

# The Research Room

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September 2024

## Tips of the month

*Here are some tips and tricks you can use to make your research experience at VUW much more productive and enjoyable*

### **What app can transform your approach to tackling complex texts?**

Is there any tool designed to help with academic reading and comprehension by summarizing and clarifying complex texts? For research students, [Unriddle](#) can be particularly useful in breaking down dense or challenging academic papers into more manageable and understandable summaries. By inputting a text or providing key sections, you can receive simplified explanations and highlights of the main ideas. This can help streamline the reading process, clarify difficult concepts, and enhance overall comprehension, allowing you to focus on integrating the information into your research. For a detailed overview of how to use Unriddle, check out this [YouTube tutorial](#)

### **Looking to boost your reading efficiency? Have you given the SQ3R strategy a try?**

Don't just skim through your reading—get involved! Ask questions, jot down your thoughts and reflections, and summarize key points as you go. Active reading helps deepen your understanding, retain information better, and identify gaps in your knowledge that you might need to explore further. The SQ3R technique is a powerful method for engaging with academic texts more effectively. It stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review:

- **Survey:** Start by skimming the document to get a sense of its structure, headings, and main ideas. This initial overview will help you understand the context and purpose of the text.
- **Question:** Turn headings and subheadings into questions like reading 'Student success' as 'What is student success?' gives you a clear purpose for reading as you seek the answer. You can also think of broader questions like, 'What's the main focus here?' or 'What key ideas are discussed?' These questions can guide your reading and help you connect the dots more effectively.
- **Read:** Read actively, looking for answers to your questions, and remember that the first sentence of each paragraph typically presents the main idea. Keep an eye out for transition words to follow the author's arguments and take margin notes or use a notebook to paraphrase main points. Highlight only the key points and avoid copying text verbatim.
- **Recite:** After reading, summarize the main points in your own words. This step reinforces your understanding. To further solidify your grasp, consider explaining what you've read to someone else, writing a summary, or creating notes and flashcards. These activities not only aid in comprehension but also make it easier to review and recall the key concepts later.
- **Review:** Go over your notes and summaries regularly to solidify your understanding and recall. Reviewing periodically will help integrate the material into your research.

Using the SQ3R technique can make your reading sessions more productive and ensure you extract and retain the most relevant information for your research.

*Dr William Eulatth Vidal – FGR, Victoria University of Wellington*

### Have your say on the University's Open Access Policy

The University is revising its Open Access Policy. In brief, this requests that you deposit any publications in the University's open access repository.

The legal team have produced a draft of the new policy and are now seeking feedback. Please click [this link](#) for a summary of changes and other relevant details.

If you have comments please follow the instructions in that link to submit feedback to the team.

*Prof. Neil Dodgson – FGR, Victoria University of Wellington*

## Share your story

*When utilized effectively, stories can be powerful tools to motivate and change minds. If you need an extra dose of motivation, this story should help you out*

### Turning writing woes into wins – Nancy



I'm Nancy, a Learning Advisor on campus, but I was once a research student like yourselves. Having navigated the challenges and triumphs of academic research, I understand the journey you're on.

I'll share a couple of key moments that set me on my way to writing those 100,000 words that are taking up so much of your mental energy right now.

At my faculty-specific PhD orientation, Anita Brady (Media Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences) gave a great talk about how we needed to begin thinking of ourselves as writers. "Researcher" was the identity most of my peers and I gravitated toward, because the idea of being a "writer" was so fraught with images of tormented artists that I shunned the notion. But Anita offered a helpful insight about what kind of writer we should train (think of a long-distance runner here) to be: someone who can use spare moments with a laptop even in random, non-ideal locations with people and hubbub around—the Moore Wilson's cheese counter, for example—to snatch a 15-30 minute writing session from the jaws of procrastination.

Until I learned to write at cafés and other places bustling with distractions, like the Hub, I hadn't actually begun to make steady progress. I was relying on fear

and late nights up at home to draft my research proposal or small sections for a meeting with my supervisors. But my experience of writing improved tremendously once I became comfortable setting a timer for 20 to 45 minutes and tuning out my surroundings for even just a snippet of writing every day. Typically, I was able to squeeze in a few more of those sessions on the same day, and that feeling of satisfaction becomes rather addictive; it makes you want to write again as soon as possible.

One of the keys to making steady progress is the momentum you build up by doing it regularly. I don't remember the author's name, but a poet once wrote that "discipline is easy movement, harnessed." Setting up your writing routine is not about perfection or being harsh with yourself; it's about making your doctoral writing less painful. We all know that completing such a long and intensive research project includes some very uncomfortable moments of growth, learning, and facing our fears, but the writing part can be as fun as the research: both involve discovery, a more or less reliable process, and time to synthesise one's thoughts.

Alright, now, one more key moment that comes to mind occurred a third of the way into my second year, around month 15 of my PhD. My research proposal had been approved, and I had returned from three and a half weeks of research travel to archives in Puebla, Mexico City, and Seville to find documentation of the transatlantic scientific book trade during the late-sixteenth and late-seventeenth centuries. Once the jet lag had worn off, my primary supervisor suggested that I should begin writing a full thesis chapter draft!! Oh

my, that was scary. I must have spent a couple of months furiously “organising” my research in order to postpone the inevitable acknowledgment that I didn’t know how to plan out a 30-page thesis chapter. I caused myself needless distress during that period because I didn’t know that I didn’t yet have strategies in place for organising my notes into thesis chapters. Needless to say, I figured it out through trial and error, meeting with my supervisors, and taking their advice, but it would have been a happier, more productive time if I had had a better idea from the start of what kind of draft they were willing to comment on.

