

## **WRITING YOUR THESIS**

Dr. Mark Matthews

Student Learning Development

Web: <http://student-learning.tcd.ie>

Email :student.learning@tcd.ie

## SPSE TECHNIQUE

This technique sometimes referred to as SPQR (Situation-Problem-Question-Response), can be useful at the early stages of your paper.

Complete one paragraph for each heading.

Situation

Describe the general background / setting in which the research takes place

Problem

Describe a problem that the research addresses.

Solution

What did you do or try to address this problem?

Evaluation

How did you evaluate the proposed solution and what were the results?

## **Robert Brown's Eight Questions**

These questions can be used as prompts when you are planning your paper.

1. Working Title of Paper (20 words)

2. Authors (in order of appearance)

3. Anticipated journal/s

4. Intended readers

Name 4 to 6 potential readers – give their names and why they should be interested

5a. What is the central question that your paper will pose? 25 words

The central question of my paper is ...

5b. What is the answer it will provide? 25 words

The answer it will provide is that ...

6. If your readers had only one sentence to summarize your article, what should it be? 25 words

Focus on the outcomes from the work, not the inputs.

7a. Why did you do the work? 70 words

Briefly outline the problem you are tackling and why it is important.

7b. What did you do? 70 words

Briefly outline the methods you used to gather evidence.

7c. What happened? 100 words

Briefly outline the key results. Focus on outcomes.

7d. What can you add to the theory? 70 words

A research paper has to add to broader understanding. What will yours contribute?

Think about how your results and conclusions will change how people see the world.

7e. What can you add to practice? 70 words

Superior research also has practical consequences. What are the consequences of your work? Think about how your results and conclusions might change what people do.

8. What remains unresolved?

This is more for your own benefit, but will provide some guidance for your audience and some of it may be useful in your discussion.

#### References

Brown, R. (1994) The 'Big Picture' about Managing Writing. In O. Zuber-Skerrit and Y. Ryan, (Ed) *Quality in Postgraduate Education* Ch 8 , pp90-109, Kogan Page : London

Brown, R. (1994) How to focus your reader with the 'main message'. In L Conrad (Ed) *Developing as Researchers*. Griffith Institute of Higher Education, Griffith University, Queensland.

Writing for academic journals / Rowena Murray

## FOCUS STATEMENT

1. What is your thesis about?

2. Why are you conducting this research?

3. What do you find interesting about your research? What is the big picture?

4. When complete, what one point you want to leave with your readers? What 3 sub-points do you want to convey?

5. Which theories or methodologies will you use? Why is that the appropriate method?

6. What data, sources, texts, or objects are most appropriate for you to work with?

7. What will be the contribution of implications of your dissertation?