Writing the Discussion Section

Unlike previous sections which rely heavily on unpacking historical context, previous research, and specific data for your audience, the Discussion (depending on whether your thesis involves experimental research or not, you may have a separate, secondary conclusion that further goes into detail about your thoughts on the research's application and use) is mostly made up of *new* material. This activity set is meant to guide you as you write this final section of your manuscript.

Part 1: Stating your Research/Results

1. Start with an introductory roadmap – Very much like any other chapter or section, use the introductory paragraphs of the Discussion/Conclusion to tell your reader what you intend to discuss and in what order. Try a little **purposeful redundancy** (Bui, 122) to give your reader small reminders on what you have already discussed.
2. Move on to explaining the data or results of your research.
   What major things did you find?

   _____
   _____

   What do your findings mean?

   _____
   _____

   Why are your findings important? How do they contribute to the literature?

   _____
   _____

Part 2: Supporting your Research/Results

3. Contextualize your findings – Explain how your results are related to, similar to, different than, or indicative of research that others have done.
   Were there any similar patters between your results and other research?

   _____
   _____

   Were there any patterns that differed between your results and other research?

   _____
   _____

   Are there any alternative explanation for your results?

   _____
   _____

4. Explain your expectations – Discuss how your results match up with or differ significantly from your hypotheses and what you expected to see initially.

   _____

   What are the limitations of your study?

   _____
   _____

5. Suggest further research – Give recommendations for research that goes further than what you have done, examines different populations or samples sizes, etc.

_____

Works Cited:
Bui, Yvonne N. *How to Write a Master's Thesis.* 3rd ed. SAGE Publications, 2020.
Clark, Irene. *Writing the Successful Thesis and Dissertation: Entering the Conversation.* Prentice Hall/Pearson Education, 2007.
"Fourteen Steps to Writing an Effective Discussion Section." San Francisco Edit. Accessed 11 March 2021.
https://jivasquez.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/discussion.pdf
"The Discussion." "Organizing Your Social Science Research Paper." University of Southern California. Accessed 11 March 2021.
https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/discussion

<u>Things to avoid in Part 2</u>:

6. Avoid jargon and over-repetition of results without interpretation.
7. Do not over-inflate the importance of findings.
8. Do not introduce new data - If you need to include more data, go back to the data section and add it in there.
9. Stay focused on your goal for the research – Do not add additional tangents or speculation apart from what data you have already focused on.

Part 3: Review/Conclusion

1. Restate your hypothesis or research question
2. Restate major findings
3. Tell the reader how your study contributes to the established literature and builds on it.
4. Highlight other limitations of the study
5. State your recommendations for the directions that future research should take.

Works Cited:
Bui, Yvonne N. *How to Write a Master's Thesis.* 3rd ed. SAGE Publications, 2020.
Clark, Irene. *Writing the Successful Thesis and Dissertation: Entering the Conversation.* Prentice Hall/Pearson Education, 2007.
"Fourteen Steps to Writing an Effective Discussion Section." San Francisco Edit. Accessed 11 March 2021.
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