Section 4 processing information

2ⁿᵈ Year Master Electrical engineering and electromechanics
Course: Documentary research and dissertation design
SECTION 4: Processing information

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4. PROCESSING INFORMATION

4.1. Organization of the work

- **Extracting information:** From the documents selected, you need to take notes, i.e. select the most relevant information from the documents and leave the rest aside. This is done using a collection document. A collection document is a working document, created with a text editor, which retraces the progress of the research by stacking cut and paste extracts from the documents.

- **Handling information**

  ➢ Using the printed collection document:

  - Number documents.

  - Highlight essential information.

  - Annotate the paragraphs: write the essential idea in pencil in the margin.

  - List the topics covered by each document.

  ➢ On a piece of draft paper, go over the initial questions in the mind map and add the new information.

  ➢ Compare the topics and information identified with others.

  ➢ Review any aspects of the subject that have not been covered. Repeat the previous steps if necessary.

  ➢ Organise and classify the topics and sub-topics into a plan. A plan: must be coherent (each part and sub-part corresponds to a topic) and follow a progression (responds to the problem).

  ➢ Specify, for each sub-section, which document(s) we are relying on (document number).

4.2. Summary of selected documents

A reading sheet gives the logical structure of a text and clearly summarises the ideas developed in a document. It must therefore fulfil its function effectively: it must not be too long or too short. It must be neat and concise.

The purpose of a reading sheet is to keep a record of the useful information you have gleaned from reading a document.

- **At the top of the sheet:** Full bibliographical references for the document.

  ➢ Document title

  ➢ Author

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➢ Date of first publication Editor

➢ Collection

➢ Number of pages

- **Further information**

  ➢ The author

  ➢ Type of document

  ➢ The setting

- **Summary**

4.3. Final plan for documentary research

To organize a plan, you first need to list the information and ideas, sort them, classify them into main parts and then rank them within each part. To do this, you need to:

- Identify the main and secondary ideas to be developed in the text.
- Make links between the ideas so that they follow on from each other.
- Outline the conclusions to be drawn.

A plan should be presented in the same way as a book's table of contents.

Determining the number of parts is not automatic. The number of parts is determined by the argumentation of the text, its main idea, and the content. In all cases, the parts and their subdivisions must be logically linked to each other, using key words or transition phrases.

- **The various possible plans**

  ➢ **Thematic plan**: Indicate the themes to be covered, justifying the order.

  ➢ **Chronological plan**: changes from past to future, from present to roots in the past, etc.

  ➢ **Analytical plan** : situation/problem/solution or facts/causes/consequences.

  ➢ **Comparative plan**: how are the situations similar? how do they differ? do the similarities outweigh the differences?

  ➢ **Dialectical plan:** This is the traditional plan for essays and many university papers. It successively presents a thesis, then its antithesis, before proposing a synthesis in a third stage, which goes beyond the opposition between the first two parts.

  ➢ **Demonstrative plan:** Start by justifying a position, then show its limits before justifying the opposite.

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