

# Strategies For Successfully Completing a Dissertation: Lowering Anxiety, Managing a Project, Creating Theory and Thinking about Football

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Your Future



*Anxiety*



# Common Problems

- Can't find time to work on it for more than an hour
- After a while I lose my place and forget what I originally wanted to do





## BAD HABITS

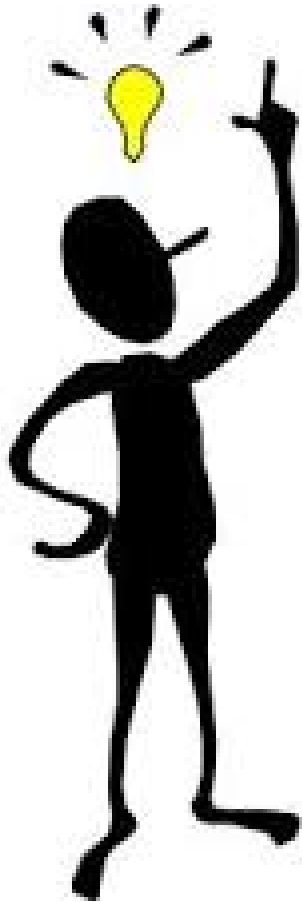
# Addresses Binge Writing



Blocking  
questionnaire

- Common Form of Writer's Block
- Wait till the last minute to do the paper
- Stress, sleeplessness
- Poor quality work

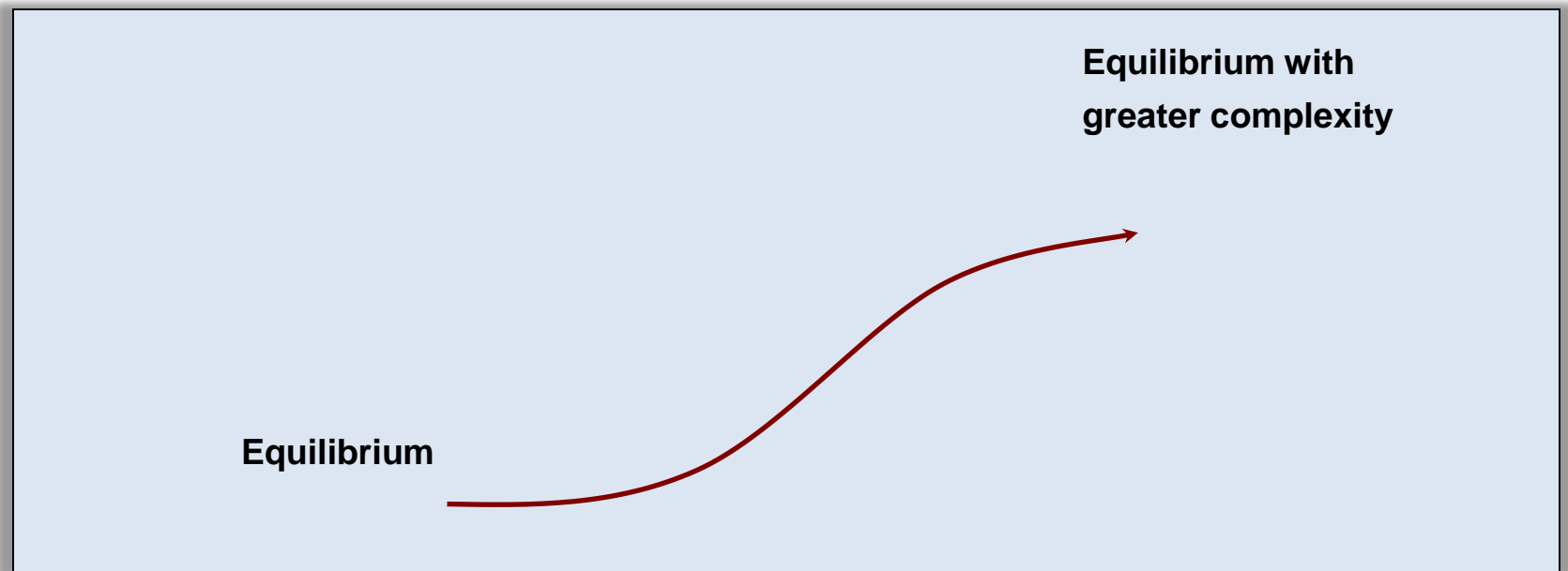




Alternative



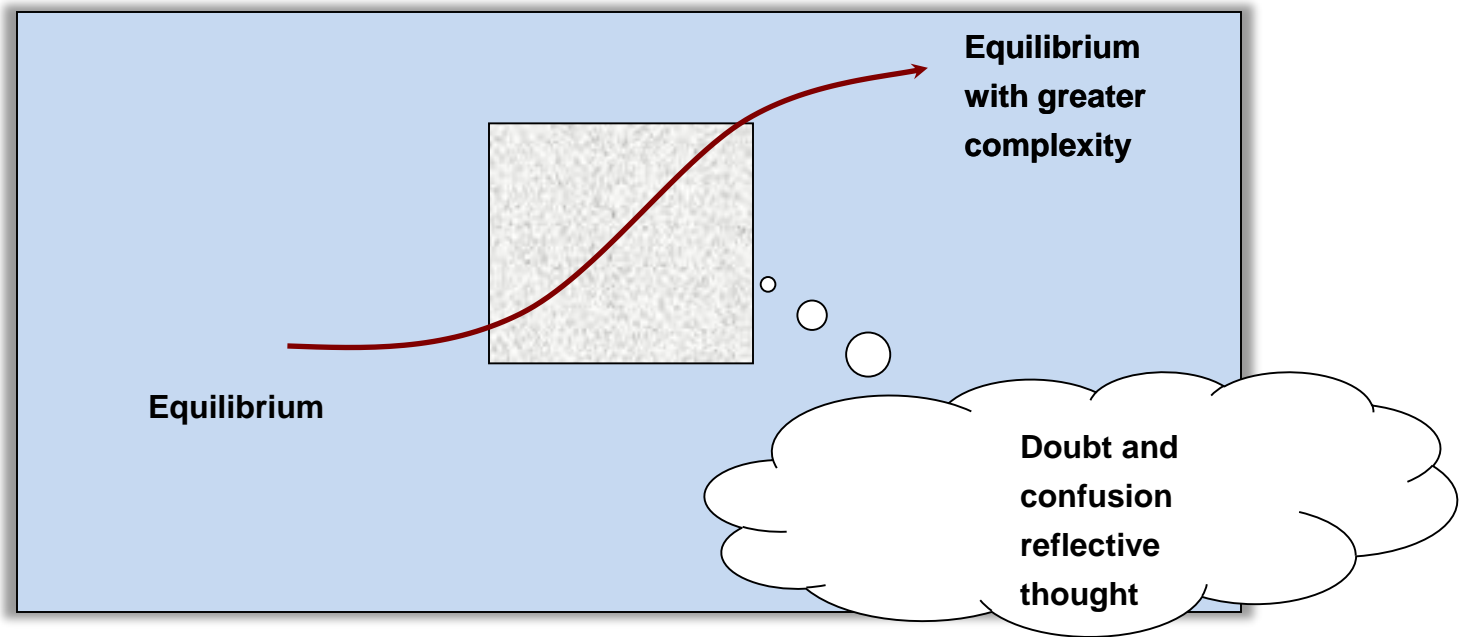
# Journey of learning or understanding while doing a paper



