Adding Value: Off-Roading to Rethink the Needs of Graduate Student Emerging Scholars

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Schlossberg’s Transition Theory (The ‘4 S’s) 1995

1: Initiation
2: Selection
3: Exploration
4: Formulation
5: Collection
6: Presentation

Self

Social Support

Strategies

Situation
Session Objectives

- Learn about the University of Utah grad student context that led me to consider off-roading for something new to do with graduate students
- Discuss Kuhlthau’s (1991) Information Search Process Model (ISP)
- Discuss Scholssberg’s Transition Theory (1995)
- Utilize a matrix tool for a short think-pair-share exercise and report back
- Wrap-Up with lessons learned and examples of how these models/theories can be used at your institution
24,735 Undergraduates
8251 Total graduate students
594 College of Education
  Graduate Students
    366 Masters
    228 Doctorate

Top 10 Areas of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Name</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Leadership &amp; Policy</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Psychology</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Culture &amp; Society</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Psychology</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MST: Educational Psychology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graduate Student Services

- Graduate Student Spaces
  - Graduate Reading Room
  - Family Reading Room
- Patent searching support
- Connection to disciplinary librarians
- Support for Qualitative Data Analysis Tools (Nvivo & Atlas.ti)
- Statistics TA Service (Master student)
- Partnerships with:
  - Writing Center - Graduate-level Writing Center Fellows
  - Graduate School – Dissertation & Thesis Writing Boot Camps
  - Thesis Office
Ebb & Flow of Services

Workshop Participation Declining
Used to offer online registration:
• Advanced Research in the Social Sciences
• Introduction to Writing Annotated Bibliographies
• Introduction to NVivo for Analyzing Qualitative Data
• Advanced NVivo
• Need help with your Literature Review? Use NVivo (MAC) to help you enhance your analysis!
• Keeping Current in Your Research Area: Using Database and Journal Alert Services
• Writing Literature Reviews
• Developing your Research Process
• Strategies for Qualitative Research
• Formatting Your Thesis or Dissertation in Word
• EndNote Basic

Consultations & Classes Increasing
• Word of mouth & relationship building increasing # of consultations
• Extending the topics for support
  • Qualitative & quantitative research
  • GIS support
  • Research design
  • Altmetrics
  • Grant writing
  • Patent searching
Graduate Student Events

Graduate Reading Room
The Graduate Student Reading Room is available to registered graduate students at the University of Utah. Registration is required and available at the level 1 service desk. Some lockers are available for semester checkout.

Graduate Student Social
Each semester we host a Graduate Student Social Hour. Get free food and learn about graduate student services at the Marriott Library.

Dissertation / Thesis Writing Boot Camp
Are you ready to write?! Get hands on assistance each semester with your dissertation, thesis, and other writing projects.

• https://lib.utah.edu/services/education/gradstudents.php
Establish a Foundation for a Research Agenda

- Conducted a review of the literature
- Reviewed University of Utah graduate student institutional data
- Reviewed historical data (Dissertation Boot Camp survey and interview data, LibQual data)
- Analyzed available data
  - Established themes
  - Revisited the literature relative to those themes
- Will use the findings to design a needs assessment and use the needs assessment data to design a graduate student support action plan
Prior Research Skills and Lack of Preparedness
• Low average attrition rate for graduate student (Sowell, Allum and Okahana, 2015).
• Lacking research skills needed to conduct graduate-level research but they feel they have the skills (Gordon, 2002)
• Overestimating research expertise Bellard (2005); Switzer and Perdue (2011)
• Faculty advisors assume graduate students come to a graduate program competent in research skills (Rempel & Davidson, 2008)

Library and Research Anxiety
• Graduate students can experience library anxiety (Brinkman and Hartsell-Gundy, 2012; Cleveland, 2004).
• Feelings like an academic impostors (Craddock, et al., 2011)
• Need for perfectionism and graduate student study habits leads to procrastination (Jiao & Onwuegbuzie, 1998; Onwuegbuzie and Jiao, 2000).

Lack of Social Support and Connection
• Adult learners with a variety of responsibilities and wearing many hats (Kayongo and Helm, 2011)
• Value of research discussions or seminars & peer-to-peer information sharing for graduate students (George, Bright, Hurlbert, Linke, St Clair, and Stein, 2006; Monroe-Gulick and Petr, 2012)
• Recommendations that librarians adopt a ‘consultancy model’ for library services (Eddy and Solomon, 2017)
Literature Review Topics (cont.)

