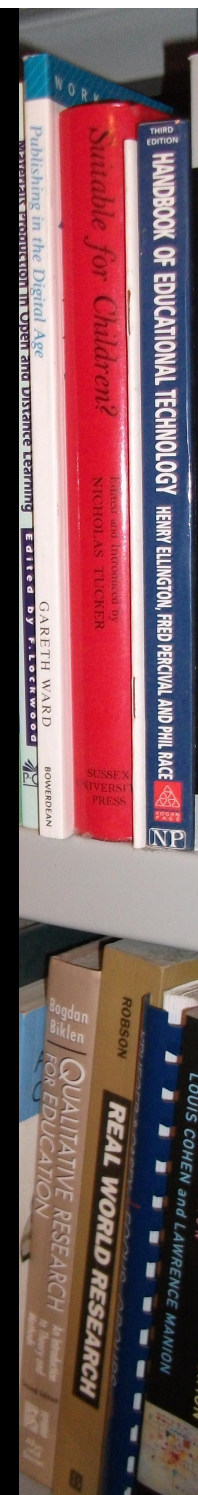
Dissertation Committee 2011

- Overall administrative responsibility for the dissertation process
- Informal advice from any member of the dissertation committee
- Formal communications (e.g., applications for changes to approved proposals, complaints, notification of medical conditions, etc.) are to be made **in writing** to the chair of the dissertation committee.



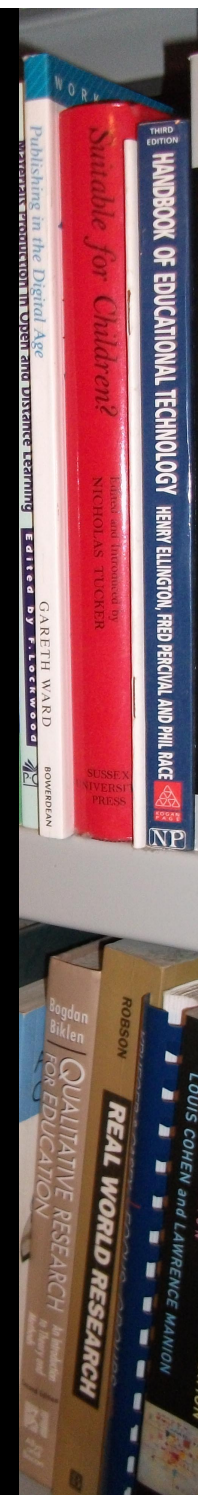
Resources

- Materials required for the Dissertation are available at the UoM VLE site:
- Materials available include:
 - MaKS Dissertation Handbook
 - List of MaKS Staff research interests
 - Key dates
 - Useful forms
- Submission of proposal will also be through this VLE site.



Resources

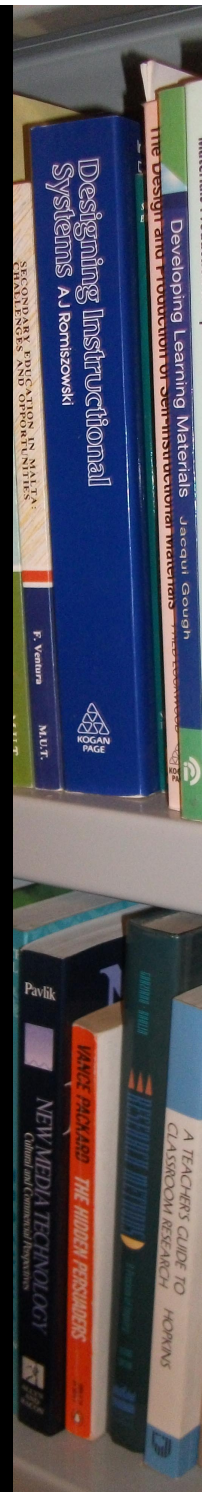
- To access materials go to:
 - Virtual Learning Environment
 - Login using your usual UoM login & password.
 - Select CST4891 2010/11 - Dissertation
- Website also includes two forums:
 - News
 - General



What is the Final Year Dissertation?