John Dewey – transformations in inquiry

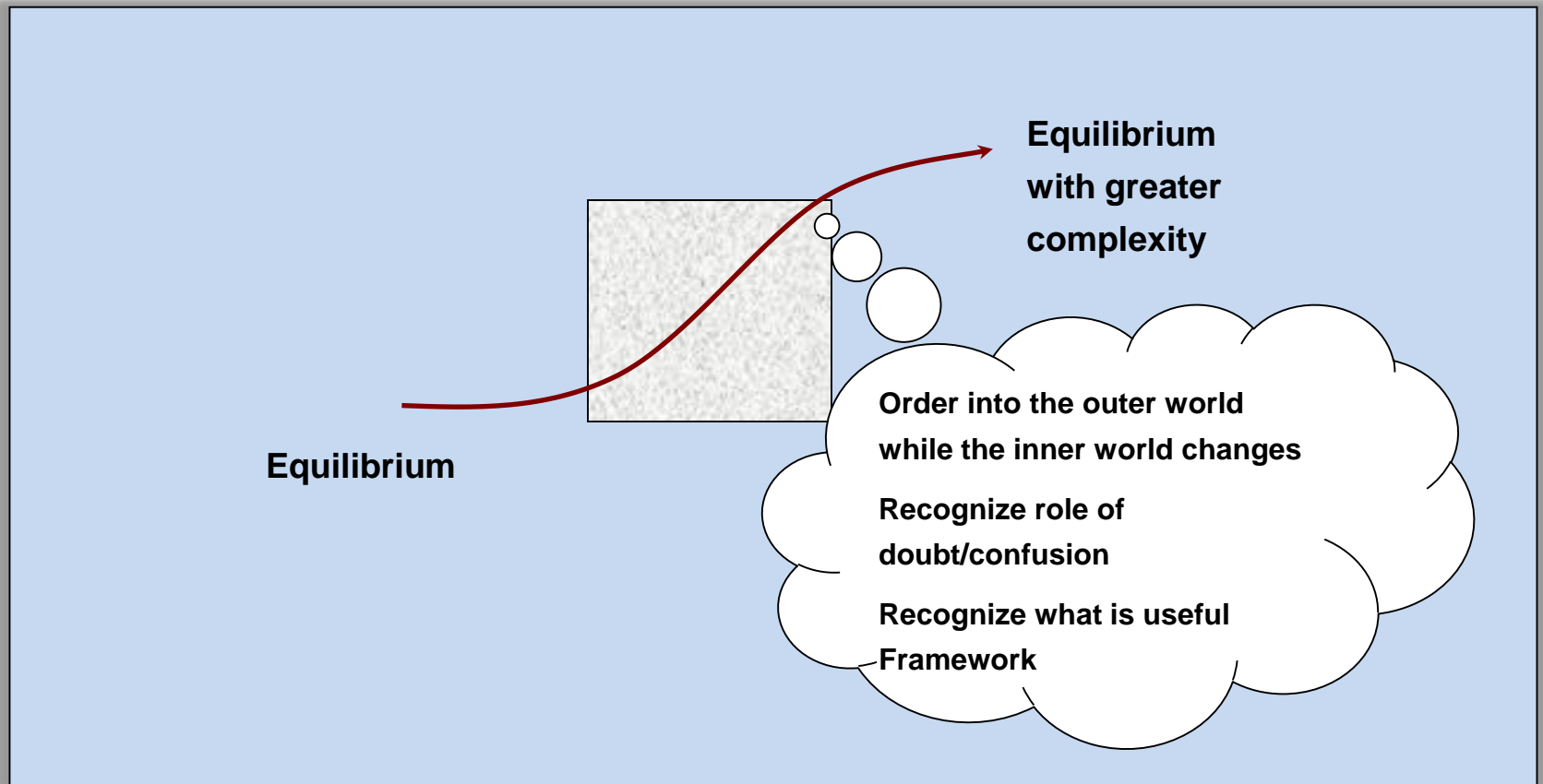


# As scholar confronts the unexpected while doing the reading- confusion-doubt



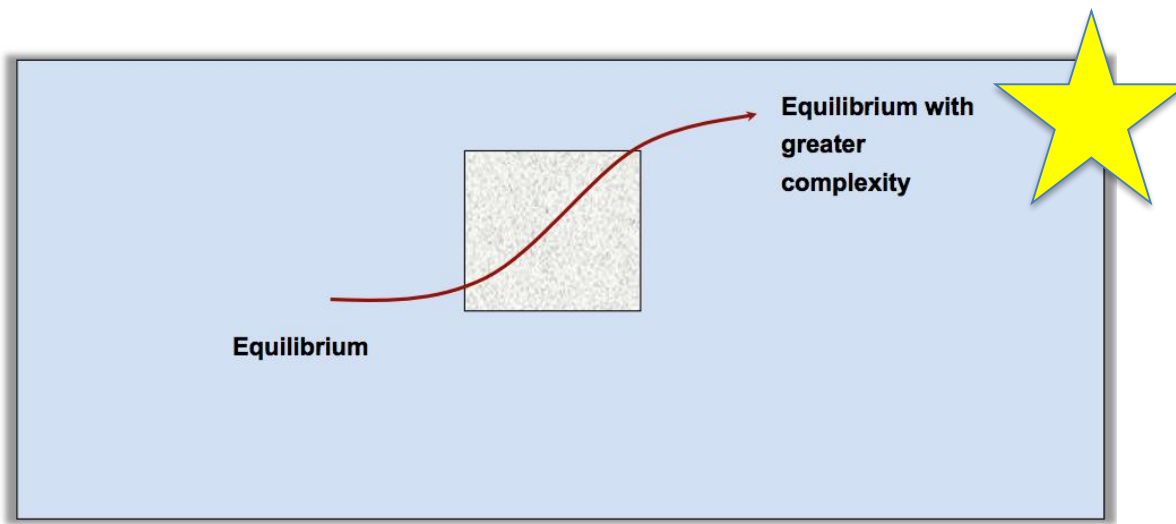


# Tools to manage the 'doubt and confusion' stage



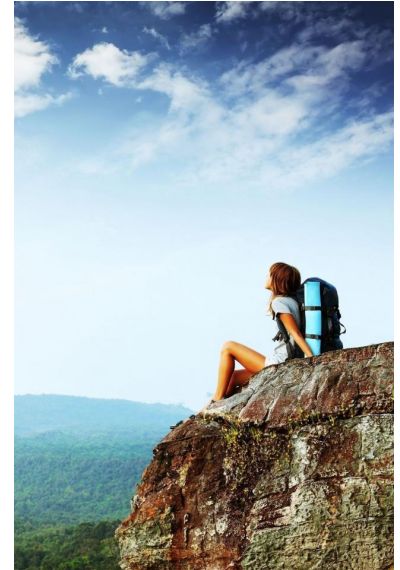
*Transformations of Inquiry*





Order and  
content allows  
space for

Creativity







# Tools of Scholarly Research

## 1. Step by Step Notebook

Project Management

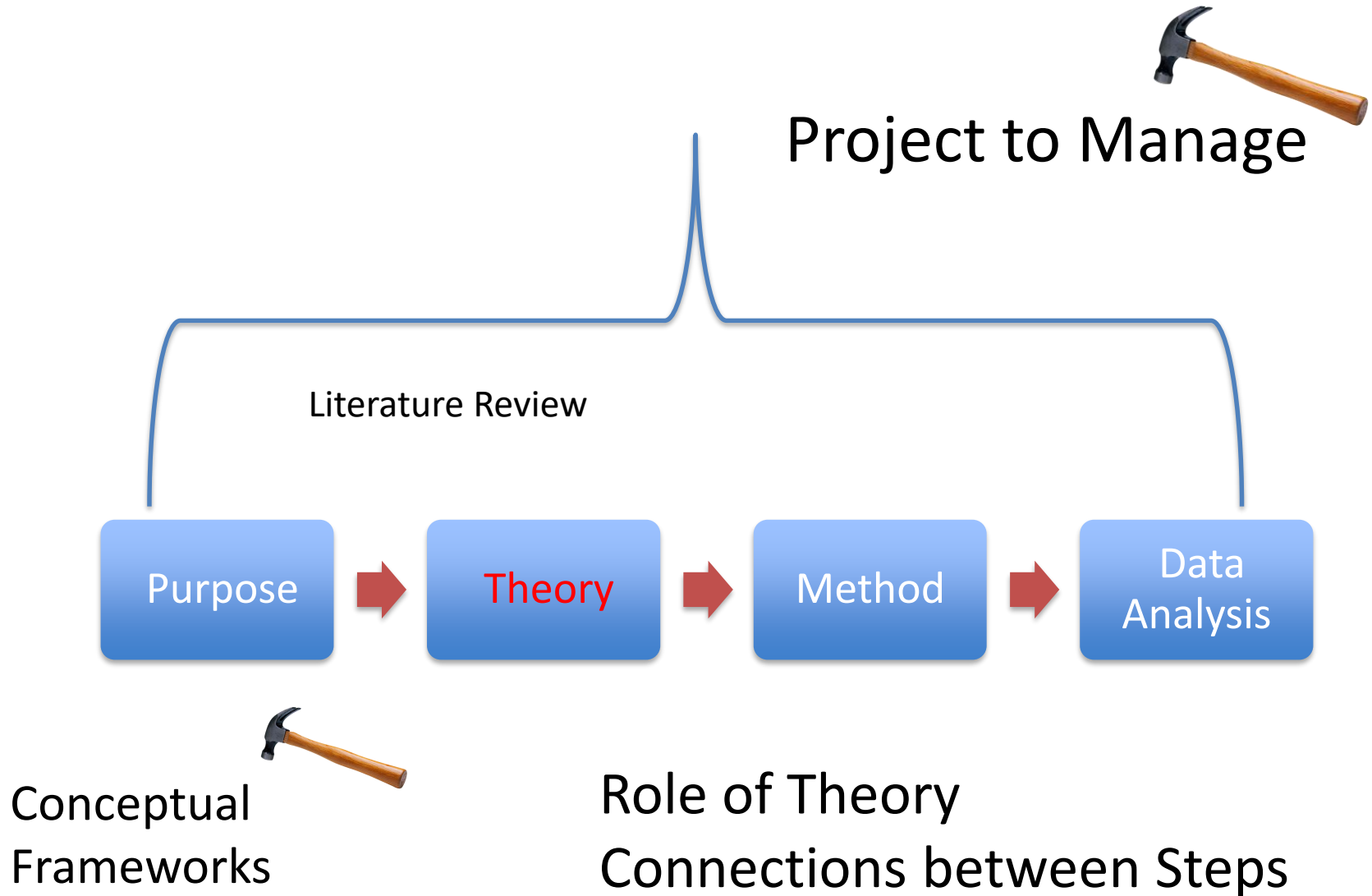
Time, Materials, Ideas

## 2. Conceptual Frameworks

Organize Ideas and Data



# Steps in Empirical Research Process







## Tools – cover today

- Conceptual Frameworks
- Project Management

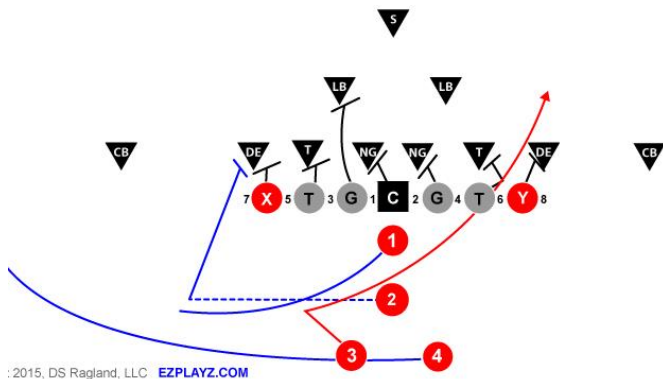
[Find playbook on Google books](#)



# Football Metaphors

## – doing empirical research

Play



Training & Skill Building





Astonishment





# Why?



Organizes

- Time
- Materials
- Ideas



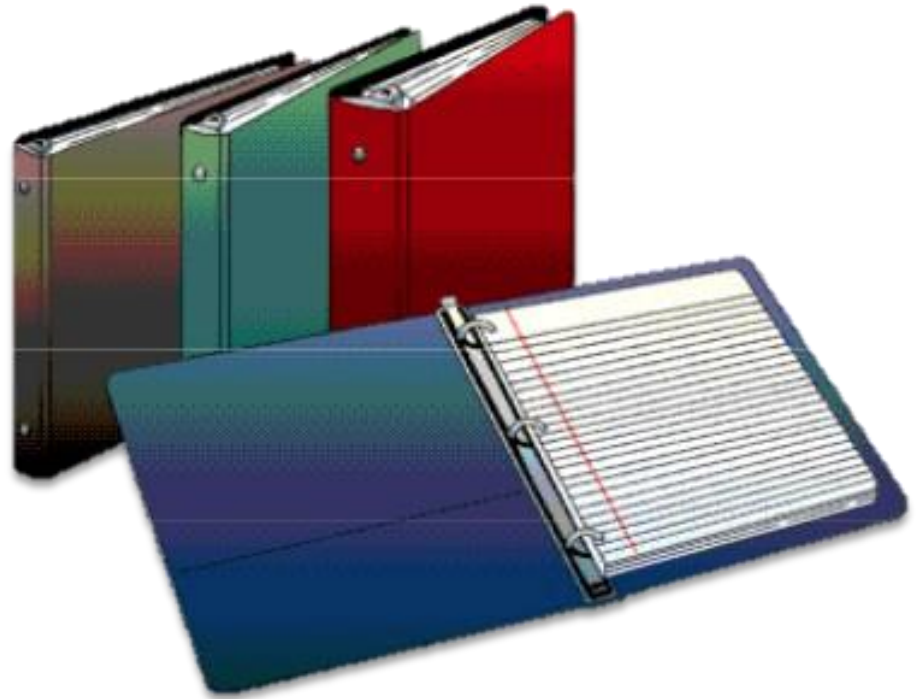
In Process Builds:

