

## **Book Review**

# **Change and Stability in Thesis and Dissertation Writing** ***The Evolution of an Academic Genre*** **Brian Paltridge and Sue Starfield**

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It has ten chapters, an appendix, references and an index.

The authors of this book have read many PhD theses and dissertations.

This book has an excellent introduction.

“Doctoral theses and dissertations, have been a relatively stable genre for many years. This has begun to change, however, especially as doctoral degrees are offered in an increasing range of academic disciplines where alternative scholarly forms are now being accepted for the award of the degree ....”

In **Chapter 2**, the authors traced the evolution and development of these over time. In this chapter, they conclude that the technologies impact the changes in the structure of theses.

The **3 chapter** extensively reviews the research methods used in past theses and dissertations. It discusses textography, which includes observations, document analysis, and other data sources. “A textography, thus, aims to provide an understanding of the context in which a text is produced to gain an understanding of why texts are written as they are as well as extend students’ understandings of the purposes for which they are writing” (Evans 2022).

**Chapter 4** reported on research carried out using a larger and more international data set to explore changes in thesis and dissertation types over time. Chapter 5 reviewed and extended it with a more recent set of doctoral theses to chart more recent developments.

**Chapter 6** deals with the Doctor of Education degree, while **chapters 7 and 8** discuss doctoral degrees in the visual arts and music theses. Using ethnographic interviews helps students and supervisors understand the challenges posed by these theses.

**Chapter 9** explores the ‘Doctorate by publication’, a collection of journal articles that have already been published or are about to be published. This is a relatively new form of doctorate in the humanities & social sciences. The genre shares similarities with the ‘prudential research article’ and the ‘more conventional’ doctoral thesis. Drawing on textual analysis of recently submitted doctoral theses by publications and interviewing students and supervisors, this chapter examines the challenges students and supervisors face and their decisions as authors and supervisors working in a relatively unknown territory. Chapter 10 explores change and stability in the field of doctorates and what the future holds

for the doctoral theses & dissertations genre. The chapter brings together the themes identified in earlier chapters of this book and looks at the implications for the future of doctorates as a genre.

This book is a fantastic review of literature on theses and dissertations writing. The readers of this book can avoid other similar contributions. This book has a lengthy bibliography supplemented with an index, besides an appendix.

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