Informatics Research Review: Tutorial 5

Academic year 2023-2024

Semester 1, Week 7

Overview

1. Building your Topic (20 min)
2. Topic Discussion (25 min)

Building your Topic

Objective: To provide a structured process to help you refine your research topic, ensuring that your topic reflections lead to clear research goals, are relevant to your field, and contribute to existing knowledge.

Exercise A: Topic 'Foundations'

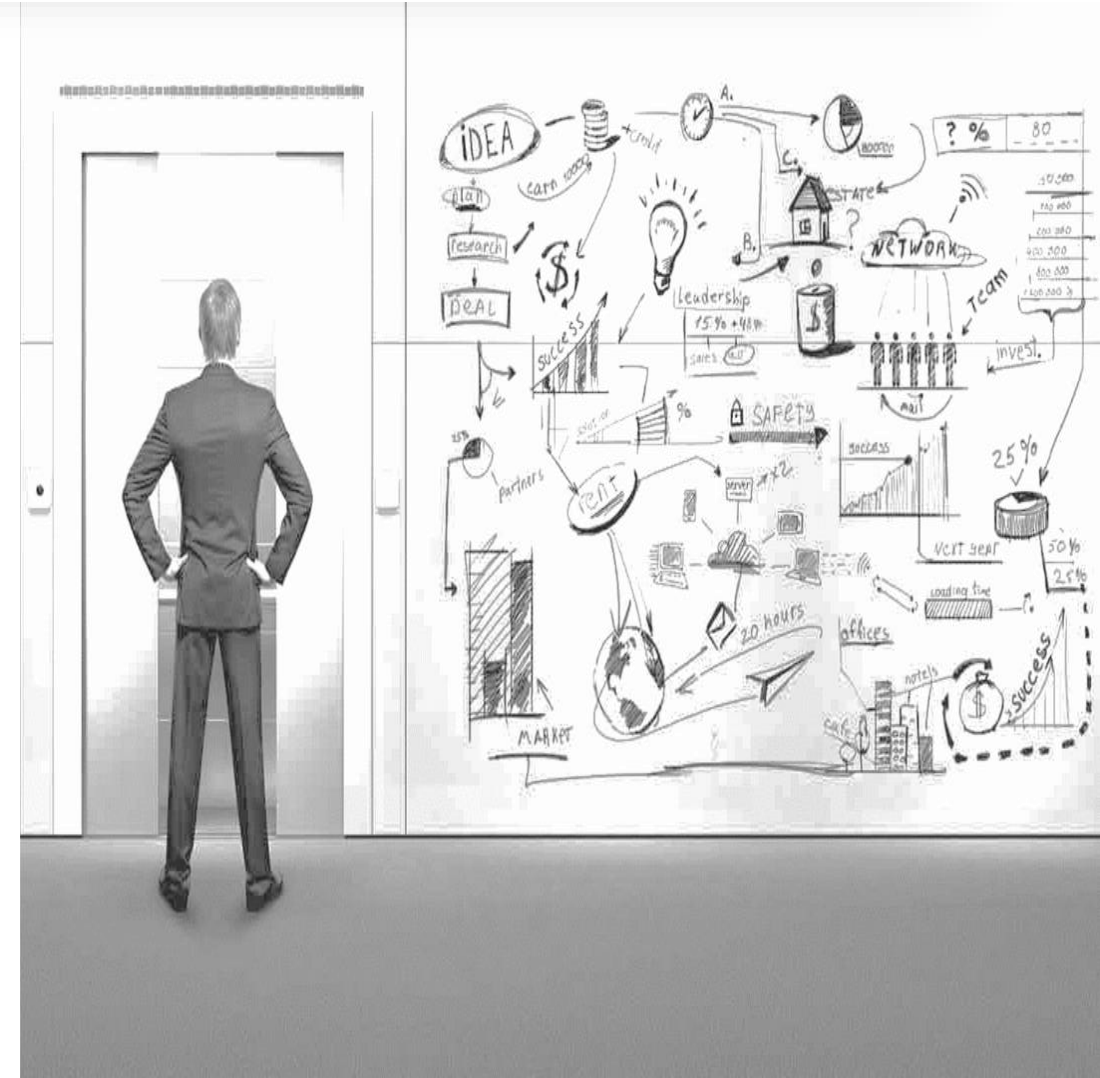**Activity (15 min):** Reflect about your topic and write down the answer to the following items:

1. **Define Your Topic:** Clearly state your research topic, which captures the central theme for your study.

2. **Contextualise Your Topic:** Describe the broader context in which your research topic fits. Consider the relevant areas, disciplines, theories, stakeholders, or industries connected to your topic.

3. **Topic Significance:** Explain why it is essential to study this topic. Highlight the significance or the pressing need for addressing this topic. Describe what aspects of the topic make it a relevant area of study.

4. **Research Objectives:** Formulate the issues you intend to address in your research. Clearly outline the research problem you aim to solve.