- Reading skills
- Thinking skills
- Writing skills



# Organizes Materials

- Three-ring binder
- Things to do lists
- Calendar
- Things to find lists
- Notes
- Outlines
- Drafts

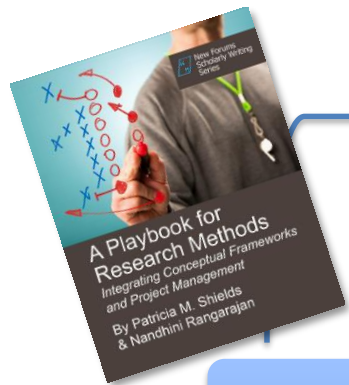


Called notebook  
“my Playbook”



# Steps in Research Process

Project to Manage



Purpose



Theory



Method



Data  
Analysis

Conceptual  
Frameworks

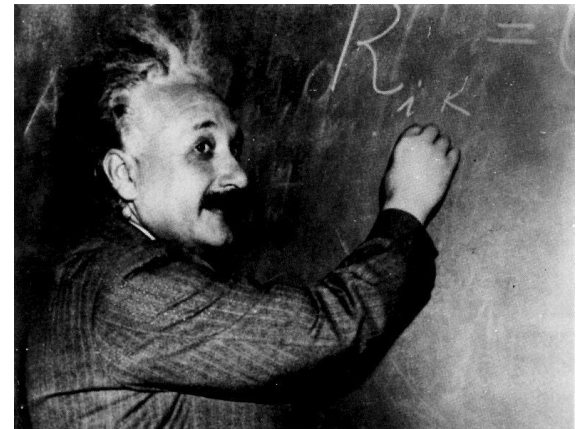
Role of Theory  
Connections between Steps





# What is Theory?

“Theory can be defined as a coherent group of general propositions or as a verified **explanation** accounting for known facts or phenomena (theory of relativity or gravity) Theories are used to **explain** reality or make **predictions.**” Johnson, 2010, p. 17



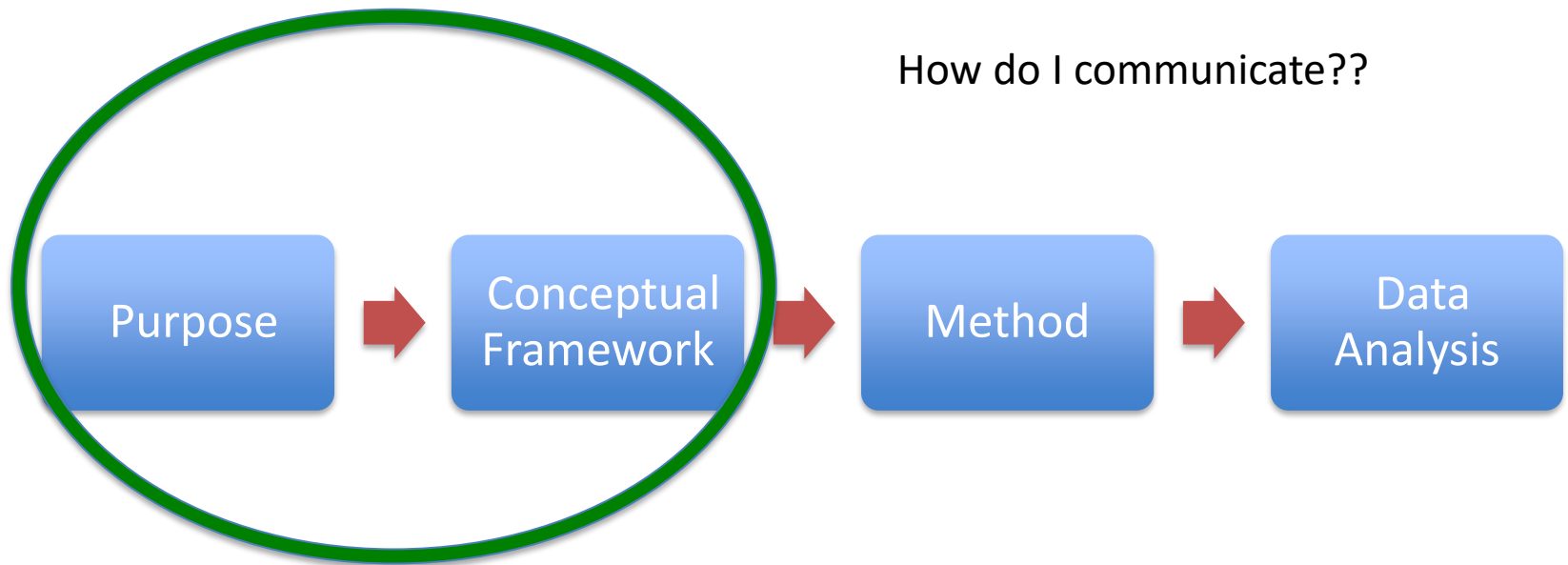


# Theory:

summarizes a hypothesis or group of hypotheses that have been supported with repeated testing. A theory is valid as long as there is no evidence to dispute it. Hence, theories can be disproven. If evidence accumulated to support a hypothesis, then the hypothesis can be accepted as a good **explanation** of a phenomenon. **One might say a theory is an accepted hypothesis.**



# Steps in Research Process



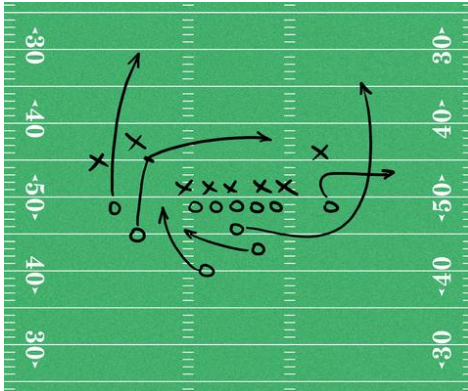
Conceptual  
Framework

Type of **theory**





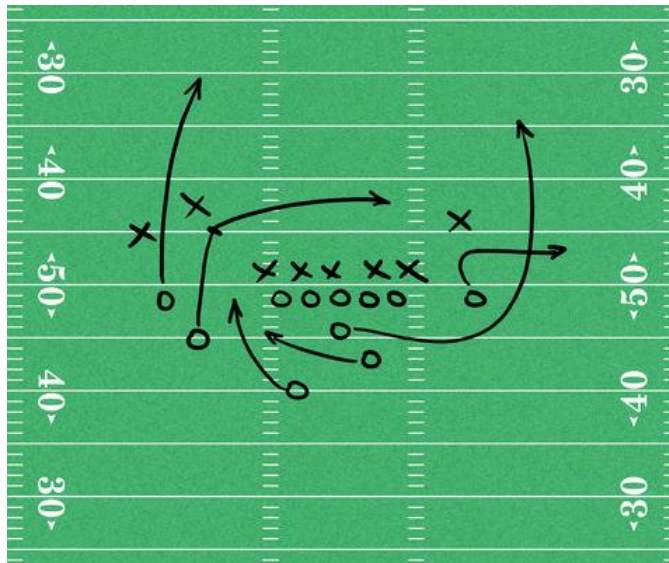
Plays are mental images/ideas that organize what players do on the ground in a particular situation



