

Developing Your Dissertation Proposal

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W e l c o m e

Tell Us About Yourself

- Year in the EdD program?
- What is your proposal gonna maybe be about? (In 250 words or less.)
- Where are you in your proposal process? (Again, in 250 words or less.)
- How's it going?

Tonight's Agenda

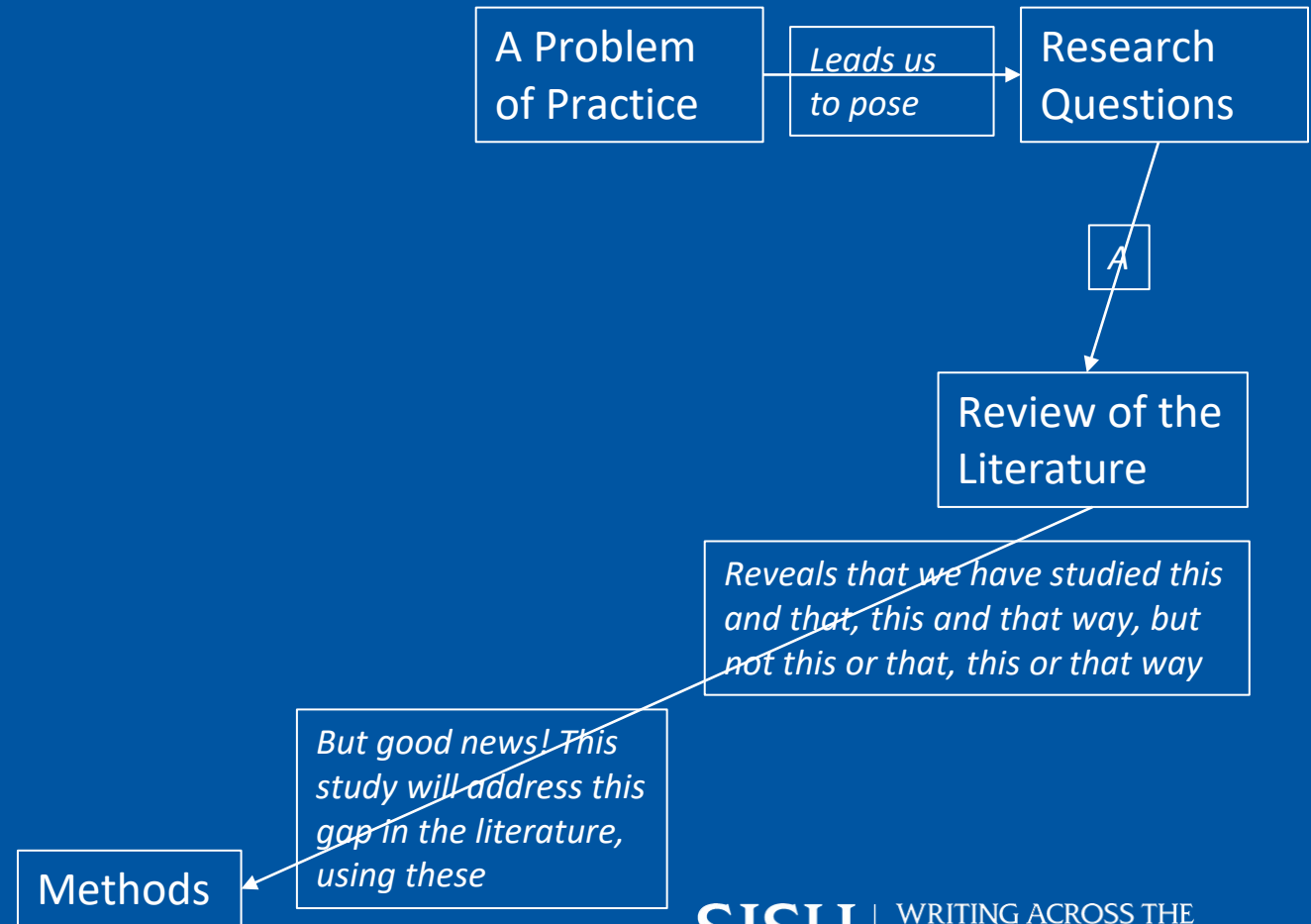
- The Proposal and Dissertation Process
- How To Think Through and Write Your Proposal
- Q& A and Discussion

Please Note...

