Write Your Dissertation First and Other Essays on a Graduate Education

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The stories related in this book really happened.

A warm thank you to my many graduate students and colleagues who have inspired my life for more than 50 years of my academic career. Most of you will never know how much you contributed to making my career an exciting, challenging, and very enjoyable voyage. Thanks especially to those who were the participants in these stories.

A very warm thank you to my many colleagues and associates in AECT who have inspired me, encouraged me, challenged me, and have provided a professional family for whom I am forever grateful. You have made my life more rewarding than it ever could have been without your friendship and association.

A warm greeting to new graduate students who may stumble onto this book of essays. I so hope that the suggestions herein enable your professional experience to be more rewarding than it might otherwise have been.

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~ Dave Merrill
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PROLOGUE

After a considerable search, I finally located the seminar room on the top floor of the psychology building. In length and breadth, it was not a large room: however, the ceiling was perhaps 25 feet above the floor. High on the outside wall a dormer window allowed the warm Midwestern sun to stream into the upper corners of the room. In the center of the room 12 wooden chairs surrounded a large conference table. The hour to start had arrived and six students were already seated around the table.

At five minutes past the scheduled hour the professor entered and seated himself at the head of the table. He immediately removed a pipe from his inner coat pocket and from his side jacket pocket he fished out a tool resembling a Swiss army knife on steroids along with a packet of tobacco. Being a nonsmoker, I found the ensuing ritual of scraping, cleaning, and tapping fascinating.

Movement in the corner of my eye drew my attention from the ceremony at the head of the table, and my gaze widened to take in the rest of the table. To my astonishment, each student around the table was
holding a pipe and intently engaged in scraping, cleaning, and tapping with their own set of shiny tools. At the conclusion of the cleaning ritual, the professor carefully placed a pinch of tobacco in the bowl of his pipe. Each student in the room did likewise, like so many reflections in a house of mirrors. A lighter ignited the professor’s pipe, and six lighters flashed in response. Large spirals of blue smoke rose lazily toward the streaks of sunlight in the upper reaches of the room. Soon, the table was engulfed in a blue fog. Odors both sweet and pungent permeated the air.

The professor tilted his chair and placed both feet on the table. Six pairs of shoes joined his. As I stared at the soles of the shoes, a voice from the haze intoned, “Welcome to Experimental Psychology.”

My first class in graduate school had commenced.

More than five decades have passed since I was part of this seminar in experimental psychology. Hundreds of seminar sessions have come and gone. I’ve participated both as a student and, more often, as the professor. (I’m happy to report, however, that I never took up smoking a pipe and was
delighted when smoking was finally banned from my seminar rooms.) In these 50 years, I have had occasion to observe a range of activities that seem to significantly enhance the experience of graduate study. In this short collection of essays, I share a few of the lessons I’ve learned in those decades. My hope is that readers will find some of these lessons of value in their own graduate education.
Firstly, writing retrospectively means that your dissertation introduction and conclusion will match and your ideas will all be tied up nicely. Secondly, it's time-saving. If you write your introduction before anything else, it's likely your ideas will evolve and morph as your dissertation develops. And then you'll just have to go back and edit or totally re-write your introduction again. Thirdly, it will ensure that the abstract accurately contains all the information it needs for the reader to get a good overall picture about what you have actually done. A graduate school personal statement is an essay often required as part of an application to a graduate school program. It explains why the individual is suited for that program. Some schools provide a specific prompt for their required personal statement. Other schools have open-ended essays, which means the student can choose one or a few aspects of their life or personality on which to focus. A personal statement is important because it portrays your personal qualities and characteristics. Tips for writing your personal statement for graduate school. As it is the most unique aspect of your application, it is important to set aside dedicated time to write your personal statement. Here are some tips that can help your personal statement rise above the competition. In writing your essay, you may draw on your professional knowledge, your reading, and/or your general understanding of adult learning. This essay should be written in a more formal voice, as if you are already writing a paper for an academic assignment. You will not be judged for your opinion. As a general education teacher, in what ways have you collaborated with special education teachers and/or other service providers to address the learning needs of exceptional students in your classroom? OR. Describe your experience working with English Language Learners, gifted, or special needs students in your classroom and the types of instructional strategies you employ to support their learning. M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction. Writing a Dissertation. Writing a Thesis. Writing a Research Proposal. The Importance of Postgraduate Education. For many young people, college is mostly a way to get the education they need for further professional activity. Postgraduate education is not only a great way to boost one's career, but also a ticket to a new life of possibilities: if a person wants to change his or her lifestyle or profession (and they are often connected to each other), there is no better way than obtaining a set of completely new skills and fresh knowledge. Besides, mental activity can positively affect one's mental health, and even in such difficult cases as Alzheimer's disease, studying and using one's cognitive functions actively can significantly decrease the pace of the disease's development. IELTS Writing Task 2/IELTS Essay: You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Some people believe the aim of university education is to help graduates get better jobs. Others believe there are much wider benefits of university education for both individuals and society. Discuss both views and give your opinion. You should write at least 250 words. Sample Answer 1: Higher education plays a pivotal role towards an individual's professional life. Firstly, it is obvious that the primal objective of any university is to award a successful candidate with a professional degree. Although a degree may not guarantee a job, it is, nevertheless necessary to have one, as employers would not want to hire an individual without the right kind of qualifications.