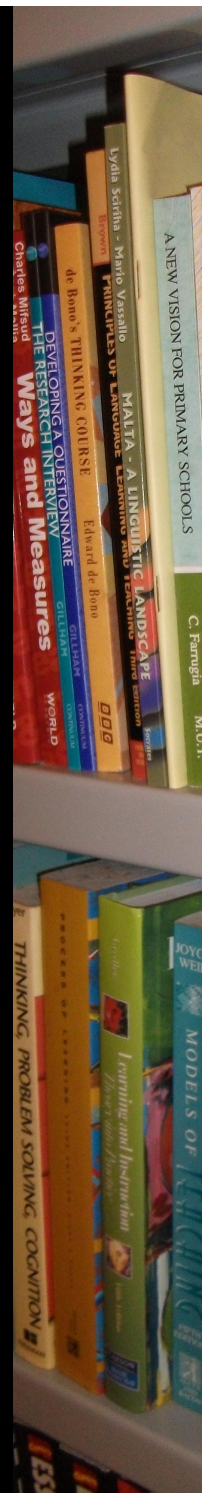
The dissertation allows you to demonstrate your acquired skills in studying a substantive topic in the area of Communications, by

- producing research through the application of an appropriate research method; undertaking data analysis, and presenting your results in writing, or
- through a practical project such as an original video (generally between 5min and 15min in length), audio, print or new media production, communications plan or
- a theoretical thesis.



Choosing a Topic

- Think about the areas of communication that you are most interested in. Which lectures or courses most captured your imagination?
- Use the Internet, go to the library and find some books or look at journal articles which are broadly relevant to an area you're interested in.
- Look at past student dissertations.
- Do you wish to interview people, analyse video data or newspaper reports, produce a video or a communications plan?



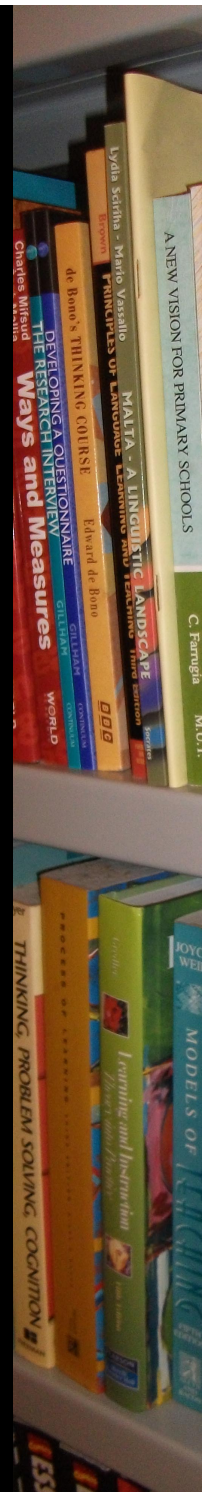
Refining your initial ideas

- Try to formulate a list of specific questions that you might be able to answer by doing the research
- What kind of data would answer the question/s you propose?
- Practical projects - print, audio, video and new media productions dealing with some aspect of the communication process. Or a communications plan dealing with the various elements of the communications process.
- **Do not try to be too ambitious**



Refining your initial ideas

- Think about the kind of research or practical project that you will actually do, and make sure that it is something that you yourself can feasibly do in the time available.
- Choose a topic or project that is interesting to you.



Understanding the structure of a dissertation

Introduction

- What is going to be done?
- Why are you doing it?
- Who is likely to be interested in it?
- What exactly is the hypothesis or problem?
- What is the possible use of the research?
- What is the locus and the focus?



Understanding the structure of a dissertation

Literature Review

- What have others said, written or researched about your topic?
- What theories illuminate the topic?
- How does the literature relate to your research questions?



Understanding the structure of a dissertation

Research Methodology

- How will you approach the empirical work?
- What style and techniques have been chosen?
- Why?
- What samples, tests, observations and measurements will be needed?



Understanding the structure of a dissertation

Data Analysis

- What data have been found?
- What is your interpretation of them?
- Do they support or refute a hypothesis?



Understanding the structure of a dissertation

Conclusions

- How can you summarise the work?
- Are there any actions or recommendations to take?
- Was it all successful?



Understanding the structure of a dissertation

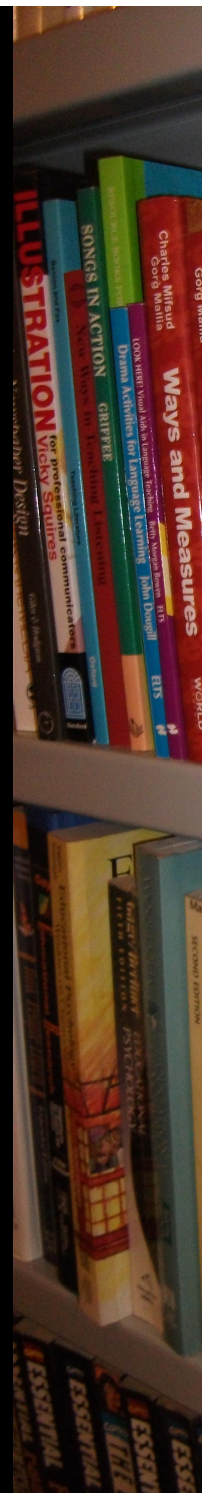
References

- What books, journals, papers and other sources have been referred to throughout the work?