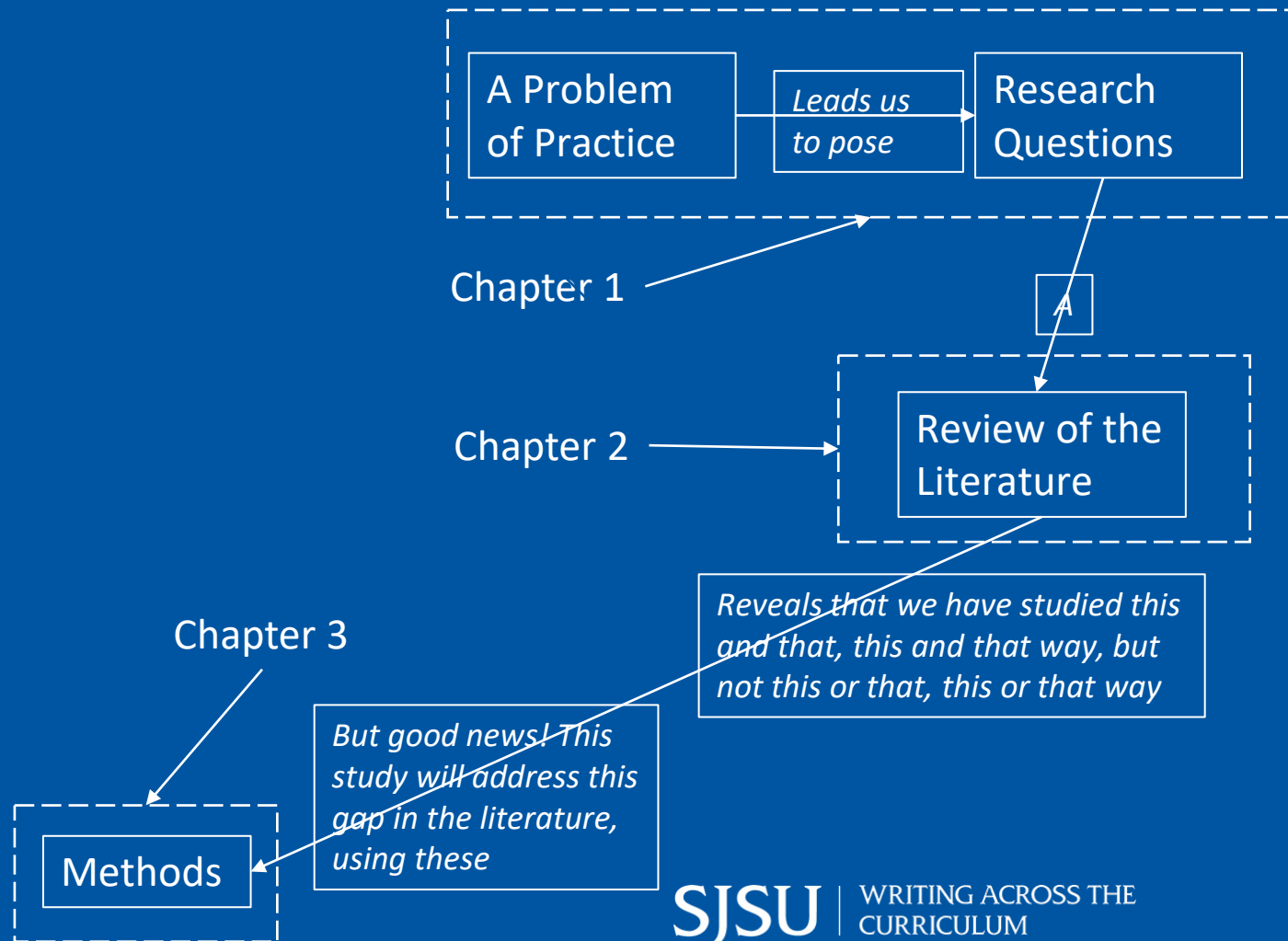
Always consult with your chair about guidelines for your proposal.

What we discuss this evening are generalities – what tends to appear in the different chapters of EdD proposals.

