

Geog 696
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April 25, 2011
Debrief for How to Survive from Dissertations

Debrief

Everything that mentioned in this article makes sense, and I feel someone who really knows where graduate students are and what they are feeling wrote this article. However, this essay is not a published scientific article but a guideline for graduate students, so the structure of the essay is unorganized. I will break down these great guidelines into six sections:

1. Why do you need dissertations?
2. Why is it hard to finish dissertation?
3. Along with inherent problems or issues, what the external stresses? And internal stresses? Are there other stresses other than these?
4. Solutions for each stress?
5. Still important thing is writing. Keep writing.
6. What else can help you other than books?

Key Points

1. Why do you need dissertations?

According to the essay, writing is a very large and independent project. It makes graduate student to be scholar. We already talk about why we want to have master degree or study your interest in the master program at the beginning of semester, so we know what we want and why we want it.

2. Why is it hard to finish dissertation?

Because we have never done this before, or we need to make some money which makes us have less time to do that, finishing thesis (I would say thesis instead of dissertations because it is much real for us.) is not easy. However, we already decided to study in the master program with whatever reasons we have (because it makes us happy), so we need to finish what we started. We know still we need to finish thesis, but many stresses could make us slacker or quitter. Finding out solutions for each stress would be helpful for us to go through it.

3. Along with inherent problems or issues, what the external stresses? and internal stresses? Are there other stresses other than these?

Author divided some stresses into two categories: internal stresses and external stresses. For external stresses, there are defending a thesis proposal, chosen an advisor, begun working with a committee, exhaustion, money, and time management, and for internal stresses, there are competition. It is good examples to explain how to overcome these, but I think external stresses could be connected to or from the internal stresses. For example, money could be external stresses, but it can be related to all other things, such as, less money makes you work more, so it can cause time management problem or exhaustion. Therefore, I would all stresses are related to each other. I will talk about stresses more in the next section.

4. **Solutions for each stress?**

Solutions are all related to stresses, so let's talk about stresses and solution each by each. First, important stress that we need to deal with is money. Briton said that money is the first issue that he needs to deal with, and I also agreed. Carin talked about getting fund, grant, or scholarship, but the only smart ones or lucky ones can get them. Time management can be the next issue. Janice said that she works part-time. I guess, if I have full-time job, I do not think I can finish the thesis within the expected time frame. Time management and exhaustion are related to each other. Janice said that the most issue for her is time management for finishing thesis because she needs to take care of her house errands such as cleaning or something. I also kind of agreed that if I am really busy, I can ignore the dirty desk and finish my assignment, but for long time project like thesis, if I see the dirty room or laundry or something, I can start doing thesis after finishing all the errands for house. Dr. Rodrigue recommends organizing desk or room, and I also agreed that way I can write something more productive and creative. Author mentioned about chair or community or change of community would be important external stresses, but in my opinion, community or chair is my one of important support group. The one of important solution for not being slacker is to choose where or when is good for you. Carin said that she likes to be at library because that way she cannot see the outside, so she does not know how much time is gone. Briton said that he usually goes to coffee shop to do his thesis because otherwise, he will be slacker. I also agreed that going coffee shop is better than doing thesis at home. Author talked about good lighting, I totally agree that if I have halogen light I am so slow to read or something.

5. **Still important thing is writing. Keep writing.**

No matter what we are dealing with, we should write and write again till it is finished, even 5 minutes a day.

6. **What else can help you other than books?**

According to the essay, author suggested some books to help graduate students, but I think students need to finish their own literature review instead of reading another. As Carin said, family support would be helpful. In the essay, the author talked about competition as internal stress, but thankfully, our department does not have that kind of stress, so we can use it as our supports. My favorite boost is "write your dissertation in single-space" and then double space it when you are depressed. My second favorite is "order your advisor's dissertation from interlibrary loan." I was always wondering what Dr. Lee's dissertation looks like, especially when he was so strict about writing or knowledge of remote sensing even though I just did not understand content with English, not content itself. I should try this one now. Briton talked about that he kind of agreed that "a lot of people beat themselves up with expectations to work 10 or 12 hours a day – many people recommend a mx. of 4 or 5 hours." I also agreed this idea because not only I need time for the rest of brain, but also from my experience, working more than 6 hours burns my body out, so next day I need to rest more than usual. It is not worth it to write more than 6 hours for me. I wish I have had much stronger body.

However, the most important boost will be your will to finish the thesis.