Plays do not make sense without a **purpose**

Plays are a kind of close to the ground Theory





**purpose**

Long or  
short  
yardage

**Play**

ideas that  
organize  
player  
actions

**How men move on ground**

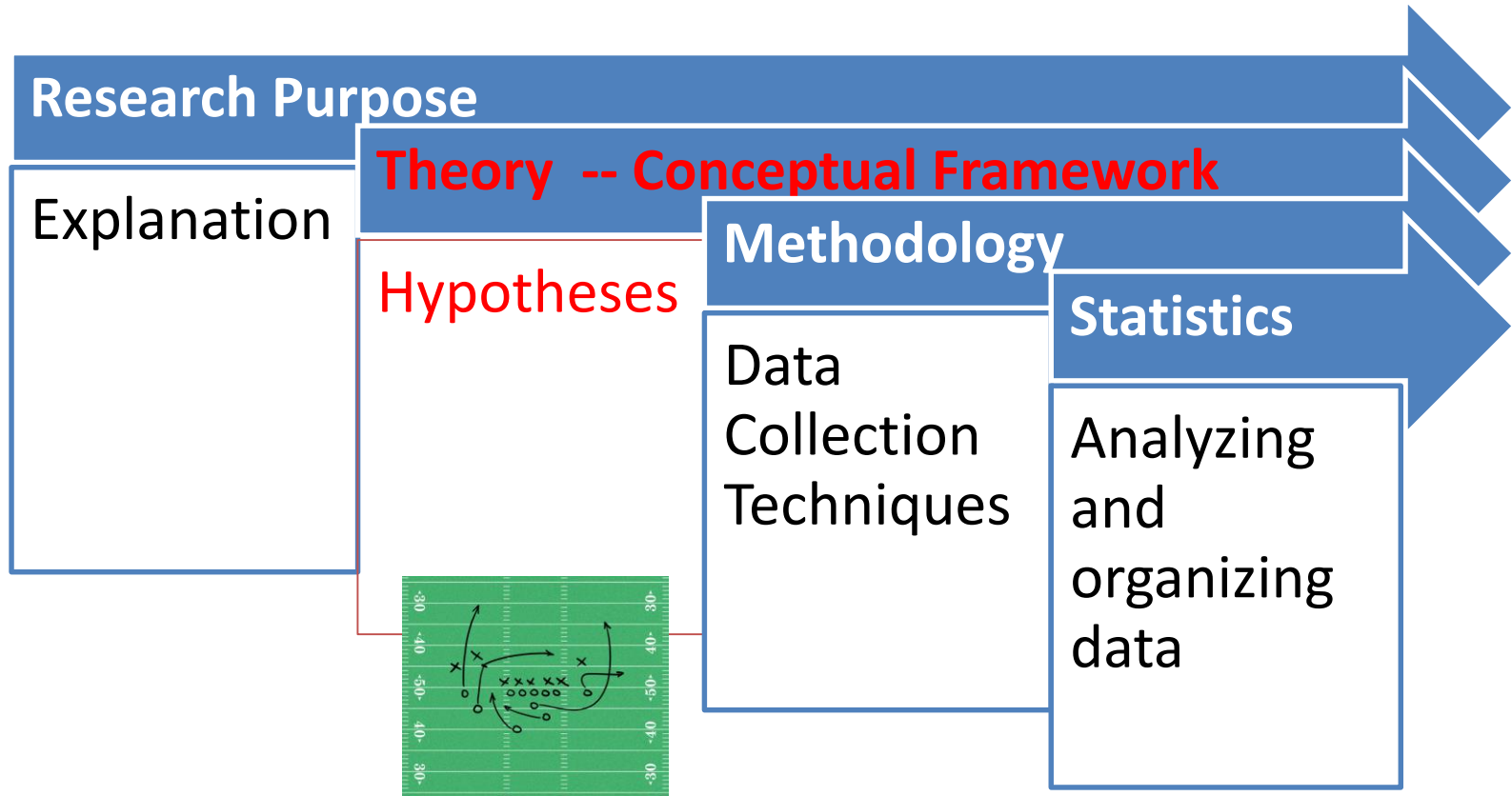
**Movement  
of players  
on ground**

**Results**

Actual  
yardage  
gained



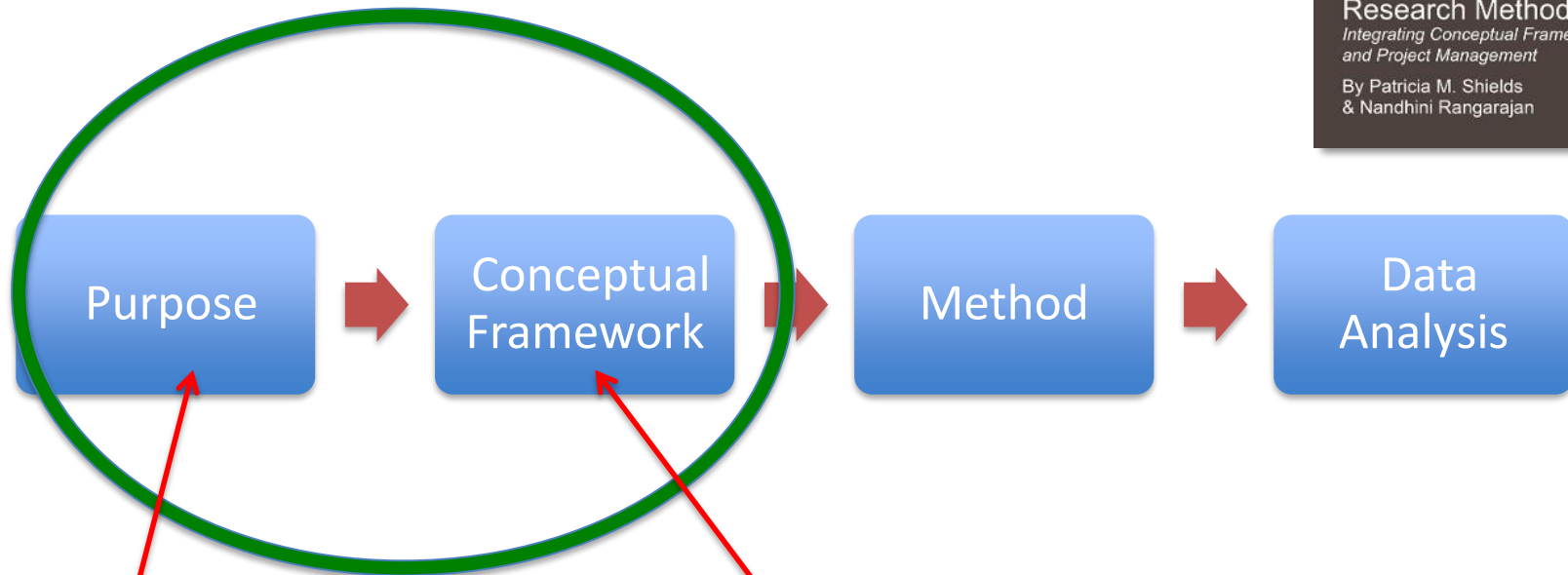
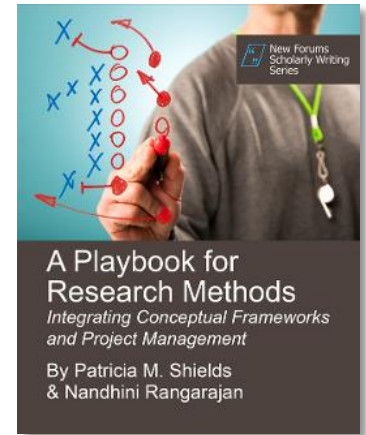
# Research Process Taking into account Traditional Research notions of Theory