Anyhow, since becoming a Learning Advisor, I’ve added much vicarious experience and many new perspectives to my repertoire of stories, and I’ve become familiar with the excellent tools, guides, and resources available to postgrads which I and my colleagues are very eager to share with you. If I can spare you the stress that each of us has known from our own postgrad journey, then my batteries are recharged for work again. Preparing postgrads for success is really the highlight of my day.

*Dr Nancy Marquez, Student Learning, Victoria University of Wellington*

## Useful resources

*Explore our list of research-related links that will help you throughout your research studies*

### [Office workout](#)

Spending long hours in front of the computer can make it easy to forget the importance of movement. This sedentary routine can lead to stiffness, fatigue, and even long-term health issues. Incorporating office workouts into your day is a simple yet effective way to combat these problems. To help you get started, this resource offers a collection of easy exercises you can do right at your desk—no special equipment needed!

## Events happening soon

*Looking for other events happening inside and [outside](#) VUW? We go over some interesting events happening worldwide*

Organizer	Event	Date and Time	Register
Student Learning, Victoria University of Wellington	Quantitative research ( <i>In person</i> )	03 Sept, 14:10 – 15:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
	Panning and conducting interviews ( <i>In person</i> )	10 Sept, 14:10 – 15:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
	Designing surveys ( <i>In person</i> )	17 Sept, 14:10 – 15:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
	Qualitative research ( <i>In person</i> )	24 Sept, 14:10 – 15:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
Human Ethics Team, Victoria University of Wellington	Human Ethics: Training session ( <i>dual delivery</i> )	18 Sept, 11:00 – 12:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
Taylor & Francis	Excellence in peer review: How to be an effective peer reviewer ( <i>Online</i> )	18 Sept, 20:30- 22:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
Dissertation by Design	How to write a quantitative research proposal ( <i>Online</i> )	26 Sept, 04:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
Science Media Centre	Tips on communicating your research & social media and online safety ( <i>Online</i> )	26 Sept, 10:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
International Institute for Learning	Project management best practices made better ( <i>Online</i> )	19 Sept, 22:00 – 23:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
ISANA NZ	International education research seminar ( <i>Online</i> )	10 Sept, 12:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>

Organizer	Event	Date and Time	Register
LIANZA	Copyright ( <i>Online</i> )	26 Sept, 13:00 – 14:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
Lumivero	Qualitative analysis reimagined: AI, reflexivity, and memoing with NVivo 15 ( <i>Online</i> )	12 Sept, 12:00 EDT	<a href="#">Here</a>
	Inductive content analysis for qualitative researchers ( <i>Online</i> )	17 Sept, 18:30 EDT	<a href="#">Here</a>
The Open University	Shifting power: Artificial intelligence researchers' perspectives from the margins ( <i>Online</i> )	27 Sept, 00:00 – 01:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
Niche Academy	Designing virtual learning for application and impact ( <i>Online</i> )	04 Sept, 14:00 Eastern	<a href="#">Here</a>
	Talk to the elephant - designing learning for behavior change ( <i>Online</i> )	11 Sept, 14:00 Eastern	<a href="#">Here</a>
Ajays Coaching Corner	Presentation skills ( <i>Online</i> )	14 Sept, 21:00 – 22:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
NYC Department of Small Business Services	Create and deliver compelling presentations Part 1 ( <i>Online</i> )	11 Sept, 08:00 – 09:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
	Create and deliver compelling presentations Part 2 ( <i>Online</i> )	19 Sept, 08:00 – 09:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
New Results	Presentations for professionals: The real science of a great presentation ( <i>Online</i> )	12 Sept, 00:00 – 01:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
Toronto Public Library: Digital Innovation Services	Coding with Python 1 ( <i>Online</i> )	04 Sept, 10:00 – 12:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
	Coding with Python 2 ( <i>Online</i> )	11 Sept, 10:00 – 12:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
	Coding with Python 3 ( <i>Online</i> )	18 Sept, 10:00 – 12:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
	Coding with Python 4 ( <i>Online</i> )	25 Sept, 10:00 – 12:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
Views Professional Development	Professional resume and cover letter writing ( <i>Online</i> )	04 Sept, 15:30 – 16:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>
	Dream career masterclass: Find a job you'll love, in 5 easy steps ( <i>Online</i> )	18 Sept, 15:30 – 16:00 NZST	<a href="#">Here</a>

*\*Please note that by listing these events we are not endorsing any organisations but rather compiling and sharing a list of resources that may be helpful.*

# FGR

The Faculty of Graduate Research (FGR) works to ensure that your experience as a thesis student is a positive one. For more information, visit our [website](#)

## Contact

Postgraduate Research Student Advisers: [FGR-postgrads@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:FGR-postgrads@vuw.ac.nz)

- Enrolling in your doctoral or master's programme.
- Candidature management changes.

Online forms for thesis candidature changes can be found [here](#).

Thesis Examinations: [FGR-Masters-Exams@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:FGR-Masters-Exams@vuw.ac.nz) or [PhD-Exams@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:PhD-Exams@vuw.ac.nz)

- Submission or examination of theses.

Doctoral Admissions and Scholarships: [pg-research@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:pg-research@vuw.ac.nz):

- Doctoral applications or the doctoral application process
- Scholarships

Learning and Development: [william.eulatthvidal@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:william.eulatthvidal@vuw.ac.nz)