



MP Module 1

MP Reports - Methods

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Roadmap

- Overview
- Anatomy of the **Methods** section



Roadmap

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- Anatomy of the **Methods** section



Rationale

Writers often think they write better than they do.

Writing is a craft. It requires knowledge of conventions.
It takes practice.



Objectives

- Develop **clear, concise, & compelling** Master's Projects (MPs)
- Practice the **writing conventions** of natural & social science & policy



MP Reports

Must include:

- ✓ Cover Sheet
- ✓ Executive Summary
- ✓ General Content of an MP

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://nicholas.duke.edu/programs/masters/advising/masters-projects/report>. The page header includes the Duke University logo and the Nicholas School of the Environment. The navigation menu includes links for ABOUT, ADMISSIONS, ACADEMIC PROGRAMS (highlighted), PEOPLE, and CAREER CENTER. The breadcrumb trail shows the path: Academic Programs > Masters (mem/mf) > MEM/MF Student Advising > Master's Projects > Master's Projects - Report.

The main content area is titled "MASTER'S PROJECTS - REPORT". It contains a table with a list of programs and their status, followed by detailed instructions for the report.

| Program | Status |
|---|--------|
| masters (mem/mf) | — |
| master of environmental management (mem) - on-campus | + |
| master of environmental management (del-mem) - online | + |
| master of forestry | + |
| concurrent degree programs | + |
| cooperative college (3-2) program | + |
| mem/mf student advising | — |
| course advising for spring 2016 | + |
| course advising for fall 2015 | + |
| master's projects | — |
| client-centered group master's projects | — |

MASTER'S PROJECTS - REPORT

The final report on the masters project must show professional competence through organization, quality of analysis, and ability to communicate findings. The student is responsible for technical content and careful proofreading is required. Consult an appropriate writer's style manual, and obtain the agreement of your adviser on the appropriate style to follow (from a style manual or journal in your field). The adviser will approve the masters project after a critical assessment of content, format, style of writing, and technical quality. All revisions must be made before the project is completed, the executive summary signed, and the official document uploaded to DukeSpace.

The Cover Sheet

The cover sheet must give the title, author, MP adviser's name, date and degree.

The cover sheet is not numbered ([click here for sample](#)).

The Executive Summary

All masters projects contain an executive summary. The executive summary is an overall summary of the master's project, clearly stating the problem (that instigated/inspired/necessitated the MP), and a description of all parts of the master's project significance, objectives, methods, findings/results, broader ramifications of the work, and conclusions. The summary should stand alone (i.e., be intelligible to those who may not have the opportunity to read the entire work). It may not exceed 2 typewritten pages. The recommended length is 650-900 words.

master's project information

- [Overview >](#)
- [Timetable >](#)
- [MPs & Internships >](#)
- [MP Advisers >](#)
- [Change MP Adviser Form >](#)
- [Registration \(MP Seminar & Credits\) >](#)
- [Statistical Consulting Services >](#)
- [Human Subjects Research >](#)
- [Non-Disclosure Agreements >](#)
- [Library Resources >](#)
- [SSRI Help Desk >](#)

Potential Solo Master's Projects Topics >

Client-Centered Group Master's Projects >

Formatting Requirements

- [iThenticate >](#)
- [MP Proposal >](#)

MP Reports

Must include:

- ✓ Cover Sheet
- ✓ Executive Summary
- ✓ General Content of an MP

General Content:

- I. Introduction & Background
- II. Materials & Methods
- III. Results or Observations
- IV. Discussion & Conclusion
- V. Literature Cited

Recommendations for Writing

- Write early & often
- Write methods as you go
- Don't need to write sections in order of occurrence

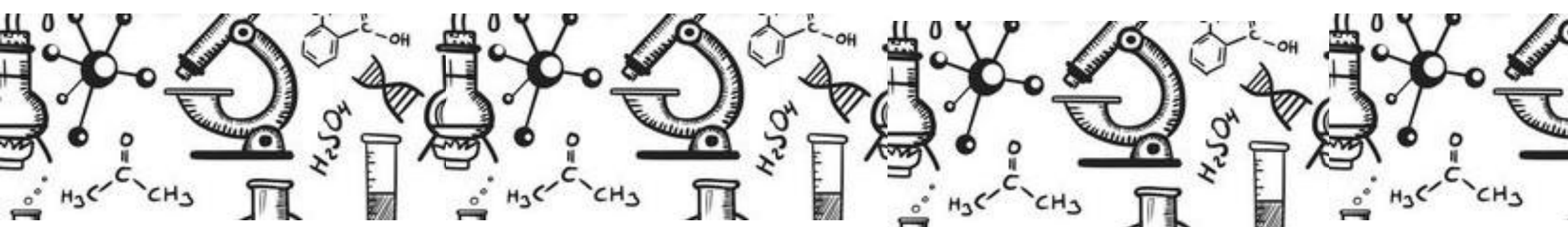
Roadmap

- Overview
- Anatomy of the **Methods** section



Methods

- Allows others to replicate your work & findings
- Allows the reader to have faith in your results
- 1st person, past tense