Lack of Knowledge about Library Services

• Coming in as new students from other institutions and lack library knowledge (Kayongo and Helm, 2011)
• Gaps between degrees can result in ‘rusty research skills’ (Harris, 2011)
• Importance of disciplinary differences (Renfro & Shields, 2018)
• Change and constant revisions for newly emerging topics (Renfro & Shields, 2018)

Connecting the Graduate Student Research Experience with Educational Theories

• Kuhlthau’s Model of the Information Search Process (1991)
• ACRL framework and threshold concepts for graduate students (Mays, 2016)
• Schlossberg’s Transition Theory (1984, 1995), or
• Adult Learning Theories for graduate students (McCall, Padron and Andrews, 2018)
Survey Data

Boot Camp Survey
• Boot camps build trust with the library and relieve anxiety
• Campus partnerships are important
• Social support and connection with other students across disciplines were surprising
• Increased knowledge about library services is helpful
• Increased information about requirements takes some of the mystery out of the process

LibQual Data for Graduate Students
• More positive than negative
• Increasing responses from grad student -117%
Open-ended comments themes similar to the interview themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LibQual Comment Question Categories</th>
<th># of Codes per Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library as Place</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect of Service</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Control</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14</td>
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</table>
Interview Data

Our Students are Our Best Advocates

• Research & Dissertation Anxiety
• The Need for Support
• Making Connections
• Feelings of Progress

“Making Connections”

“It also helped ... librarians not just providing resources but also a supportive approach with a non-judgmental attitude.”

(The Need for Support)

“Research & Dissertation Anxiety”

“I don’t think I would have the confidence to just email someone I haven’t met and say “hey will you help me?” And I think there’s a lot of anxiety. This is a pretty competitive environment, right? Am I stupid if I’m having to go ask a librarian for help on how to do this?”

(Reduction & Dissertation Anxiety)

“What surprised me is I’ve met a lot of people that are experiencing a similar journey ... we’re a crew of people. Writing can be very lonely and it’s been a lot of fun meeting this group of people.”

(Making Connections)

(Feelings of Progress)

“Feelings of Progress”

“I think if I could do it over again, doing all of this like the boot camp and writing center much earlier and just having someone to point out the writing center and mentoring would make things go much smoother, less lonely, and more productive. You can learn almost anything on your own, but it’s not the most efficient way.”

(Feelings of Progress)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation: Developing awareness but linked with uncertainty</th>
<th>Research &amp; Dissertation Anxiety</th>
<th>The Need for Support</th>
<th>Making Connections</th>
<th>The Need for Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection: Identification of the problem &amp; readiness to tackle it (temporary optimism)</td>
<td>Feelings of Progress</td>
<td>Making Connections</td>
<td>Making Connections</td>
<td>Making Connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploration: Encountering uncertainty &amp; feeling less confident Spinning my wheels!</td>
<td>Research &amp; Dissertation Anxiety</td>
<td>The Need for Support</td>
<td>Research &amp; Dissertation Anxiety</td>
<td>The Need for Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulation: Forming of a focused perspective and increase in confidence (Clarity)</td>
<td>Feelings of Progress</td>
<td>Making Connections</td>
<td>Feelings of Progress</td>
<td>Making Connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection: Pertinent information results in deepening involvement More confidence &amp; more questions!</td>
<td>Feelings of Progress</td>
<td>Making Connections</td>
<td>Feelings of Progress</td>
<td>Making Connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation: Satisfaction with searching &amp; application of learning</td>
<td>Making Connections</td>
<td>Making Connections</td>
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<td>Research &amp; Dissertation Anxiety</td>
<td>The Need for Support</td>
<td>Making Connections</td>
<td>Feelings of Progress</td>
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</table>
| **Self (Personal & Psychological)** | • Questioning of competence  
• Anxiety about not being able to do this | **Self (Personal & Psychological)** | • Feeling alone after finishing courses  
• Feeling like lack of direction | **Self (Personal & Psychological)** | • They try to measure personal progress but not sure what to expect |
| **Social Support (Relationships Communities)** | • They do not know where to go for answers  
• Sharing knowledge with peers | **Social Support (Relationships Communities)** | • Looking for other people in the same boat as them for support | **Social Support (Relationships Communities)** | • Students are helping to support each other and learning from each other |
| **Situation (Role Change, Timing & Triggers)** | • Worried about committing to a topic  
• Worried about their future as an academic | **Situation (Role Change, Timing & Triggers)** | • Feeling faculty expectations are too high  
• Confusion about faculty expectations | **Situation (Role Change, Timing & Triggers)** | • As they get closer to finishing easier to see themselves as scholar, a teacher etc.  
• Confidence can be dashed in one meeting |
| **Strategies (Coping Responses)** | | **Strategies (Coping Responses)** | • Get faculty to make referrals | **Strategies (Coping Responses)** | |
| | | **Strategies (Coping Responses)** | • Once they find one person – they can connect to others | |
• My priorities emerged as helping graduate students:
  1. Develop confidence in their ability to do demanding research (affective dispositions)
  2. Develop a more holistic cognitive capacity about their research process (cognitive abilities)
  3. Develop skills to successfully explore, document and present their ideas, arguments, and conclusions (actions and skills)?
• Librarians are good at helping graduate students take action and develop skills for finding, evaluating, and using scholarly resources in their writing.
• We need to see our graduate students through a more holistic lens that could help them overcome frustrations, develop confidence in their ability as a researcher, or progress through the process of maturing their emerging scholar identity
• How can we help graduate students cope with the stress of conducting graduate-level research?
• How can we scaffold graduate students across the research process?
### Kuhlthau’s (1991) Information Search Process Model (ISP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings (Affective)</th>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Exploration</th>
<th>Formulation</th>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>Confusion</td>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Sense of direction / Confidence</td>
<td>Satisfaction or Disappointment</td>
<td>Sense of accomplishment</td>
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<td>Optimism</td>
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<td>Frustration</td>
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<td>Confidence</td>
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<td>Doubt</td>
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<td>Clarity</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thoughts (Cognitive)</th>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Exploration</th>
<th>Formulation</th>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions (Physical)</th>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Exploration</th>
<th>Formulation</th>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>seeking</td>
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**Video** of Dr. Kuhlthau talking about her research with examples of student data.
Schlossberg’s (1995) Transition Theory (The 4 S’s)
Lesson Learned