The Dissertation Proposal

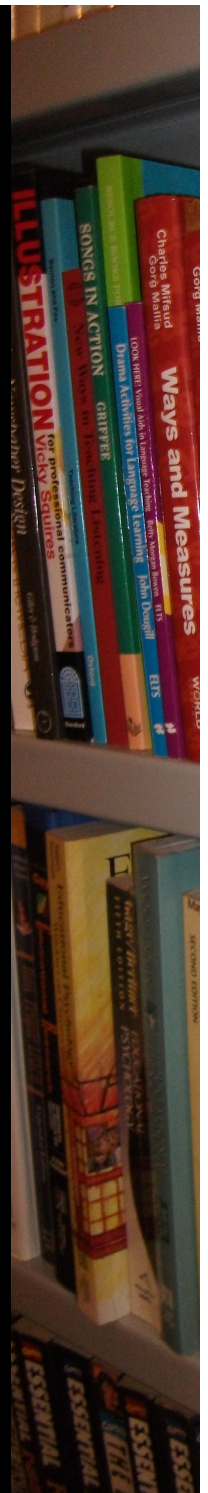
- Dissertation Proposal Forms due by **March 23rd 2012**
- Download a copy of the Dissertation Proposal Form from the VLE website, fill it in and upload it to the website by **March 23rd**.
- You should consult a member of staff for guidance and advice before you submit your dissertation proposal. Your Dissertation Proposal Form will be signed by the person you have consulted.



The Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal form sets out key aspects of your work:

- Area of Interest (Keywords)
- Background & Justification
- Your research question(s)/hypothesis(es)
- A short statement of methodology
- Relevant literature that you have consulted up to the moment of the proposal.



Proposal Evaluation Procedure & Allocation of Supervisors

- The dissertation committee will evaluate your proposal and allocate a supervisor. You will be advised (via your University of Malta email) of the outcome of this evaluation by April 12th 2012.
- Dissertation supervisors will be allocated, to the best of our ability, on the basis of your dissertation topic and methodology.
- You should try to set up one supervision session before the end of your third year.

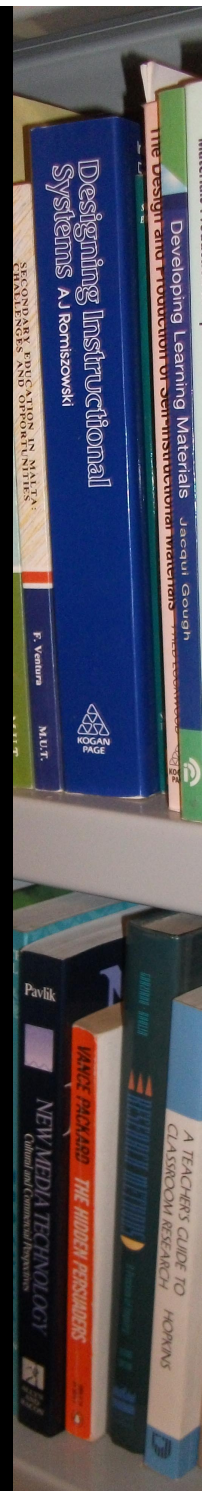


Typical Outcomes of Proposal Evaluation & Action Required

	Evaluation	Action By Student
1	Proposal Accepted. Supervisor Allocated.	Contact supervisor to make first appointment.
2	Proposal Accepted subject to changes as recommended by DC. Supervisor Allocated. Changes to be verified by supervisor	Contact supervisor to make first appointment. Prepare revised proposal to incorporate recommended changes and submit to supervisor for approval
3	Proposal Not Accepted in current form. Supervisor not allocated. Revised proposal required with changes as recommended by DC	Prepare revised proposal and resubmit to DC. Student may contact members of the DC or any other member of staff for further guidance and advice.
4	Proposal Not Accepted. New Proposal Required. Supervisor not allocated.	Prepare new proposal and resubmit to DC. Student may contact members of the DC or any other staff for further guidance and advice.