Methods: What to Include

Data Collection

- **How** you collected your data
- Why you thought your data collection **approach was best**
- **Limits and assumptions** of your data collection
- Subjects, materials, instruments, & procedures

Data Analysis

- **How** you analyzed your data
- Why you thought your data analysis **approach was best**

Assumptions/Limitations

- **Limits and assumptions** of your analysis
- Ethical concerns

Methods: General Structure

- Overview of research design
- Pilot study description (if applicable)
- Study area description
- Subject description
- Research instrument description (if applicable)
- Procedure
- Analysis
- Ethical considerations

Methods: Overview of research design

“This study use a cross-sectional survey design to assess adjustment to retirement of a sample of retired male executives.”

Methods: Study area description

Twenty-two study sites were located in six preserves (Table 3.1) within the Illinois portion of the tallgrass prairie peninsula, including the United States' first national tallgrass prairie (Midewin) and the largest remnant prairie east of the Mississippi River (Goose Lake). **These sites were located at a minimum of 1 km and a maximum of 135 km apart.** Sites were approximately contained within Illinois's Grand Prairie natural division – **a geographic region with similar soil, topography, and biota** (Schwegman, 1973). Delineated by the farthest advance of the last glacial ice sheet to affect the state (McClain, 1997), this division was **previously dominated by black soil prairie**. Historically, **these prairies were maintained by periodic fire and grazing** (Robertson et al., 1997), with disturbances, such as bison wallows and mammal burrows, increasing plant species richness and heterogeneity (Matlack et al., 2001; Gibson, 1989).

Methods: Describe subjects

“We recruited 29 subjects (17 male, 12 female) from two introductory psychology classes. They were given a choice of extra course credit or \$5.00 for their participation. Subjects selected had taken Pettigrew's Category Width Scale on the first day of class and scored among the top or bottom 10% for their sex in their respective classes. Selected subjects were unaware of why they in particular were being asked to participate. All Ss were assigned to perform the same task. For the final data analysis, the 20 subjects with the fewest missed responses in the experimental tasks were used.”

Methods: Describe research instruments

“A survey was constructed and used that contained six simple yes or no questions dealing with honesty, cheating, stealing, and not getting caught (See appendix). A Monopoly gameboard was used for demonstrating question one.”

Methods: Describe procedure

“Subjects were told that the study investigated the relationship between personality traits and academic performance as indicated by an anagram task and an attentional task. Subjects were informed that a practice anagram task would be followed by an attentional task, and then by the main anagram test (which was never administered). **The intention of this misleading information about a second anagram test was to maintain state anxiety levels during the attentional task,** which lasted several minutes without interruption.”

Methods: Analysis

I used hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis to identify groups of sites similar in snake species and abundances of those species. From these groups, **I then identified** assemblages of snakes in the study area. Cluster analyses, using PC-ORD 5.0 (McCune and Mefford, 1999), **were performed** on the relativized snake species composition matrix. In this, **I used group averaging**, a linkage method compatible with the use of Bray-Curtis distance matrices that preserves the properties of species-space (McCune and Grace, 2002), to join similar sites into groups. The number of groups ranged from one (a single group containing all 22 sites) to 21 (i.e., N-1).

Methods: Ethical Considerations

- State procedure for protection of animals and humans
- May include statement of confidentiality

Methods: What to Include

Evaluate an MP

Data Collection

- **How** you collected your data
- Why you thought your data collection **approach was best**
- **Limits and assumptions** of your data collection
- Subjects, materials, instruments, & procedures

Data Analysis

- **How** you analyzed your data
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Assumptions/Limitations

- **Limits and assumptions** of your analysis
- Ethical concerns

Methods: General Structure

- Overview of research design
- Pilot study description (if applicable)
- Study area description
- Subject description
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- Procedure
- Analysis
- Ethical considerations

Next Time

- Results
- Introduction & Background
- Discussion & Conclusions



Images

<http://writingcenterworkshop.blogspot.com/p/the-thesis-statement.html>

<https://www.nbn-nrc.org/nonprofit-resource-center/services/training/fundraising-roadmap/>

<http://spanish-translation-blog.spanishtranslation.us/pen-vs-pen-2015-01-13.html>

<https://ianbrownlee.wordpress.com/2013/08/12/the-three-key-structures-of-effective-communication/>

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References

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