• New type of workshop series
  • More than just database searching
    (https://utah.instructure.com/courses/353729 )
• Importance of face-to-face connections and regular contacts with graduate students
• Importance of campus partnerships (for variety of perspectives)
  • Coordinate workshops and events with partners
• We should conduct a needs assessment of graduate students
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 Stages of Kuhlthau’s Model of the Information Searching Process</th>
<th>Self (Personal &amp; Psychological)</th>
<th>Social Support (Relationships Communities)</th>
<th>Situation (Role Change, Timing &amp; Triggers)</th>
<th>Strategies (Coping Responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initiation:</strong> Developing awareness but linked with uncertainty Why can’t I do this?</td>
<td>Help them see they are not alone You can do this!!! – cheerlead - sincere encouragement</td>
<td>Listen &amp; offer own story Connect them to other students going through the same thing Provide time to talk</td>
<td>Encouragement – they will be different on the other side (“moving in, moving through, moving out”) Remind – this is a process</td>
<td>Concept mapping to visualize their topic Excel spreadsheets, tools to get organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selection:</strong> Identification of the problem &amp; readiness to tackle it (temporary optimism)</td>
<td>Encourage following their passion – to increase readiness Be enthusiastic and interested in their topic Provide support (options &amp; directions)</td>
<td>Meeting with advisor may trigger anxiety or motivation</td>
<td>Chunk it – to see progress Take deep breaths Go for it – focus in!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploration:</strong> Encountering uncertainty &amp; feeling less confident Spinning my wheels!</td>
<td>Be there for them when they get overwhelmed Recognize procrastination</td>
<td>Assurances Build relationship so they ask questions Offer your own story</td>
<td>Assurances – uncertainty is OK Ground interaction in adult learning principles</td>
<td>Shared box folder Break down task to see progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formulation:</strong> Forming of a focused perspective and increase in confidence (Clarity)</td>
<td>Check in and praise efforts Encourage questions &amp; uncertainty</td>
<td>Scaffold support based on focusing-in-on needs</td>
<td>Offer regular check in meetings to motivate and encourage</td>
<td>Reminder – This is a process Strategies for a research question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collection:</strong> Pertinent information results in deepening involvement More confidence &amp; more questions!</td>
<td>With more confidence – support that with resources and tools Just in time support – specific and relevant not the kitchen sink</td>
<td>Recommend they focus on seeing progress – more motivated and engaged</td>
<td>Talk about issues at a higher level Help them see the bigger picture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation:</strong> Satisfaction with searching &amp; application of learning</td>
<td>Excited to be finished! Sense of accomplishment or disappointed</td>
<td>Go to the defense, go to graduation</td>
<td>Mentor as a researcher Encourage reflection Encourage publication</td>
<td>Mentor in getting ready for the next stage Encourage connections Moving on</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Going Forward

• **Design and implement a needs assessment**
  • Specifically for my own liaison responsibility, the College of Education
  • Recruit collaborators from other disciplines, other institutions
  • Use the findings from the needs assessment to share with other departmental liaisons, if interested, to replicate in their own disciplines

• **Design self-directed resources (online or flipped) and be more explicit about marketing**
  • A program with outcomes that students can take one or several (needs-based approach)
  • Provide a community of practice for sharing
Questions?

1: Initiation

2: Selection

3: Exploration

4: Formulation

5: Collection

6: Presentation

Self

Strategies

Situation

Social Support