

## WRITING A POSTGRADUATE THESIS OR DISSERTATION: TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

Books	Book
Author (s)	Michael Hammond
Title	Writing a Postgraduate Thesis or Dissertation: Tools for Success
Series	1st Edition
Publisher	Routledge
City and Country	London and New York
Year of Publication	2022
Number of pages	172 Pages
Price	(Paperback) £18.99, (Hardback) £135.00, (eBook) £17.09
ISBN	9780367752828

**M. Zaenal Abidin<sup>1\*</sup>, Rangga Alif Faresta<sup>2</sup> & Malisa<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>English Education Department, Faculty of Languages, Arts and Culture, Universitas  
Negeri Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Department of Digital Learning, Faculty of Education, Monash University, Clayton  
3800, Australia

<sup>3</sup>Master of TESOL, Faculty of Education, Monash University, Clayton 3800, Australia  
(Corresponding author: [mzaenal.2022@student.uny.ac.id](mailto:mzaenal.2022@student.uny.ac.id))

**Abstract**

This book discusses students' thesis or dissertation writing skills in relation to the challenges faced by students in their projects. Looking to the future, the book provides insightful strategies on how to overcome obstacles in writing. Explicitly, this book is a highly recommended resource as a reference, strategy and inspiration to start writing. The author shares how to highlight literature, methodology and methods and emphasizes individual work to provide renewal and contribution to knowledge in his masterpiece as a scholar who indicates writing a dissertation or thesis requires the use of all three forms of knowledge, and should be approached as a cohesive and holistic process.

*Keywords:* Academic; higher education; teaching and learning; theses dissertation; writing

**Abstrak**

Buku ini membincangkan kemahiran menulis tesis atau disertasi pelajar dan cabaran yang dihadapi oleh pelajar dalam projek penyelidikan mereka. Melihat ke masa hadapan, buku ini menyediakan strategi yang bernas tentang cara mengatasi halangan secara bertulis. Buku ini sangat disyorkan sebagai sumber rujukan, strategi dan inspirasi untuk mula menulis. Penulis buku ini berkongsi tentang cara sorotan literatur, metodologi dan kaedah serta menekankan kerja individu untuk memberikan pembaharuan dan sumbangan ilmu dalam karya agungnya sebagai sarjana yang menunjukkan penulisan disertasi atau tesis memerlukan penggunaan ketiga-tiga bentuk pengetahuan, dan harus diberi pendekatan sebagai satu proses yang padu dan holistik.

*Kata kunci:* Akademik; pengajian tinggi; pengajaran dan pembelajaran; Disertasi tesis; menulis

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Academic writing requires a long process that, for many people, may be a difficult thing due to other factors, such as requiring a process like peer review (Biango-Daniels & Sarvary, 2021). Whereas using primary literature in introductory courses can be challenging for novice students who are inexperienced with the organization, conventions, and peer review processes that underlie technical writing forms (Round & Campbell, 2013; Sandefur & Gordy, 2016). At the same time, scholars such as (Majid et al. 2012) argue that academic research can be defined as systematic, rigorous investigation of a situation or problem in order to refine new knowledge or validate existing knowledge. In addition, Wallace and Wray (2021) assert that sometimes, writing is not far from the process of reviewing densely. It constantly needs to

create an argument intended to convince readers. Therefore, the book *Writing a Postgraduate Thesis or Dissertation: Tools for Success* by (Hammond, 2022) makes an essential contribution to the academic field due to it aims at being objective in its expression of ideas, and thus tries to avoid specific reference to personal opinions. Corresponding to Hammond's views, (Arnaudet & Barrett, 1984) also describe an academic writing that should imitate this style by eliminating first person pronouns as far as possible. Additionally and most importantly, Hyland (2002) indicates that impressions for writers play an important consciousness-raising role in assisting learners in developing their awareness of self-mention and in helping them to notice the consequence of their decisions, as opposed to focusing primarily on meaning. Finally, the purpose of this book serves as a fundamental guide for new academics, postgraduate students, as well as for earlier doctoral programs, in order to give a noteworthy masterpiece in their academic writing. This book is highly recommended as it is aimed at refining, expanding, and improving the quality of the thesis and dissertation designed to overcome the possible challenges associated before and during the writing processes.

