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## Book review: The Research Student's Guide to Success

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CRYER, Pat (2000)

The Research Student's Guide to Success, Open University Press,  
Buckingham, 273pp. ISBN 4 33520686 7

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Academic research calls for high quality skills in knowledge management which includes in depth analytical study of a particular area within a discipline, verification of that knowledge, organisation of relevant materials, usually within a specific time and presentation. The second edition is a valuable collection to any and every researcher who wants to make his work intellectually and professionally viable. At the very onset of the book Professor Cryer mentions well 'who the book is for' as well as 'what the book does and does not do.' Going by these sub sections readers can comprehend whether or to what extent the book is to fulfil their need.

The chapters - Exploring the opportunities for postgraduate study and research and Liaising with institutions - are of immense help and cater well to a prospective student's initial preparation for research study. The various sections in the chapters provide rich insight into the 'Level', 'Structure', 'Mode' of postgraduate (research) study; possible sources of funding; establishing personal contact with an institution of the student's choice; finding out or selecting a supervisor; writing a proposal and other related aspects which are crucial in starting a research.

The section on Setting yourself up in a supportive way of life: the pervasive influences of personal circumstances - is brilliant as it offers enough suggestions on how could a researcher balance his personal life and existential needs with his academic demands, and make both fruitful. At the same time, the chapter also hints how a foreign student or one pursuing research through distance education mode can go ahead with their research effectively. A complete chapter (Chapter 5) has been devoted to the ways an individual can or rather should integrate as well as settle himself when he goes to an institution as a research student. This chapter serves well to answer the questions of international students who go to different foreign universities to pursue research studies.

The chapters - Towards recognizing quality in research., Interacting with your supervisor(s), Keeping records and Planning ahead - gives a wide understanding of the research process and techniques a researcher should undertake and follow to make the work profound and high standard. The chapter on time management, researcher's own

responsibility for progress and mutual cooperation (Chapters 10, 11 12) with the subsections: Using music to manage yourself, Being realistic with you, Keeping up with your subject, to mention few: enables the researcher to sail through his work in a stress free manner.

To any researcher writing reports on his research is very important as is the presentation. The author has good suggestions (Chapters 13, 14) on how to produce effective research reports, the variety of presentations and how a researcher should present his work interestingly. The techniques mentioned therein, if applied would fetch appropriate results to the researcher. At the same time, Professor Cryer also speaks of how a researcher can use his research programme as a preparation for employment (Chapter 15). This is indeed novel and refutes the belief of many who consider research just as an intellectual exercise without much to contribute in real life. The chapter on Progress checks and hurdles rightly serves as a self evaluation guide for the researcher and hones his research perspectives considerably.

Originality is very important in research and Cryer has come up with adequate ways by which a researcher can achieve originality (Chapter 17). This chapter is like the life-breath of the book and the subsection: Originality as 'potentially publishable': is really good and deserves to be read by senior researchers too. The chapter on Developing skills for creative thinking formulates not only the importance of creative thinking or the techniques but has also efficiently linked them with research modes and valuations. It relates the necessity of creativeness in research which in turn makes the research exciting and professionally fulfilling.

The final chapters of the book – Dealing with flagging, Producing your thesis, Preparing for the examination and Afterwards – are useful and develop the researcher with proper maturity to reap maximum benefits from his work. The chapter on Flagging has some behavioural insights while that on Thesis acts as a final guide for the entire job. The chapter on Preparation for the examination equips the researcher with the right approach and conduct for the situation. The last chapter is like a bridge between the researcher's life prior to the research and after the research – some sort of cementing between reality as it was, reality as it is and reality as it should be.

The reading list given by the author is sufficiently chiselled to satisfy a reader's want for further material(s) or information on the subject. The book is a valuable contribution in the field of academic research study techniques and can be accessed by any prospective student or researcher irrespective of his subject or geographical boundary.