Conceptual framework – close to the data theory



# Steps in Research Process

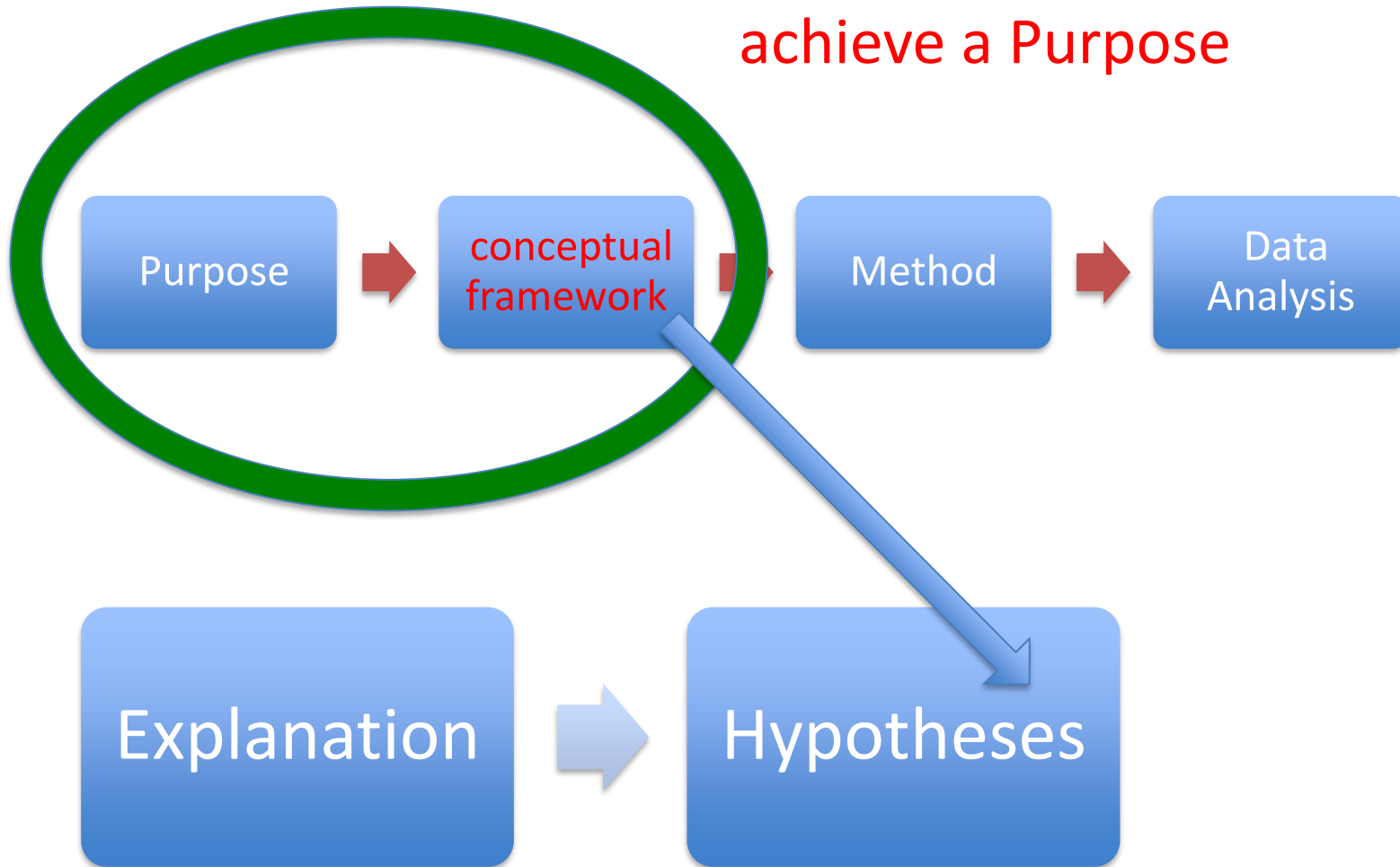


Emphasizes finding  
crafting research  
purpose/question

Emphasizes building a  
Framework – literature review



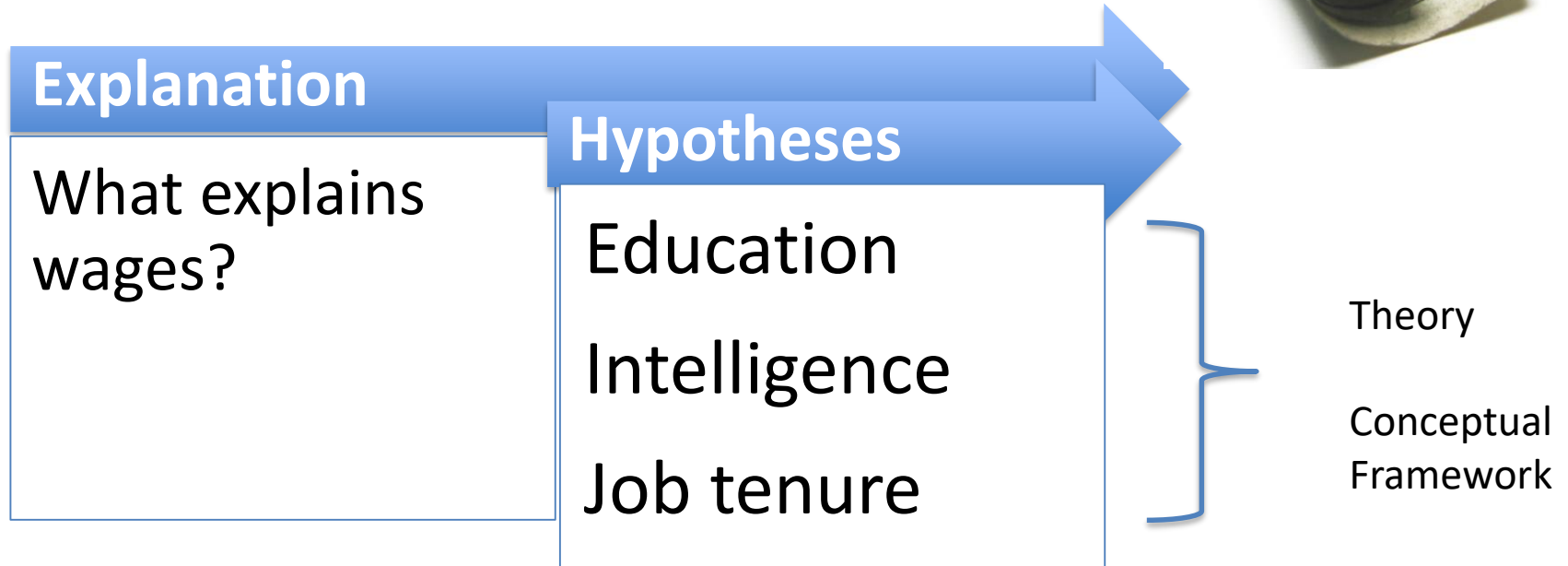
# Conceptual Framework: Organization of ideas to achieve a Purpose



Most common – def of theory

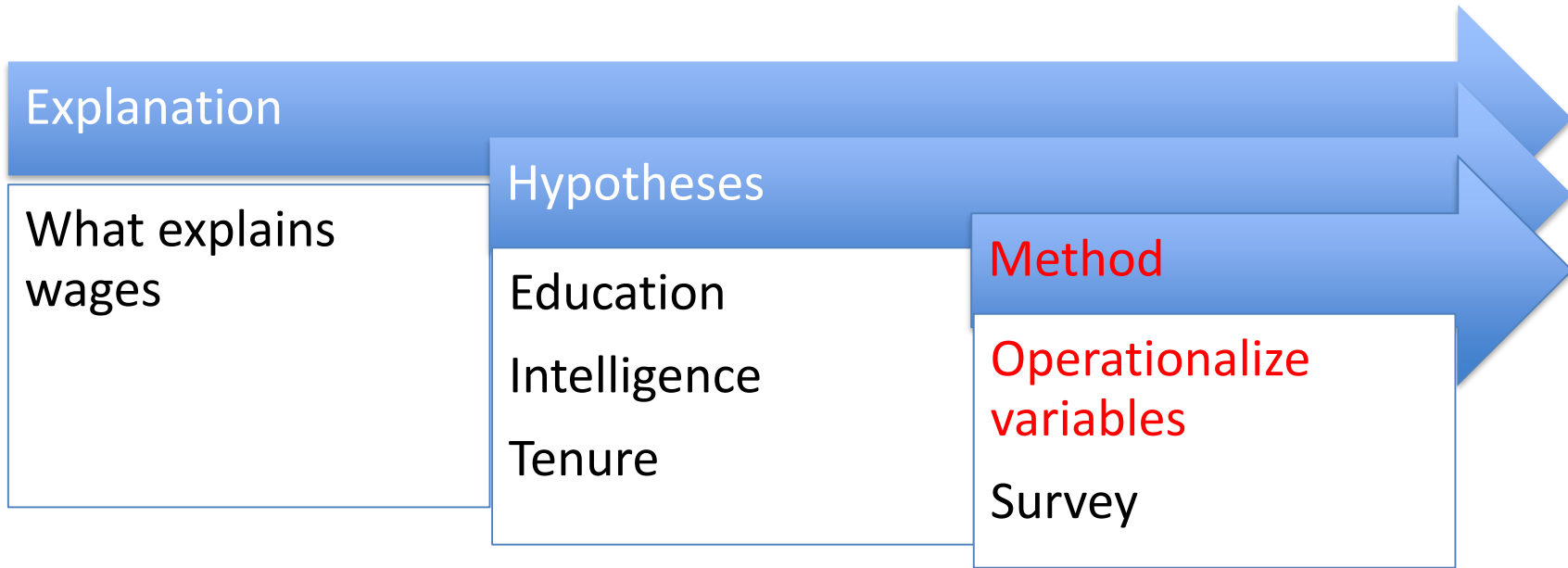


# What Explains the level of Wages?



- H1: As education increases wages increase
- H2: As intelligence increases wages increase
- H3: As job tenure increases wages increase



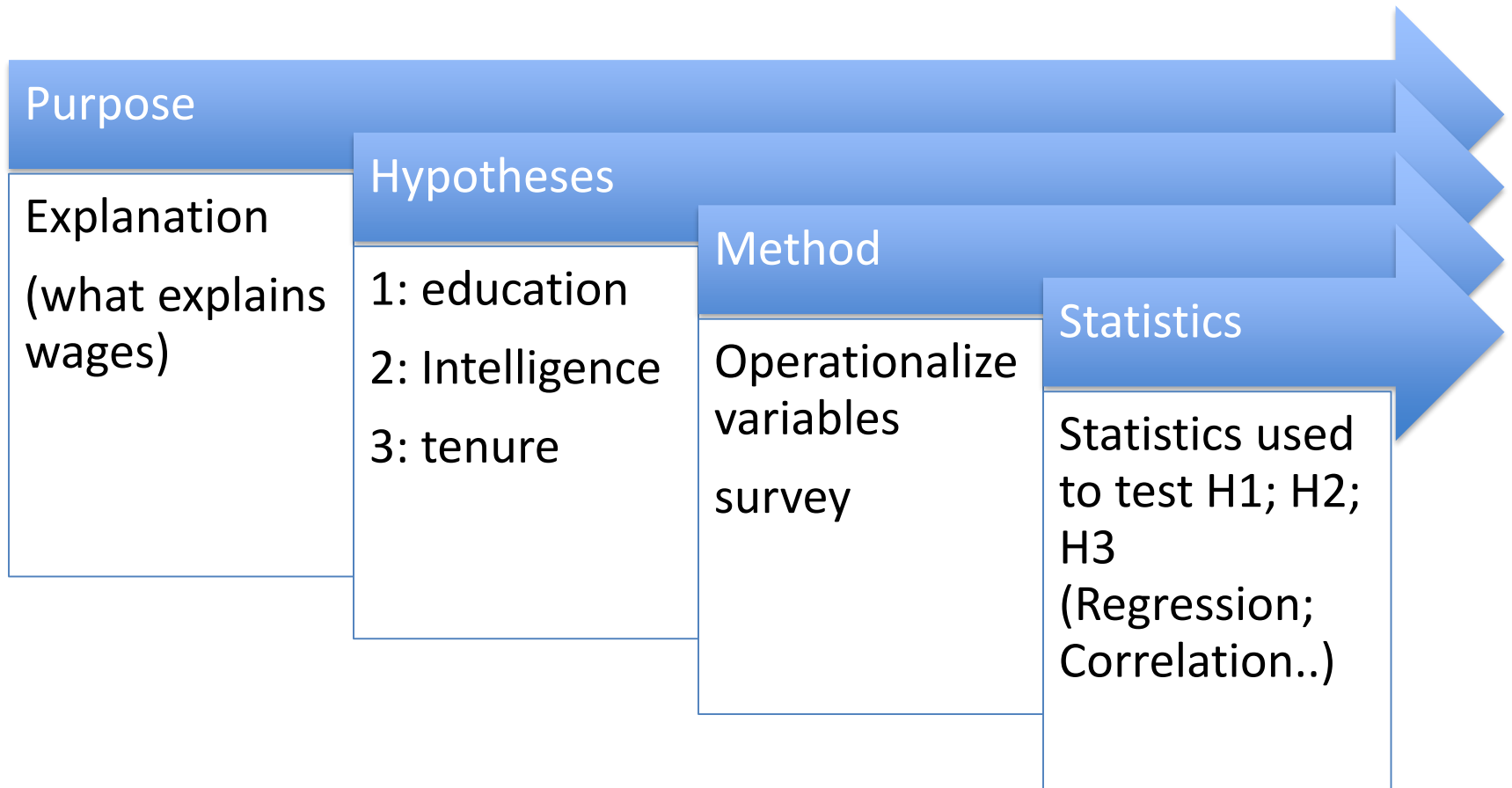


## RESTATE HYPOTHESES

**Dependent variable** – Wages (Hourly rate of pay \$)

**Independent variables** Education (years of school completed) H1  
Intelligence (IQ score) H2  
Tenure (months on the job) H3



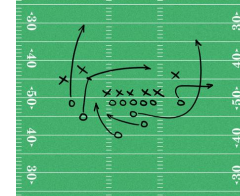






# PA has many types of purposes -- and Frameworks

Many Plays



## Purposes

- Explanation
- Description
- Exploration
- Decision making
- Gauging

## Conceptual Frameworks

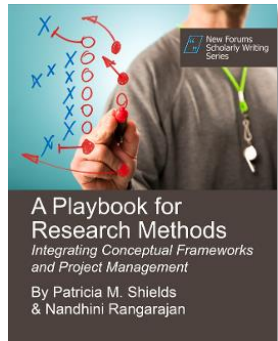
- Hypotheses
- Categories
- Working Hypotheses
- Models of operations research
- Practical Ideal Type



Purpose	Conceptual framework	Method	Data Analysis
Explanation	Hypotheses	Survey Existing data Experimental design	Multivariate statistics Regression, t-tests, correlation, ...
Description	Categories	Survey Content Analysis	Descriptive Statistics Mean, median, mode
Exploration	Working Hypotheses	Mostly Qualitative Case study, interviews, focus groups, direct observation...	Evidence analyzed by working Hypotheses
Decision Making	Models of operations research	Cost benefit analysis, cost effectiveness analysis, linear programming .....	Depends on the technique used
Gauging	Practical ideal type	Mostly Qualitative Case study, interviews, focus groups, direct observation...	Evidence analyzed by criteria of practical ideal type