The Dissertation Proposal Process



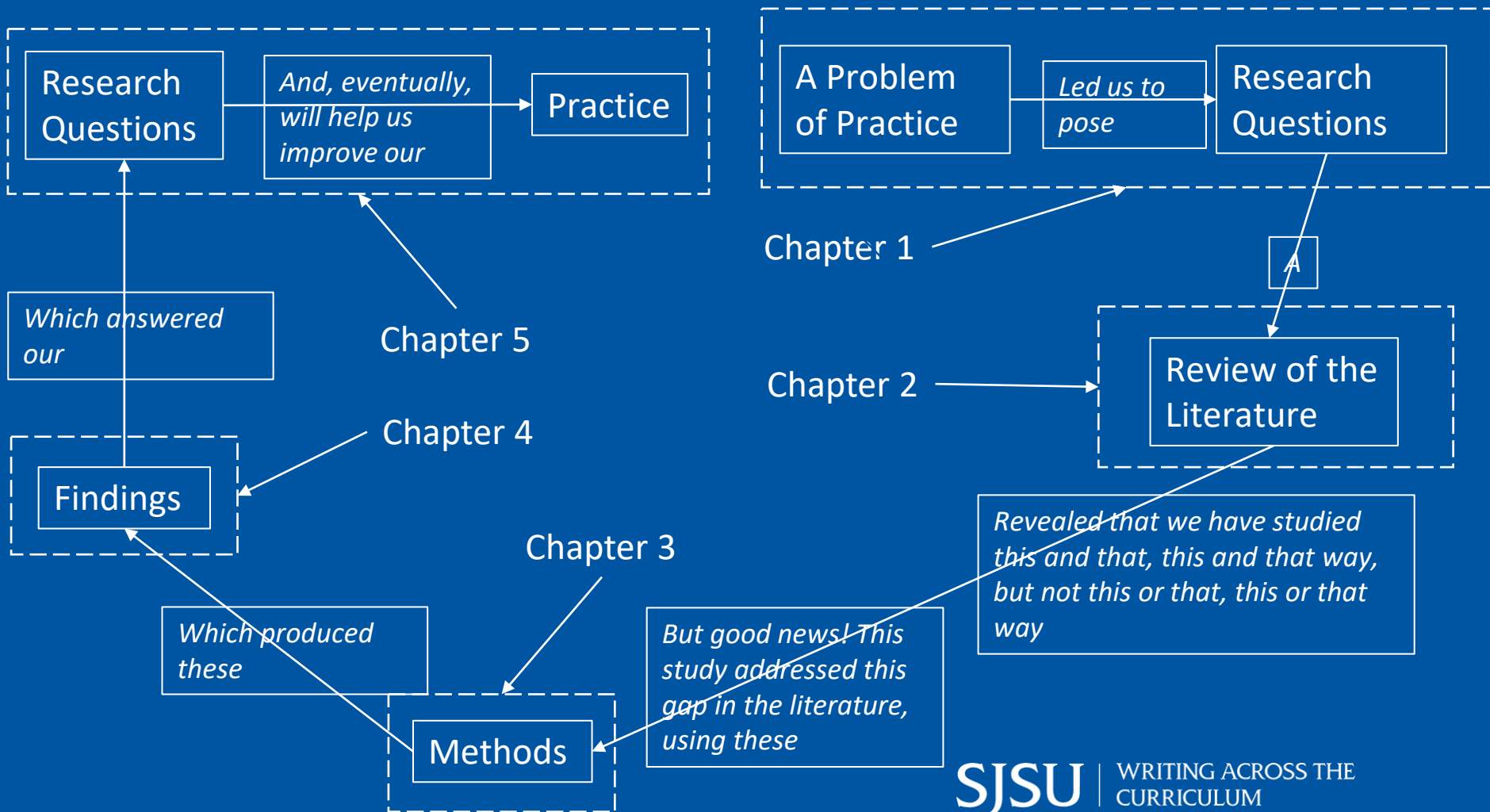
The Dissertation Proposal Process



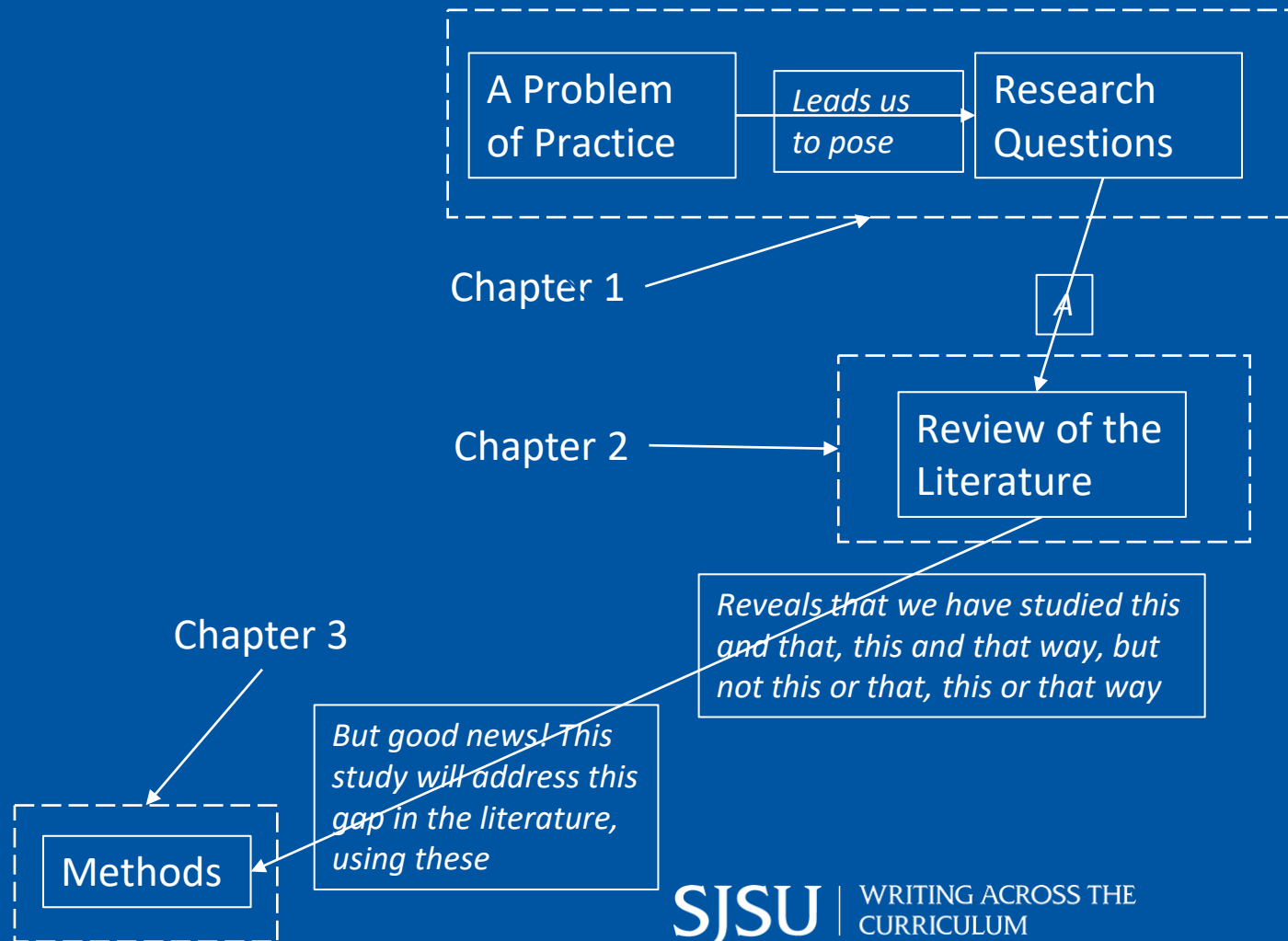
The Dissertation Process



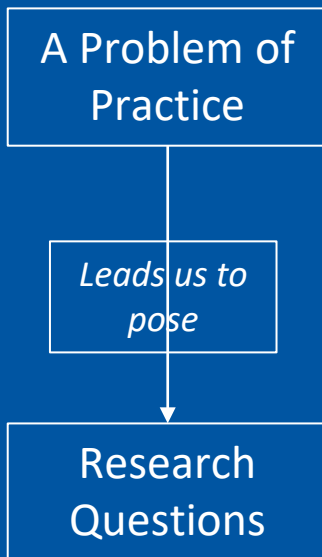
The Dissertation Process



The Dissertation Proposal Process



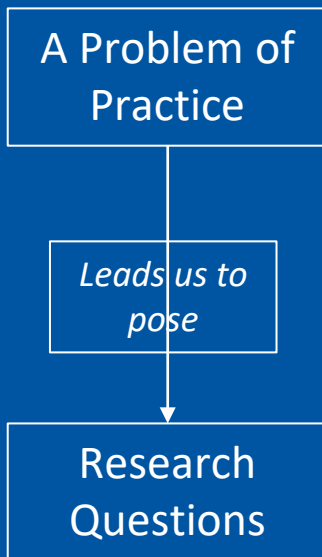
Thinking About Problems of Practice



There is something going on that isn't quite right. Or could be better.

- What is the problem?
- What is the context of the problem? What else is going on around it?
