­Transcript

Chapter 4: Developing a Research Idea

So, one of the things that students struggle the most with during the dissertation process is actually coming up with an appropriate idea and much of our early contact with students is concerned with the sorts of things can be achieved within the context of a dissertation. In part, is directed by the remit of the discipline, but even then, there is an awful lot of scope to develop a project - and, I think, that can often feel a little overwhelming.

But it’s important to remember that initial ideas won’t necessarily be fully formed, and they don’t have to be. It’s often a case of simply thinking of something that you are interested in and then reading around the topic. Then you might start jotting down some ideas for research - I mean, possibly in the form of very descriptive titles - before reading a bit more about the topic and how people have done similar types of projects. Then, it might be worth talking, or taking these ideas to the person that is responsible for dissertations and having a chat, before then beginning to sketch out a rationale for research. And at each point, your project will develop. And, it might not always be a strictly linear process - some things might not ‘work’ so be prepared to change course if necessary.

And when you do begin to think that you have a pretty good rationale for research, you can then go and develop your research proposal.

So:

* Think of the things that you are interested in, and do some reading around those subject areas
* Jot down some ideas for research, possibly in the form of prospective title
* And then, talk to someone about what you might want to do and then try and build a research rationale