Purpose	Conceptual framework	Method	Data Analysis
Explanation	Hypotheses	Survey Existing data Experimental design	Multivariate statistics Regression, t-tests, correlation, ...
Description	Categories	Survey Content Analysis	Descriptive Statistics Mean, median, mode
Exploration	Working Hypotheses	Mostly Qualitative Case study, interviews, focus groups, direct observation...	Anything goes  Evidence analyzed by working Hypotheses
Decision Making	Models of operations research	Cost benefit analysis, cost effectiveness analysis, linear programming .....	Depends on the technique used
Gauging	Practical ideal type	Mostly Qualitative Case study, interviews, focus groups, direct observation...	Evidence analyzed by practical ideal type category



[Google Books link](#)

**Traditional  
Methods Texts**



# Examples of Quality Student Research



- Award Winning (national, regional)
- Cited (Journals, Books, United Nations Reports, Dissertations, Policy documents)
- Widely Downloaded



Larry  
Douglas

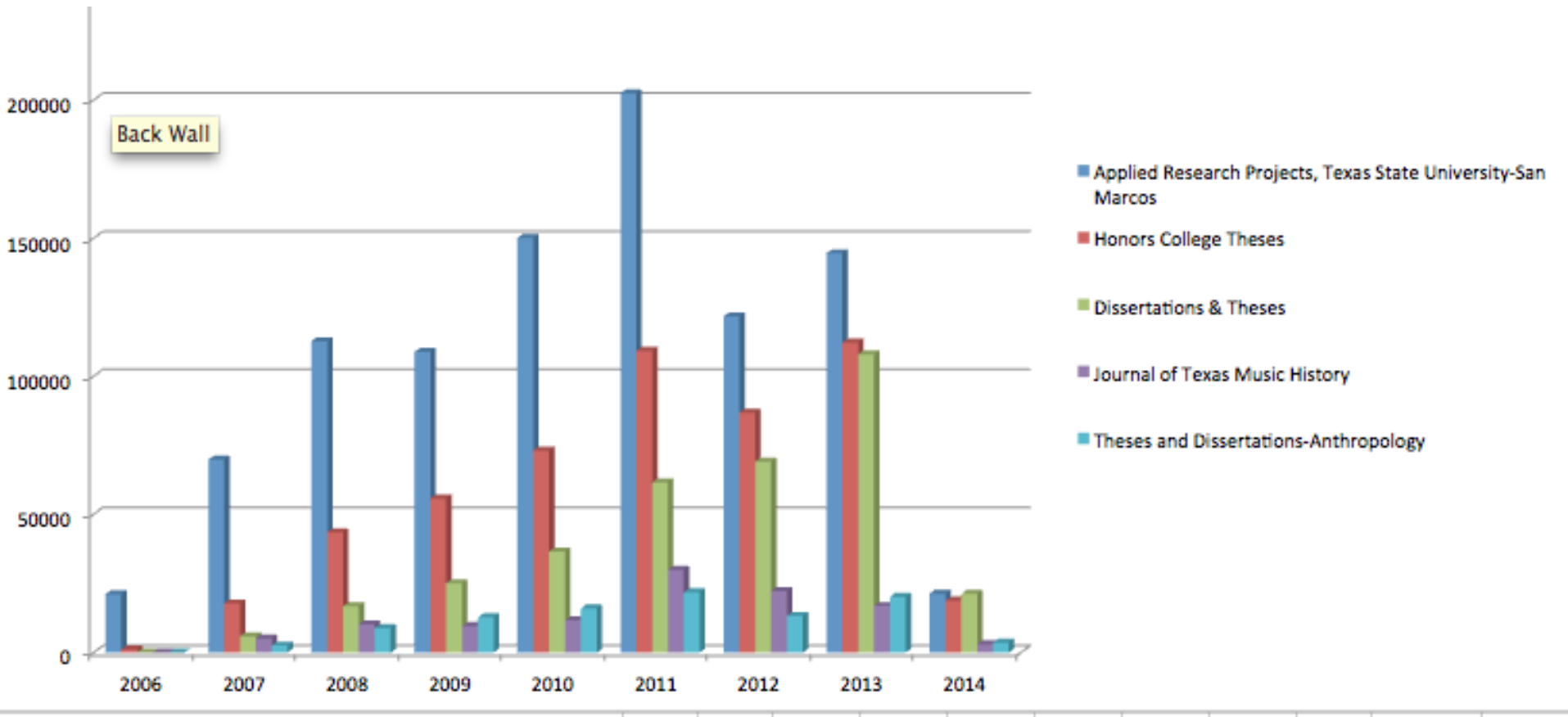


Lamar Collins



# Applied Research Project Downloads

## By Year



Texas State Top five Download Categories



# Where do Conceptual Frameworks come from??

- Literature Review
- Creativity

Like coach that **creates**  
Plays



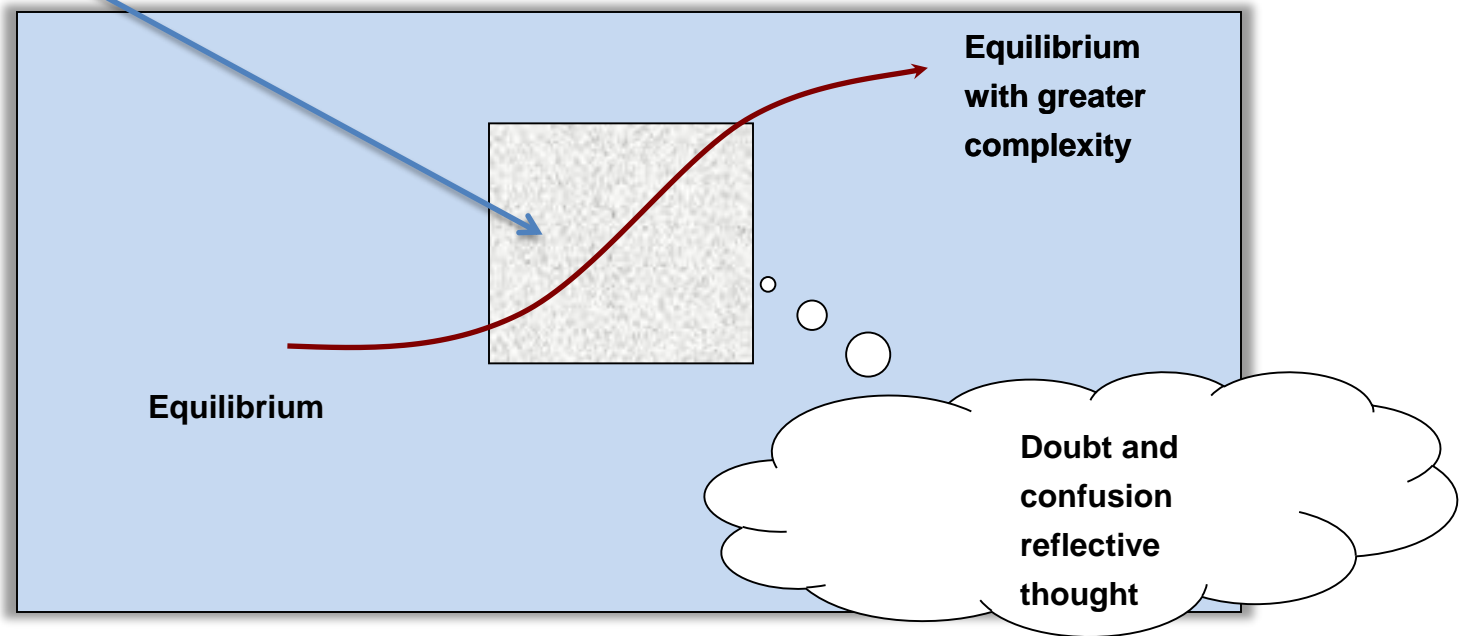


# Common Problems





# Anxious – stuck in confusion stage







## Project Management **System**



## Organizing

- Materials
- Time
- Ideas

## Build Skills

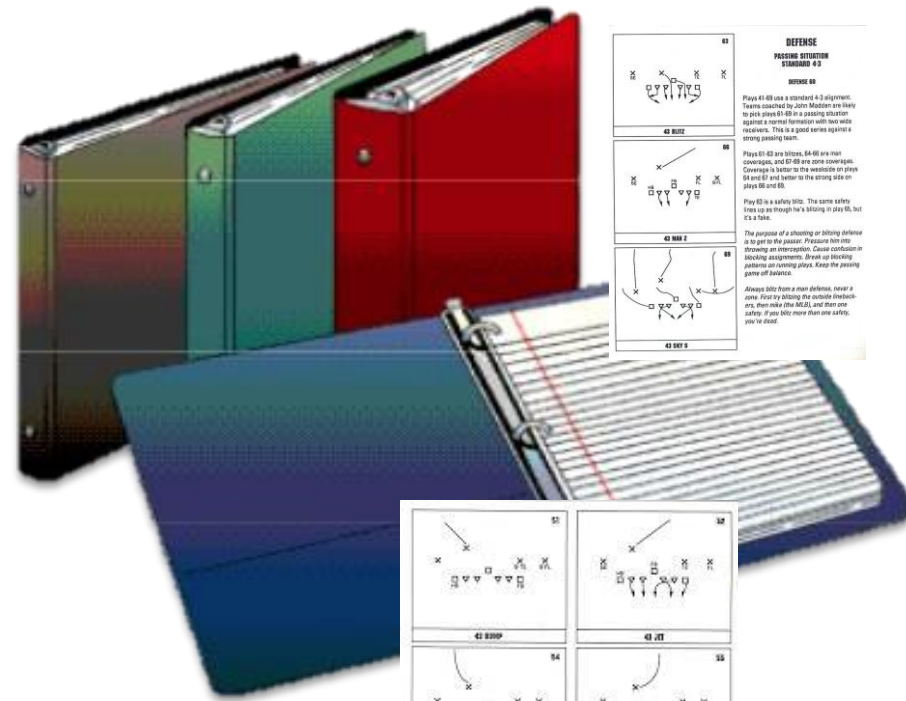




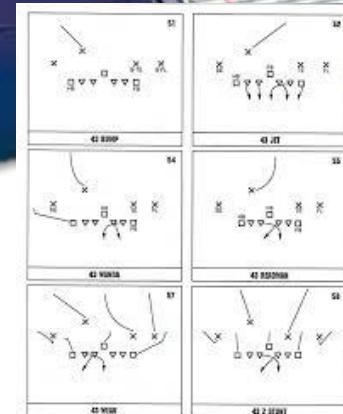
# Organizes Materials

## Tabs

- Things – to – do
- Notes
- Calendar
- Outline
- draft



Like a Playbook







## Things-To-Do List — Tab

- Project oriented - tasks for paper only
- Breaks the many tasks into small manageable pieces (15 minutes - hour)
- Keeps track of book chapter, articles etc.
- Links to notes
- **Emphasizes scholarly reading**
- Addresses procrastination - easy to return to work after a break