- What is the significance of the problem? Why should we care about it?

Moving From Problems to Research Questions



What questions can we ask about the problem that might generate data and insights we can use to address the problem?

- Why ask *these* questions and not others?
- Can these questions be answered?
- Are these questions related to the problem(s) of practice? How will they address the problem(s)?

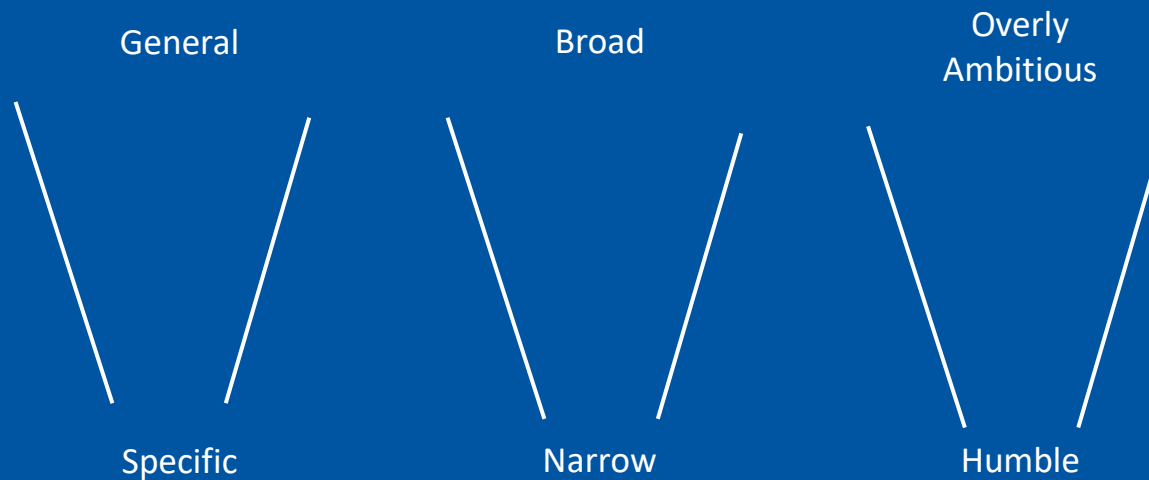
Thinking About Research Questions

Begin by posing general, broad, and very ambitious questions.