The author provides an approachable manner and addresses a wide range of topics concerning the writing aspects. In fact, it is quite simple to believe that readers would have their eyes opened since it challenges us to reconsider where and how to start writing. The questioning idea that the author presented leads readers to be more active in evaluating and refining on ideas in relation to why it is important to write?. For example, the author highlights mind mapping strategies, organizing skills, and how to find relevant literature, until the revising stage (p.14). Interestingly, it keeps a readable example presented by (Hammond, 2022). Compared to other literature, in order to theorize student writing and how universities assist the growth of student writing, it has offered a critical frame (Street, 2009). It has been relevant since, and most recently, the twentieth anniversary of Academic Literacies theory has sparked a resurgence of discussion on its applicability in comprehending student's writing. As the context of higher education is evolving, with a focus on consumer compliance and student satisfaction, which also makes these new factors relevant (Aiken, 2023). Most importantly, the author discusses how to show the reader's ability and knowledge in writing. In several strategies, Hammond (2022) indicates a strategy that is perhaps useful, namely Survey, Question, Read, Recall, and Review (SQ3R). This technique is a mind-blowing input for readers and leads them to be more active. An additional important aspect is that the author proposes how to support strong arguments and techniques in summarizing and paraphrasing. To make it easier, the author provides text comparisons that greatly grasp the reader in summarizing techniques (see chapter 2, p. 38). Although as novice writers [reviewers] who

have much curiosity concerning methodology and how to deal with academic writing, we are thankful in reading the book. Hammond (2022) again successfully provides a comprehensive exploration of research methodology with an in-depth examination of ontology and epistemology, illustrating these concepts through a practical example; the analysis of riots.

A further discussion extends to the intricacies of data collection and analysis, emphasizing the importance of critical thinking throughout the process. Notably, Hammond (2022) reinforces each point with clear examples, facilitating reader comprehension. Hammond addresses the topic of riots, a seemingly broad subject that could potentially confuse readers. However, Hammond (2022) anticipates and mitigates this confusion by presenting two distinct views on the matter. He connects the example to people's daily experiences, focusing on urban rioting in modern Western democratic societies. The author elucidates an interpretivist perspective, emphasizing subjective meanings and individual interpretations within the context of riots (see chapter 3, p. 55). In addition, he introduces a positivist approach, concentrating on the relationships between variables or factors that may trigger riots (p. 55). This dual perspective serves as a valuable tool for readers, aiding them in contextualizing and differentiating between these two methodological approaches. As a result, it offers a systematic guide, presenting a step-by-step approach to assist readers in formulating and developing research questions effectively, whether pursuing qualitative or quantitative methods. This volume showcases a research methodology as a resource for novice researchers who are concerned about academic writing and will be able to apply the strategies discussed when they seek to imitate certain studies in a different setting.

Some further conversations is also addressed like research questions, compare findings to existing literature, generalize results, transition from description to explanation, articulate contributions clearly, and offer recommendations for stakeholders. Each of these aspects is presented in a well-managed and structured manner, providing readers with a clear roadmap for presenting their research findings. To enhance understanding, the author provides tables and diagrams, allowing readers to visualize and extract information with ease. This was echoed by (Abrahão et al. 2013) who claims that diagrams are effective to deliver the content and improve the comprehension of it. A good example is "Moving from Description to Explanation" (refer to p. 91), Hammond (2022) illustrates his concept by presenting a table that distinguishes between types of reporting for quantitative data, qualitative data, and literature. Hammond (2022) attempts to clarify numerous voices and styles that can be employed in presenting a thesis or dissertation. His purpose is to guide researchers in

developing their unique academic voice through various approaches, including the standard, counter-cultural, and reflective voices. Hammond argues that the most essential components in academic writing include clarity, coherence, and critical analysis. Although both Hammond (2002) and Swales and Feak (2004) offer significant contributions on academic writing, Swales and Feak's work more focus on task-based instruction for understanding academic genres and rhetorical structures. On the other hand, Hammond's work strikes a balance between encouraging scholars to develop a distinct academic voice and respecting the rigidity of standard templates (see, p. 112). When compared to the more prescriptive approaches of Swales and Feak, Hammond offers a perspective that values individuality, reader engagement, and flexible structuring of academic work, while still acknowledging the importance of academic conventions. His arguments about clarity, coherence, and critical evaluation are essential contributions to the field of academic writing, offering valuable insights for researchers aiming to refine their scholarly communication skills. Moreover, his guidelines provide valuable recommendations for improving coherence and clarity while outlining the editing, proofreading, and revision processes. The critical writing chapter maintains a healthy balance between haughtiness and modesty by stressing the importance of linguistic choices, highlighting a practical approach to criticism through real-world examples, and promoting a thorough understanding of philosophical practices.

