

# Theses and Dissertations: A Guide to Planning, Research, and Writing

R. Murray Thomas, Dale L. Brubaker

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This book guides students through the process of planning, researching, and writing the final version of theses and dissertations. Five major stages of the process are illustrated with multiple examples from the social and behavioral sciences, humanities, and such allied fields as education, social work, and business administration. The first stage, Preparing the Way, describes problems and alternative solutions in working with faculty advisors and in searching the professional literature. Stage 2 explains how to find good research topics and define them clearly for presentation to faculty advisors.

Stage 3 describes problems often encountered in data collection and suggests solutions for those problems. At Stage 4, students learn ways of organizing and interpreting information, including classification schemes, verbal and statistical summaries, and methods of deriving meaning from data. The final stage, Presenting the Finished Product, offers guidelines for thesis and dissertation writing and for publishing the results in such media as books, journal articles, and popular periodicals. Stage 5 also includes a chapter about how students can mount a convincing defense of their work during a faculty committee's final oral examination session.



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