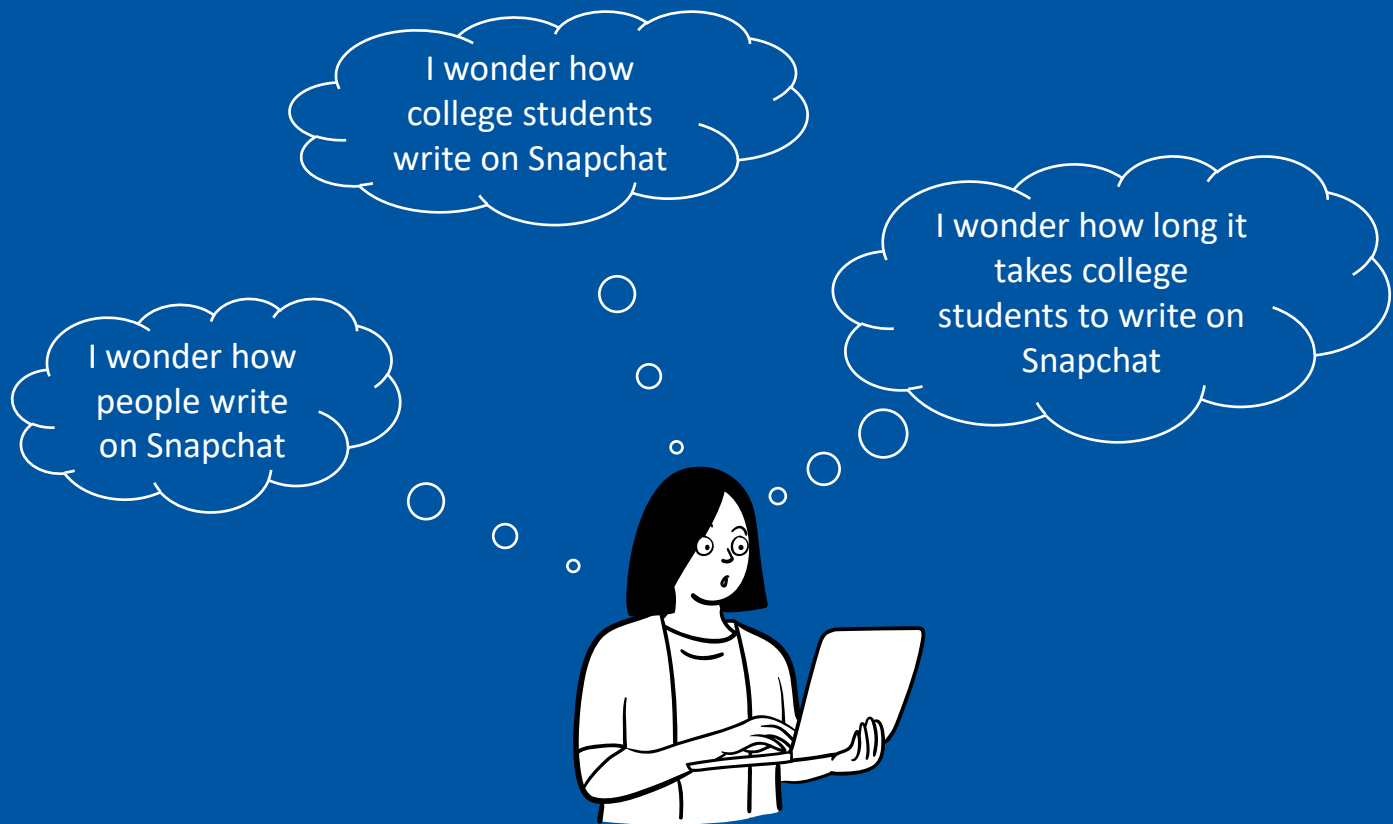
Thinking About Research Questions

Then evaluate, narrow, and refine your questions.

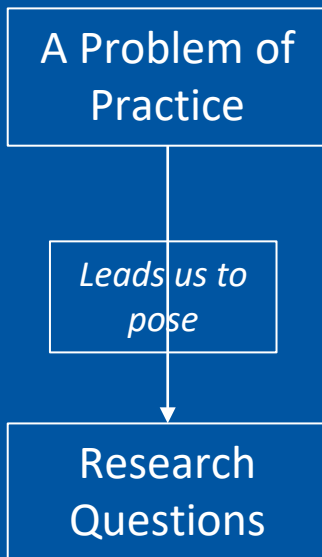


Thinking About Research Questions

Then evaluate, narrow, and refine your questions.



Thinking About Your Research



How might you actually study these questions?

- Where might you study this?
- Who might you study?

What is the scope and limitations of this study?

What assumptions and background do you bring to your role as researcher in this study?

Chapter 1 Content

The Unresolved Issue in Education

Describe the context of the problem.

Statement of the Problem

State your Problem of Practice (POP).

Significance of the Problem

Describe the purpose of the study.

Justify the need to conduct the study.

Explain why it is important to conduct the study.

Research Questions

State your research question/s, rationale, and relationship to your POP.

Initial Definitions

Define terms that you will use throughout the study.

Site Selection and Sample

Describe the location of your study and sample participants.