Lastly, Hammond (2022) examines the nature of writing and discusses obstacles and techniques, emphasizing crucial processes, including organizing, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and publishing. The data predominantly utilized in this book is gathered from literature reviews, including journal articles and book reviews. This data collection method may not be reliable for every condition, as bias could potentially occur due to the authors' backgrounds and perspectives. However, this book is suitable for postgraduate students as this book guides them through a survey of the literature, techniques and methodology, and the art of making a meaningful contribution that has been discussed by the author in this book. These sections assist readers in critically analyzing and synthesizing pertinent information and demystifying the intricacies of academic research. Furthermore, the author presents the thesis and emphasizes the importance of introductions, abstracts, and titles. Although standard formats are widely used, the book encourages readers particularly for postgraduate students who are doing research to think about other frameworks that might be appropriate for research narratives. One recurrent subject in academic writing is the holistic approach, which highlights the need for a well-rounded understanding of writing, research methods, and academic customs.

To sum up, the author's success in providing a combination of theory, written examples, and diagrams is a strength, especially evident in assisting in making sense of the discussions and the well-designed matching of reader comprehension levels. It provides conclusions and implications at the end of the conversation. Although it is written for a global context, considering the inclusion of topics such as language or tenses that are often used in academic writing, for instance, future tense, such as will, and or past tense used, would also be helpful to consider enriching the quality of the book, especially for novice writers. Despite this, it addresses rich subjects, conveying a wealth of knowledge input for discussion. This book's significance lies in discussing various voices and styles in academic writing, which attempts to assist scholars in enhancing their unique academic voice; the emphasis on clarity, coherence, and critical evaluation are three important components in academic writing for effective communication. Furthermore, his thorough guidance on organizing academic work, from crafting an engaging title to structuring a compelling introduction and summary, provides invaluable support for postgraduate students, readers in compiling their academic work. Therefore, to address the critique, it is recommended that writers and or readers be concerned about their use of tenses. Additionally, while Hammond's approach is comprehensive, beginners might benefit from supplementary resources that provide more step-by-step guidance on the basics of academic writing.

## **2.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The authors would like to thank all participating authors who contributed to the process of writing this masterpiece.

## **3.0 FUNDING**

This research was made possible by the support of the Education Fund Management Institution (LPDP) under the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia.

## **4.0 REFERENCES**

Abrahão, S., Gravino, C., Insfran, E., Scanniello, G., & Tortora, G. (2013). Assessing the effectiveness of sequence diagrams in the comprehension of functional requirements: Results from a family of five experiments. *IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering*, 39(3), 327-342. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TSE.2012.27>

- Aiken, V. (2023). Academic literacies and the tilts within: the push and pull of student writing. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 28(8), 2104–2120. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.1952565>
- Arnaudet, M. L., & Barrett, M.E. (1984). *Approaches to academic reading and writing*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Biango-Daniels, M., & Sarvary, M. (2021). A challenge in teaching scientific communication: academic experience does not improve undergraduates' ability to assess their or their peers' writing. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 46(5), 809–820. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2020.1812512>
- Hammond, M. (2022). Writing a Postgraduate Thesis or Dissertation: Tools for Success. In *Writing a Postgraduate Thesis or Dissertation: Tools for Success*. London and New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003161820>
- Hyland, K. (2002). Options of identity in academic writing. *English Language Teaching*, 56(4), 351-358. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/56.4.351>
- Majid, N., Ahmad, R. R., Din, U. K. S., Rambely, A. S., Suradi, N. R. M., & Shahabudin, F. A. A. (2012). Academic Research Process: A Review on Current Practices in School of Mathematical Sciences. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 59, 394-398. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.292>
- Round, J. E., & Campbell, A. M. (2013). Figure facts: Encouraging undergraduates to take a data-centered approach to reading primary literature. *CBE Life Sciences Education*, 12(1), 39-46. <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.11-07-0057>
- Sandefur, C., & Gordy, C. (2016). Undergraduate Journal Club as an Intervention to Improve Student Development in Applying the Scientific Process. *Journal of College Science Teaching*, 45(4), 52-58. [https://doi.org/10.2505/4/jcst16\\_045\\_04\\_52](https://doi.org/10.2505/4/jcst16_045_04_52)
- Street, B.V. (2009). *"Hidden" features of academic paper writing*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Received: 12 January 2024, Accepted: 20 June 2024, Published: 30 June 2024  
<https://doi.org/10.17576/ajtlhe.1601.2024.13>

Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills* (Vol. 1). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.  
<http://eli.johogo.com/Class/AWFGS.pdf>

Wallace, M., & Wray, A. (2021). *Critical reading and writing for postgraduates* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition.). London, England: Sage