# Things-To-Do List Emphasizes Reading and Thinking

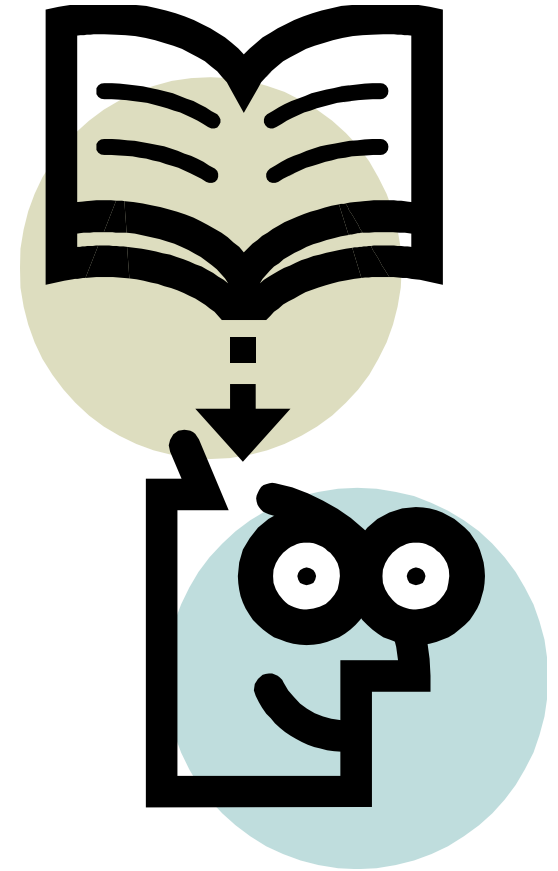
Important to read widely.

Important to comprehend deeply.

Ideas for paper come from the literature and thoughts of scholar.

A persons writing ability is constrained by their reading **comprehension**.

**It is impossible to write clearly about a subject you do not understand.**



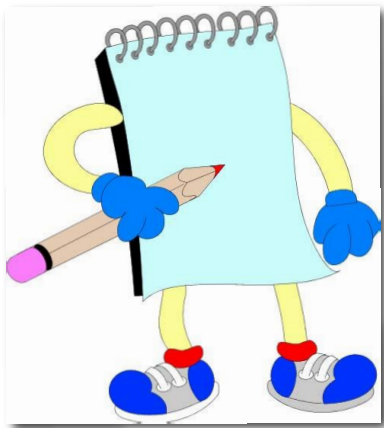


# Things-to-do list reinforces author's name



Date completed	
2/3/04	6. Read <b>Feaver</b>
2/10/04	7. Take notes <b>Feaver</b>
2/4/04	8. Read <b>Cottey et al</b>
2/9/04	9. Take notes <b>Cottey et al</b>
2/6/04	10. Read ch.1 Wilson
2/18/04	11. Take notes Ch.1 Wilson
2/6/04	12. Skim Ch2. Wilson





## Notes - Tab

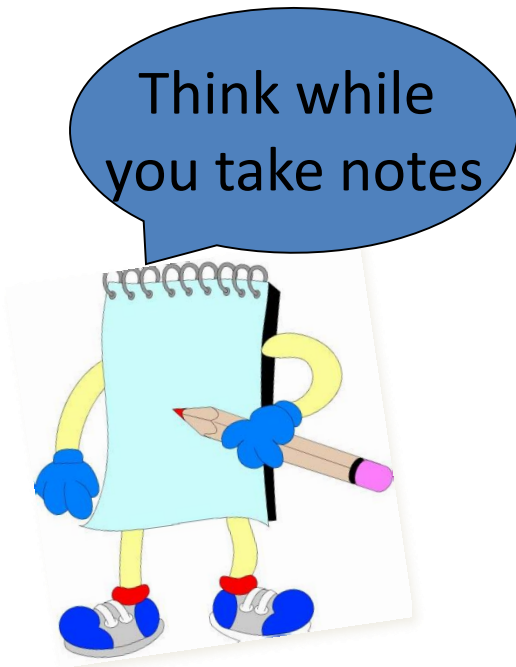
- Keep detailed notes in this section.
- Organize alphabetically by last name of author.
- Develops habit of writing.
- Builds reading comprehension.
- Ties directly to the integrated outline.
- **Essential part of process - this is where the student really learns the new material.**





# Tips on Note-taking

- Be self-reflective when taking notes.
  - ✓ Do you really understand what the material?
  - ✓ Less you understand the more detailed the notes should be.
  - ✓ Notes can be take on computer or by hand.
- Be sure the author's last name, year and page are on every page of the notes.





# Cottey et al 2002

p. 31      Says too concerned in lit about “threat of praetorian military intervention in domestic policies.”

p. 32      Should “reconceptualize in terms of democratic governance of the defense & security sector.”

Shifts focus to “the wider problem of **the democratic mgt and implementation** of defense & security policy.”

**PART OF BUREAUCRACY - job to implement policy**



# Organizes Ideas - Innovation



## Integrated Outline

- Before writing begins the outline incorporates the reading, notes, interviews
- **Entire notebook builds to create the outline**
- **Conceptual Frameworks** (p. 85  
playbook)



# Outline - Tab

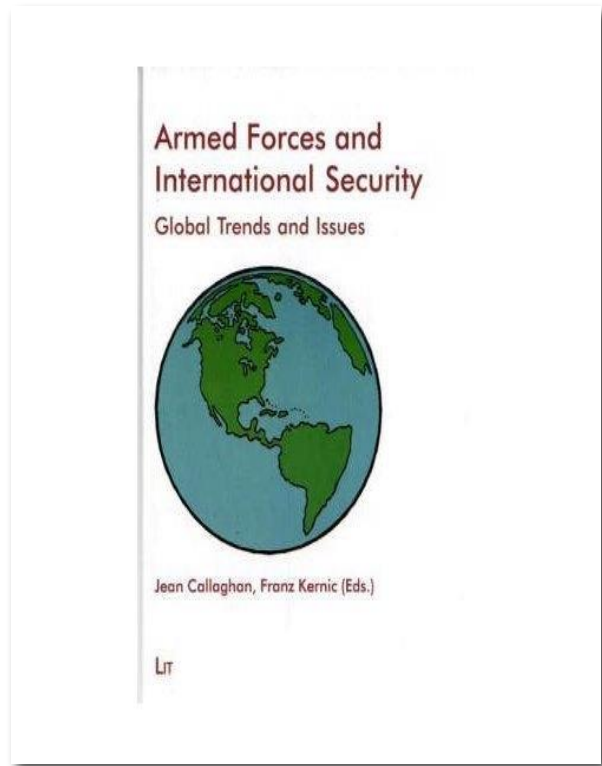
## *Integrated Outline*

- ✓ Outline that incorporates all of the notes.
- ✓ Begin drafting paper after integrated outline is complete
- ✓ Fewer frantic searches.





# Integrated Outline example



Chapter - The Bureaucracy in  
Military Sociology (8 -10 pages)

**Purpose :** “This chapter examines  
the intersection of military  
sociology and bureaucracy.”

2003



## The image shows the front cover of a book. At the top, the title 'Armed Forces and International Security' is printed in a large, bold, black serif font. Below the title, the subtitle 'Global Trends and Issues' is printed in a smaller, black serif font. In the center of the cover is a circular graphic of a globe, showing the continents of North and South America in green against a blue ocean. Below the globe, the authors' names 'Jean Collinghorn, Peter Kaciva (Eds.)' are printed in a small, black serif font. At the bottom left of the cover, the publisher's logo 'LIT' is visible. The entire cover is set against a plain white background.



Where would this fit in Outline??

## Cottey et al 2002

- p. 31 Says too concerned in lit about “threat of praetorian military intervention in domestic policies.”
- p. 32 Should “reconceptualize in terms of democratic governance of the defense & security sector.”
- Shifts focus to “the wider problem of **the democratic mgt and implementation** of defense & security policy.”

**PART OF BUREAUCRACY - job to implement policy**



# Integrated Outline Step 2

## The Bureaucracy in Military Sociology

### I. Intro

- A. Set the stage/Weber ideal (Weber, Merton)
- B. Purpose statement: **This chapter examines the intersection of military sociology and bureaucracy**
  - 1. Define mil sociology(**Siebold, H-J & Moskos**)
  - 2. Interdisciplinary study bureaucracy

Socio-(**Mills**)

Political Sci (**Allison**)

Policy science (**Wilson**)

### II. Military Bureaucracy

- A. Unique Definition - War (**Janowitz & Little p.27-28**)

B. Authority (**J&L p.27-28**)

C. Leadership decisions  
(**Allison**)

### III. Recent Trends

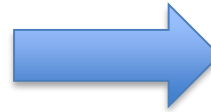
A. Bur & Civil-military relations

1.mature democracies  
(**Feaver**)

2.emerging democracies  
(**Cottey et al pp31-32**)\*

B.New Roles  
(**Mora, Parchomenko**)