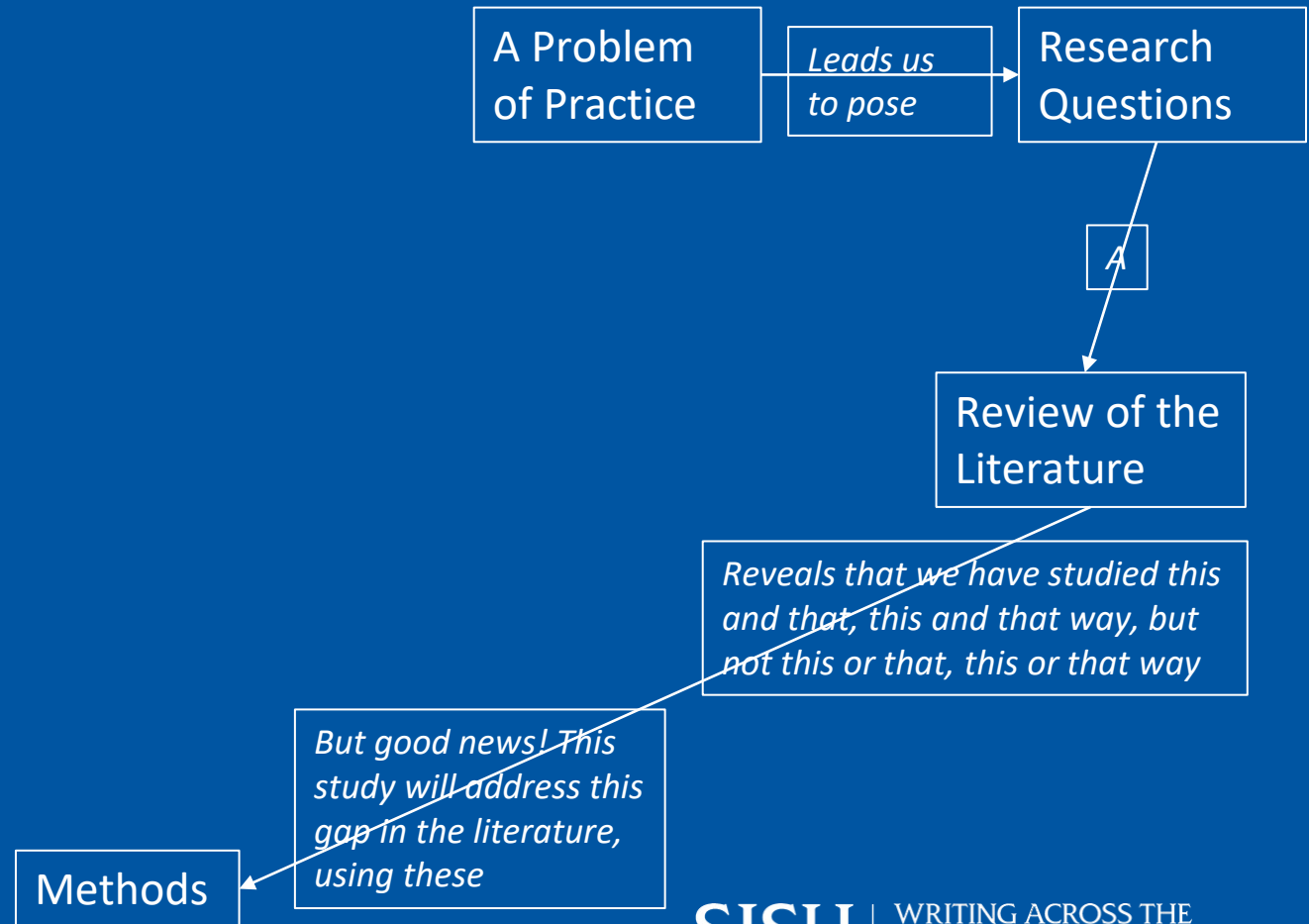
Scope and Limitations of the Study

State the scope and limitation of your study.

Assumptions, Background, and Role of the Researcher in the Study

All research proceeds from a particular set of a priori assumptions, theoretical perspectives, firm opinions, and/or personal experiences related to the research topic. Such biases are not weaknesses in the research. Nevertheless, you should be reflective about your work and foreground the assumptions, perspectives, opinions, experiences, and so on, that shape your study.

The Dissertation Proposal Process



Thinking About Your Literature Review

Review of the Literature

*Reveals that we have studied this
and that, this and that way, but
not this or that, this or that way*

What literature should you review?

- Tease out all the topics and areas of research that are touched on in your great Chapter 1 thinking.
- Everything related to the Problem of Practice you articulate and the contexts in which it exists.

And then start reading – and reading –
in those areas of scholarship.

How to Read for Your Literature Review

Review of the Literature

*Reveals that we have studied this
and that, this and that way, but
not this or that, this or that way*

Read each of your articles or book chapters with an eye on three key things:

- Topics (what was studied, and how they relate to your research problem and questions)
- Methods (how it was studied)
- Findings (what the study found out)

Why Read This Way?

Review of the Literature

Reveals that we have studied this and that, this and that way, but not this or that, this or that way

A Literature Review points out gaps in practice and how the literature helps us (or doesn't help us) address those gaps – gaps in terms of what we've studied, how we've studied it, and what we know. A Literature Review also points out disagreements in the literature: some studies might suggest this in their findings, while others suggest that. These gaps and disagreements are where you will eventually locate *your* study.

That is the point of a Literature Review – to show that your study is valuable and important because it will improve your local practice and, by extension, contribute to our knowledge by looking at a new topic, studying a topic in a new way, or contributing more data to our discussions of the topic.

When You Have Read A Fair Amount...

First, think about the audience and purpose for your literature review.

- Audience: Fellow scholars and researchers, the same people whose articles you've been reading.
 - So that's the style you want to use when writing your literature review.

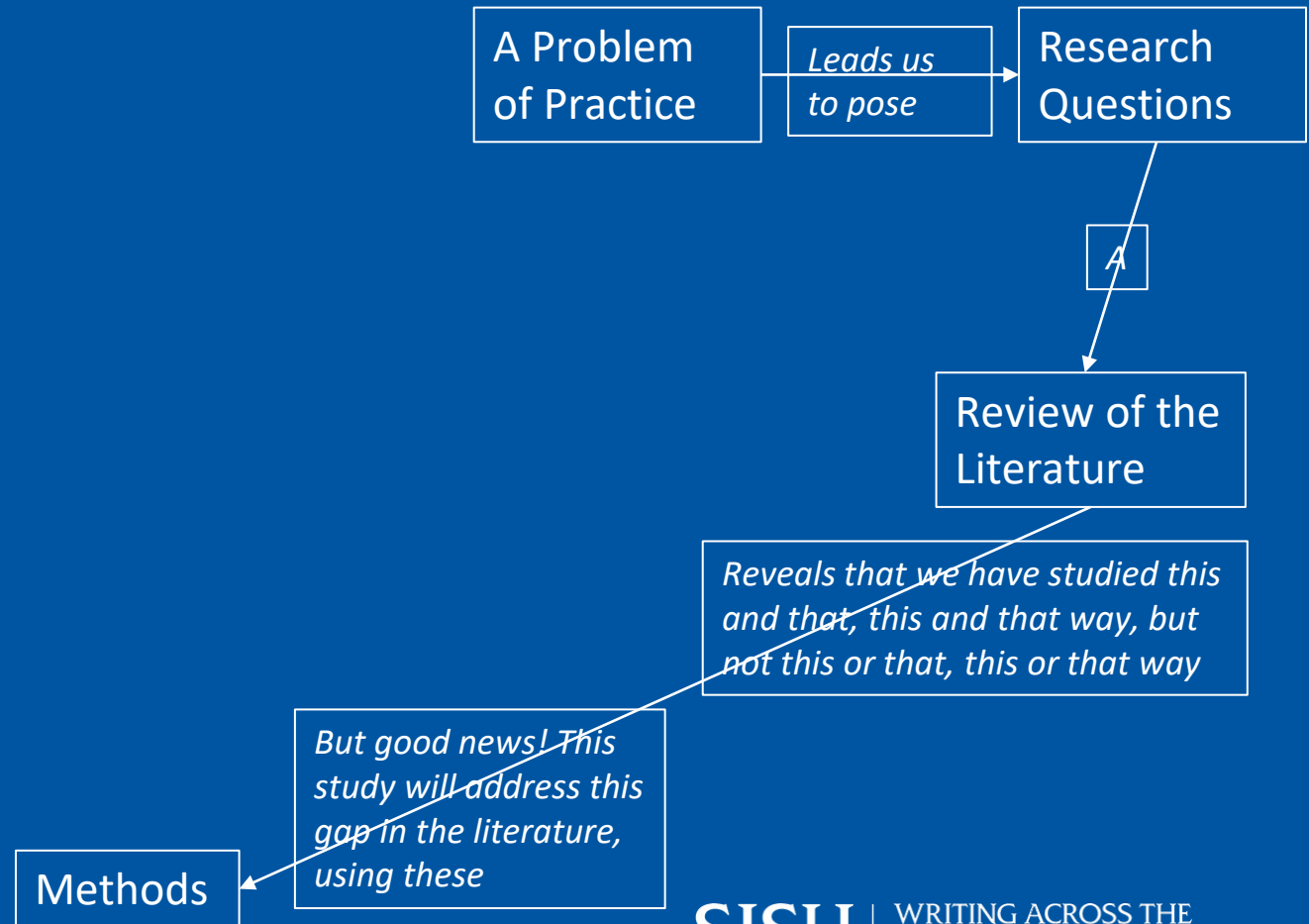
When You Have Read A Fair Amount...

