

Contents

Introduction	xiii
Chapter 1: Foundational Issues	1
MYTH #1: Students who don't finish their doctoral program will be considered failures.	1
<hr/>	
☞ The Concept of a “Textual Mentor”	3
☞ Common Problems Faced by Prospective Dissertation Writers	4
☞ Pre-Proposal Homework, Leg Work, Head Work, and Heart Work	11
☞ Summary of Main Points in This Chapter	12
☞ Suggestions for Discussion and Reflection	12
Chapter 2: Things to Consider before Deciding to Pursue a Doctoral Degree	13
MYTH #2: Students who complete their doctoral programs must certainly be brilliant.	13
<hr/>	
☞ Some Sensible—and Not So Sensible—Reasons for Pursuing a Doctorate	14
☞ Common Reasons for Dropping Out	17
☞ Knowing the Demands, Procedures, and Resources at Your University	19
☞ L2 Issues	23
☞ Quality-of-Life Issues	24
☞ Summary of Main Points in This Chapter	29
☞ Suggestions for Discussion and Reflection	30

Chapter 3: Writing Research Memos and Dissertation Journals	31
MYTH #3: Personal and reflective writing is not essential and is therefore a waste of time.	31
<hr/>	
☞ Writing about Readings	35
☞ Writing about Ideas and Experiences	37
☞ Writing about Decisions	40
☞ Writing about Emotions	41
☞ Concluding Cautions	42
☞ Two Sample Writings	43
☞ Summary of Main Points in This Chapter	45
☞ Suggestions for Discussion and Reflection	46
Chapter 4: Initial Thoughts on Topics	47
Myth #4: A doctoral dissertation topic needs to aim for the goals of objectivity and truth.	47
<hr/>	
☞ Some Common Problems with Topic Development	49
☞ Where Ideas for Topics Come From	54
☞ Constructing a Topic That Is Unique To You	56
☞ Choosing a Quantitative, Mixed-Method, or Qualitative Approach That Fits Your Topic	57
☞ Issues of Access, Consent, and IRB Approval	60
☞ Issues of Multiple Languages	61
☞ Your Role in Your Topic	62
☞ Summary of Main Points in This Chapter	63
☞ Suggestions for Discussion and Reflection	64

Chapter 5: Reading in the Early Stages	65
MYTH #5: It is important to read every word of readings related to your doctoral study.	65
<hr/>	
☞ Reading A Lot, or Not, Early in the Dissertation Journey	68
☞ Locating and Evaluating Materials	72
☞ Conceptual vs. Empirical Readings	74
☞ Thinking Ahead to a Literature Review	77
☞ Summary of Main Points in This Chapter	78
☞ Suggestions for Discussion and Reflection	79
Chapter 6: Thinking Theoretically and Conceptually	81
MYTH #6: Theory plays an essential and elevated role in doctoral work.	81
<hr/>	
☞ Fear of Theory	85
☞ Contrasting Theorizing and Conceptualizing	86
☞ Finding and Using Theories and Concepts	87
☞ Framing	89
☞ Avoiding Lip Service	90
☞ Being Patient	91
☞ Summary of Main Points in This Chapter	93
☞ Suggestions for Discussion and Reflection	94
Chapter 7: Finding Advisers-Supervisors and Mentors	95
MYTH #7: Professors can be trusted to know more than doctoral students will ever know.	95
<hr/>	
☞ Putting an Adviser's Role in Perspective	100
☞ Searching with an Open Mind from the Beginning	101
☞ Assessing an Adviser's Knowledge, Interests, Commitment, and Expectations	102
☞ Changing Advisers, If Necessary	104
☞ Managing Your Advisers	107
☞ The Rarity of Real Mentors	108
☞ Summary of Main Points in This Chapter	112
☞ Suggestions for Discussion and Reflection	112

Chapter 8: Seeking Supportive People	113
MYTH #8: Successful doctoral students work independently and autonomously.	113
<hr/>	
☞ Cohorts and Study Groups	117
☞ Individual Classmates	119
☞ Staying Connected to the Department	120
☞ Friends and Family	121
☞ Summary of Main Points in This Chapter	123
☞ Suggestions for Discussion and Reflection	124
Chapter 9: Topic and Project Development and Refinement	125
MYTH #9: Successful doctoral students aim for perfection in their doctoral dissertations.	125
<hr/>	
☞ The Normality of Zig-Zagging	129
☞ The Value of Meditative Time Alone and Long Talks	129
☞ The Value of Pilot Studies	131
☞ The Value of Presenting at Conferences	131
☞ Situating a Project in the Literature	132
☞ Situating Oneself in the Project (as Insider or Outsider)	135
☞ Seeking Ongoing Input from Professors, Advisers, More Advanced Students, and a Trusted Writing Partner	136
☞ Summary of Main Points in This Chapter	137
☞ Suggestions for Discussion and Reflection	138
References	139
Subject Index	149
Author Index	153