5. **Research Question(s):** Define your research questions, which are specific inquiries you aim to answer through your study. Ensure a clear distinction between your research objectives and research questions.

6. **Keywords and Concepts:** Identify and list keywords, phrases, or central concepts related to your refined topic.
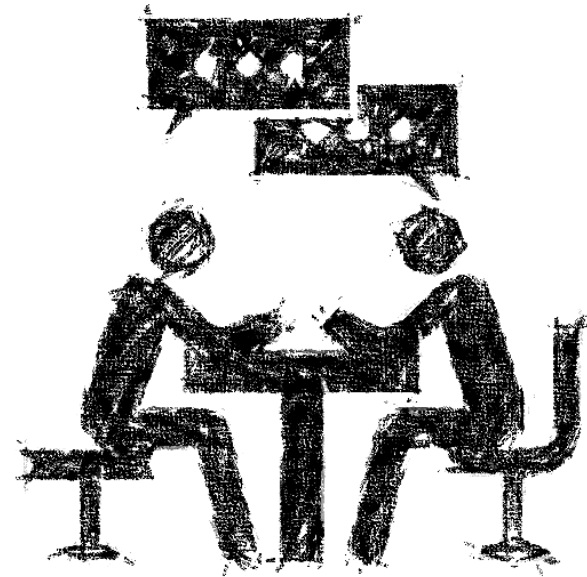
Exercise B: Topic 'Elevator Pitch'

Activity (5 min): Using your notes from the previous exercise about your research topic, create an elevator pitch of your topic containing: **topic**, **context**, **significance**, **objectives**, and **questions**. The template below is aimed at helping you organise your pitch:

"The **research topic** I am interested in is _____. The broad **context** within which this topic fits is _____. It is **essential** to study this topic because _____. Based on this, my **research objective(s)** is(are) _____. Following this(these) objective(s), my **research question(s)** is(are) _____".
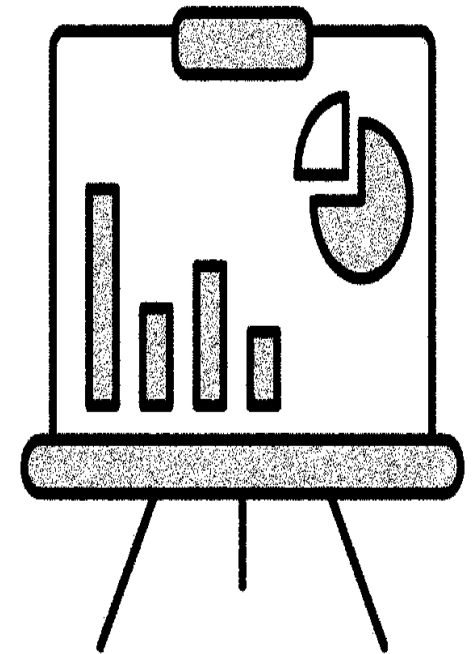
Topic Discussion

Objective: To encourage critical discussions about your research topic by incentivising self-reflection on its foundational aspects and through peer feedback.

Exercise C: Topic 'Pitch'

Activity (15 min): In pairs, you will present and discuss each other's "Elevator Pitch".

1. **Person A:** Present your Elevator pitch to Person B (2 min)

2. **Person B:** Plays the 'Devils Advocate' role, by asking questions to help Person A reflect on their topic. Consider the following initial questions (5 min):

   a. Why should anyone be interested in your topic?

   b. Who stands to benefit from the answers to your research questions or problems?

   c. What insights or contributions do you expect to make with your topic review?

   d. How do your research questions distinguish your work from previous studies, and why do you believe your review will offer originality and novelty to the topic?

   e. Explain why this topic interests you (e.g., What fascinates you about it and/or what aspects of the topic spark your curiosity)?

3. **After the first round, switch roles and repeat the process**

Exercise D: Peer Feedback

Activity (10 min): Building on the "Elevator Pitch" exercise, provide at least two constructive suggestions for enhancing your colleague's work. Consider the following aspects to help you structure your suggestions:

Topic Clarity and Focus: Evaluate the clarity and specificity of the research topic. Is the topic clear or are there ambiguities that require further refinement?

Context: Assess whether it is clear what context the topic belongs to.

Stakeholders: Examine whether the target audience or relevant field is clearly defined for the topic, or if there are potentially other stakeholders that may also benefit from the topic.

Research Significance: Regarding the broader significance of the topic, I s it clear how it relates to real-world issues, theoretical debates, or practical applications in its field?

Research Questions: Scrutinise the clarity and relevance of the research questions. Are they well-aligned with the research objectives? Are they realistically answerable through a literature survey?

Relevance: Consider how the proposed topic aligns with existing research in the field. Does it clearly address a gap, controversy, or a pressing issue? If so, are these well articulated? Does it have the potential to yield interesting and original findings?