- Purpose:
 - Show that your topic is an important issue – an authentic and relevant problem of practice – that it is of interest to people working in your field. You do that by showing that other people have studied the topic, or things similar to the topic, or have been asking and wondering about questions that are related to the topic.
 - Show that there is a gap in practice, a “gap between the existing and preferred organizational state (the ‘goal’ state).”
 - Show that there is useful and relevant literature out there that addresses similar issues, but not these issues. The existing literature is a good start, but there are gaps in the literature (a gap in our knowledge, a gap in what we know about this). That’s why we need your study. You do that by showing that *this* has been studied, but not *that* (a gap in topics). Or this has been studied *this way*, but not *that way* (a gap in methods). Or we know *this* about our topics, but we don’t know *that*, or what we do know seems not quite settled (a gap in findings/knowledge).
 - Show that you can effectively address the gap. You do this by giving your readers the sense that your literature review is thorough. You’ve covered all the bases, looked into all the corners.

Chapter 2 Content

- Start with an introductory section. Introduce the topic(s), forecast your discussion, and give us a sense of what you found in the literature.
- Discuss all the research. Organized by ideas or themes, not sources. Put your sources in conversation with each other, in a way that shows what we know and how we know it, the gaps, and how it all relates to *your* research problem and questions. A good literature review is never organized chronologically – “Here is something I read and it says this. And then I read this other thing and it says that. And then this third thing.... Zzzzz...”
- Discuss the gap in practice and the research. This is where you pull it all together and really delineate the gap(s) you have found. (Because right after this comes your proposal – how you will fill those gaps).

The Dissertation Proposal Process



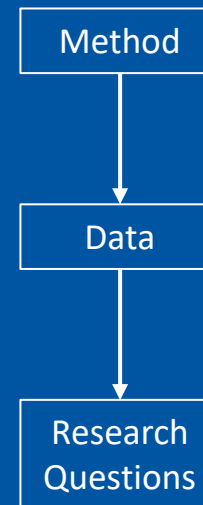
Thinking About Methods

How to Choose Your Methods

But good news! This study will address this gap in the literature, using these

Methods

Answer: Pick methods that will produce data that will answer your Research Question(s). (No way!)



Thinking About Methods

How to Choose Your Methods

But good news! This study will address this gap in the literature, using these

Methods

It's also helpful to think it through inside out.

What Data Will Help Me Answer...

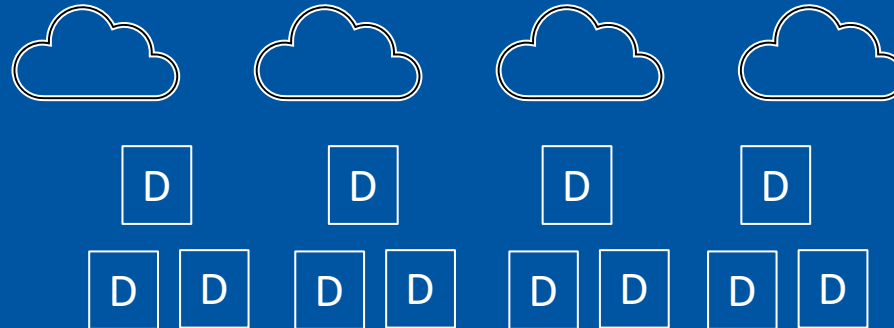
These Research Questions?

What Methods Will Produce...

This Data?

More Thinking About Methods

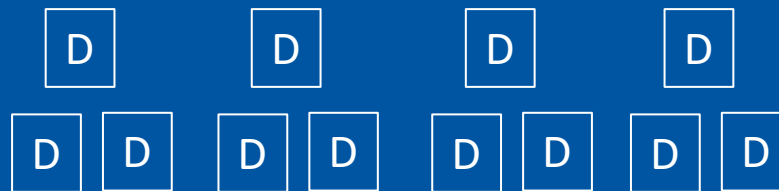
Methods



More Thinking About Methods

Initial Questions to Ask About Your Potential Pile of Data

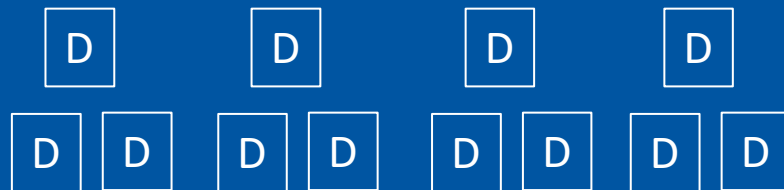
- Will you collect what you think you will collect?
 - Will participants write what you expect them to write?
 - Will they think about things you think they might think about?
 - Will they answer your questions in ways you think they might answer them?
- How might you revise your data collection plan, interview questions, directions for subjects, etc. so you get more of what you want from participants?