### IV. Conclusion





# Example

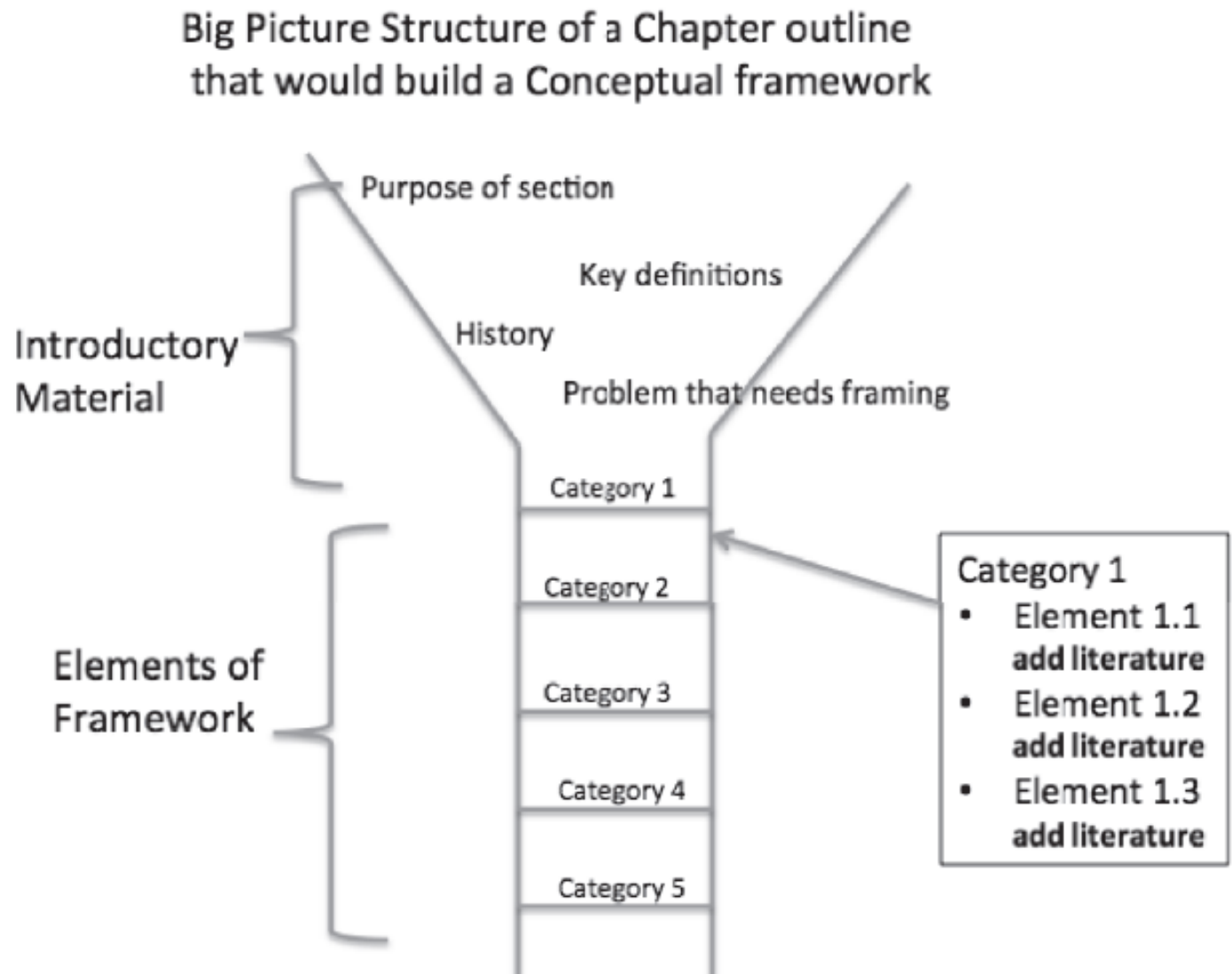
## *Paragraph with embedded references*

**Cottey et al.** (2002) examine civil-military relations in the emerging democracies of post-communist Eastern Europe. Like **Feaver** (1996) they believe there is too much concern in the literature over the “threat of praetorian military intervention in domestic policies” (**Cottey et al. 2002:31**). They call for a reconceptualization of civil-military relations “in terms of the governance of the defense and security sector” and the “wider problem of the **democratic management and implementation** of defense and security policy” (**Cottey et al. 2002:32**).





Figure 7.4 The Shape of an outline incorporating the Conceptual Framework



Playbook

p. 85



# Explanatory Research -- Studies with Findings

Table 7.1 Factors Explaining Residential Fire across Eight Studies (Huang 2009, p. 26)

		Dependent variable	Independent Variables that achieved statistical significance used in studies on residential fire*														
Study	Year	Residential fire Rate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Schaenman et al	1977	Intra-city	+	-	+												
Karter & Donner	1978	Intra-city	+			-	+	-	+								
Donnell	1980	Intra-city	+						+								
Munson & Oats	1977	Intra and inter-city	+				+	-		-	+	+	-	+			
Gunther	1981	Intra-city								-				+			
Fenner	1990	Intra-city	+				+										
Goetz	1991	Intra-city							+	-		+		-			
Jennings	1996	Intra-city		-					+	-							+

\*Independent variable codes 1= Poverty rate; 2= Parental presence; 3= Under-Education; 4=Family Stability; 5= Crowdedness; 6= percent owner; 7= Vacancy Rate; 8 = Income; 9 = Unemployment rate' 10 = Percent of non-white; 11 = Housing Conditions; 12 = Temperature; 13 = Property Value; 14 = Age of Structure; 15 = Population under age 5



# Drafts - Tab

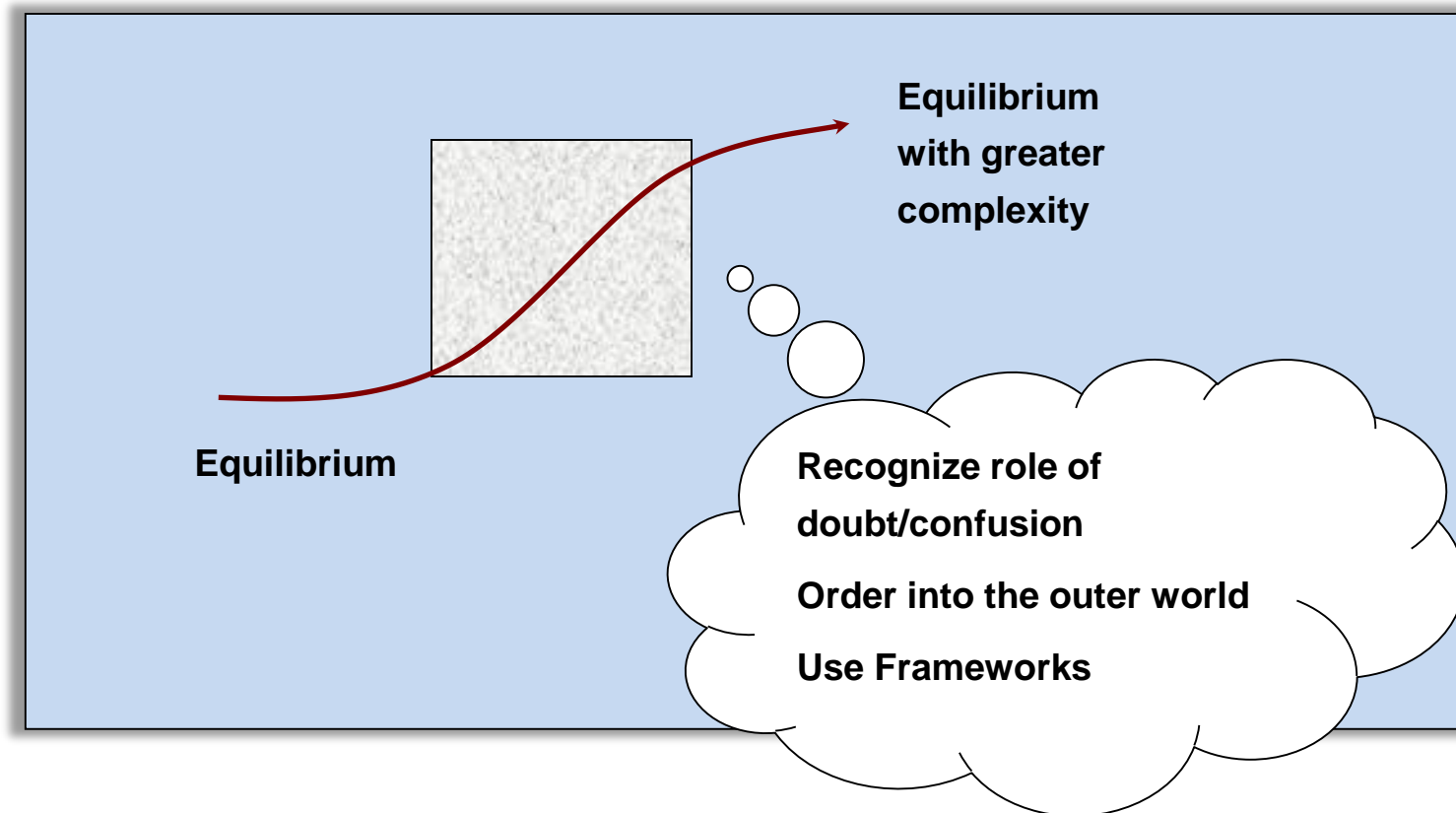


- Early drafts are kept here.
- Sculpture example.
- Edit on hard copy and then make the corrections.
- Aesthetic, calm location





## *Transformations of Inquiry*

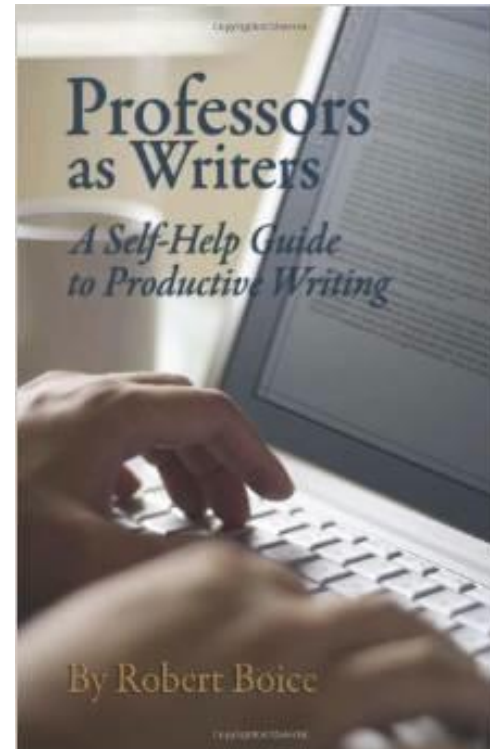






Questions????

[Google books](#)



Writers Block Questionnaire

New Forums Press