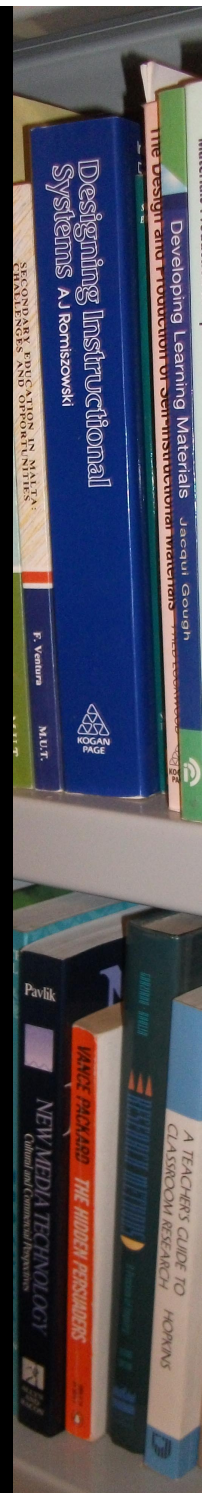
Your supervisor

- A member of staff who has been allocated to help guide you through the various stages of your dissertation.
- Your first point of contact for all matters relating to your dissertation.
- No hard & fast rule, but you usually would meet your supervisor roughly every fortnight in your 4th year but usually more contact at the start of the year.



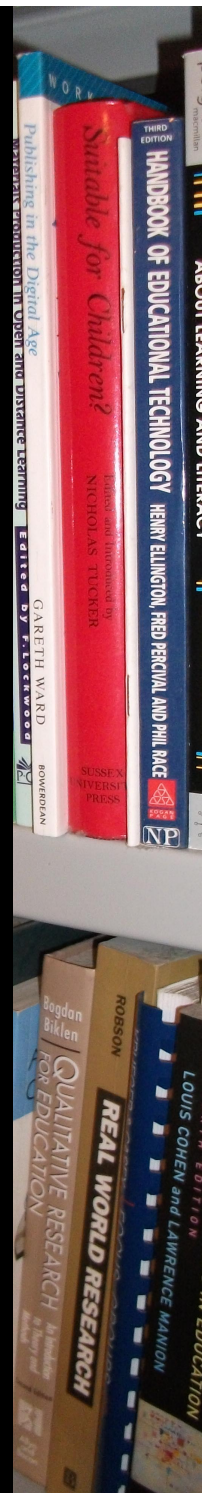
Your supervisor

- Best to go to a supervision session with some specific issues to discuss.
- Supervisors are charged to read no more than one draft of each chapter in the dissertation.
- It is YOUR responsibility to contact your supervisor to set up meetings & discuss your progress



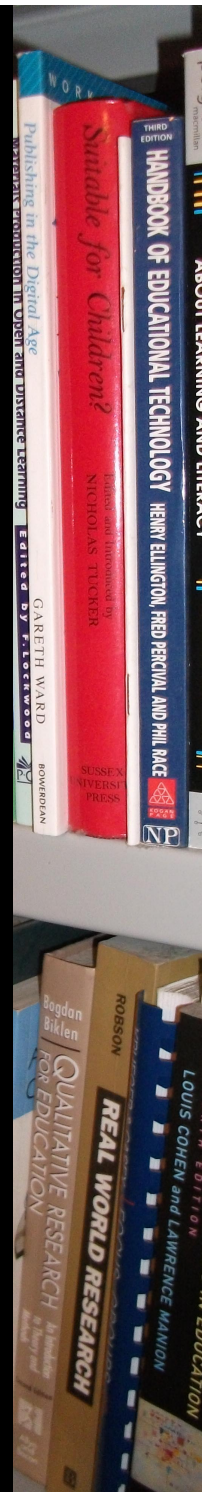
Ethical & Safety Considerations

- University of Malta research ethics guidelines
- If you intend to use other people in your research you will be required to submit an 'Ethics' form for approval
- **Your 'Ethics' form must be approved before you can undertake any data collection.**
- Consent & Talent Release forms
- You must not harm your research subjects
- You must not put yourself at risk while collecting data
- You must act with academic integrity
 - **Plagiarism**



Other Issues

- Stages to Completing the Dissertation
 - Doing the Research/Practical Project
 - Writing up the Dissertation
 - Submitting soft-bound copies of the Dissertation
- Friday March 22nd 2013**
- The Marking Process
 - Guidelines for Assessments of Dissertations
 - Submitting hard-bound copies of the Dissertation



You should start...

... NOW!