More Thinking About Methods

Second Questions to Ask About Your Potential Pile of Data

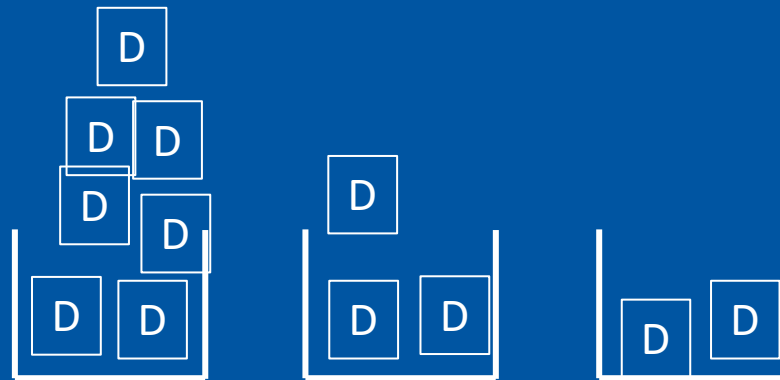
- Will you be able to analyze your data? How?
 - How might you sort your data?
 - What kinds of “buckets” might you put your data in?
- How might you revise your data collection plan, interview questions, directions for subjects, etc. so your data is more easily sortable into buckets?



More Thinking About Methods

Third Questions to Ask About Your Potential Sorted Data

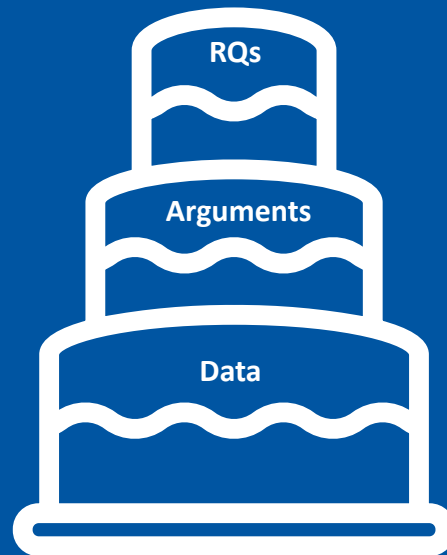
- Will you be able to analyze your data? How?
 - What might you look for in the data?
 - What might you count and analyze quantitatively?
 - What might you sort and analyze qualitatively?
- How might you revise your data collection plan, interview questions, directions for subjects, etc. so you get data that you can analyze (and see patterns in)?



More Thinking About Methods

Fourth Questions to Ask About Your Potential Data

- Does your data speak to your Research Question(s)? Will it help you build arguments that you can use to answer your Research Questions?
- How might you revise your data collection plan, interview questions, directions for subjects, etc. so you get data that better helps you answer your Research Questions?



Chapter 3 Content

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology (for Descriptive-Driven **DiP**)

Overview

Start with a brief description of your Problem/Practice and research questions. Briefly describe the instruments you plan to use to collect your data, and explain how such instruments and data you will collect are related to various components of your theoretical framework. Briefly discuss when you collected your data and, if appropriate, provide additional context for the timeline.

Sample

Selection Procedures

Explain how you selected your subjects and solicited their participation (assent and consent). Use pseudonyms as appropriate.

Demographic Characteristics

Provide all necessary background and context of your subjects.

Data Collection

RQ 1: (Copy and paste the actual research question from Chapter 1).

Interviews and Procedures

Explain the content of your interview instruments. If you plan to interview different sets of subjects (e.g., students, teachers, administrators), discuss each one of them.

Surveys and Procedures

Others

RQ 2 (if applicable; copy and paste the actual research question from Chapter 1)

Interviews and Procedures

Journals and Procedures

Others

Data Analysis

RQ 1: Example: Constant Comparative Method (CCM)

Describe how you established your coding scheme and provide examples.

RQ 2: Example: Descriptive Methods (DM)

Describe how you used descriptive methods to organize and summarize survey results.

Rationale for the Methodology that Informs Your Research Design

A discussion and justification of the selected research design presents an opportunity to explain the methodology that informs the design choice in terms of the research problem(s) identified. This section is about the theoretical underpinnings of your research design.

Chapter 3 Content

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology (for Intervention-Driven DiP)

Overview

Sample

Selection Procedures

Demographic Characteristics

Data Collection

RQ 1 that is descriptive-driven: XXXX

Interviews and Procedures

Surveys and Procedures

Others

RQ 2 that involves your intervention: YYYY

Design, Development, and Implementation of the Intervention

*Describe how you designed, developed, and implemented your intervention (e.g., PD for subjects).
Provide a logic model and theory of change. Include timeline and sequence of activities.*

Assessments and Procedures

Interviews and Procedures

Others

Data Analysis

RQ 1

RQ 2: Example: Mixed Methods

Describe how you employed mixed methods to assess the impact of your intervention.

Rationale for the Methodology that Informs Your Research Design

That Was A Lot

Q&A

Discussion