**Conceptual/Theoretical Frameworks**

- Organizers
- The key ideas that organize and shape your thinking.

**A Conceptual (Theoretical) Framework**

- Should grow logically out of your literature review.
- Should lead to your methodology and provide a rationale for why you are proceeding in a particular way.

**Put Another Way… A Conceptual Framework…**

- Explains key constructs and terms, introduces or clarifies any theoretical models
- Situates your work within prior theory and research on the question.
- Identifies the phenomena you propose to analyze and the justification for studying them.

**Conceptual (Theoretical) Framework**

- Conceptual frameworks attempt to connect to all aspects of inquiry (e.g., problem definition, purpose, literature review, methodology, data collection and analysis).
- Conceptual frameworks should act like maps that give coherence to your inquiry.

**A Sample Conceptual Framework**
Academic Disciplines Are...

**Another Example**

### Conceptual Framework
- When purpose and framework are aligned, other aspects of the research such as methodological choices and statistical techniques become simpler to identify.
- Why did you approach your problem in THIS particular way?

### Writing a Conceptual Framework
- Begin with an introductory paragraph introducing the elements of the conceptual framework.
- Conclude with a summation that helps review the need for your study and transitions to the methodology you will use.

### Formatting Can Help You Think!
- Use APA levels of headers to present the components of your conceptual framework.

### Using Levels of Headers
- Heading Levels use formatting to communicate a hierarchy of ideas for readers.
- Topics of equal importance should have same heading level throughout a MS.

### Using Levels of Headers
- APA heading style has 5 formatting styles
  - Based on level of subordination
  - Page 62
  - BUT...NO BOLD within the MS!! (This is a requirement of Graduate Studies, not APA.)
- So...for your dissertation, use modified APA!
APA Heading Levels
1. Centered, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading

2. Flush Left, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading

3. Indented, lowercase paragraph heading with a period.

4. Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading with a period.

For Example…Chapter 1
- Chapter Titles = Level 1 (Centered, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading)
  - Introduction
  - Problem Statement
  - Purpose and Significance
  - Research Questions
  - Overview of Methodology
  - Limitations and Delimitations
  - Organization of the Dissertation

For Example…Chapter 2
- Title = Level 1
  - Introduction: Heading optional
  - Review of Literature = Level 2
    - Sub headings that group your sources—Level 3
  - Theoretical/conceptual framework = Level 2
    - Sub headings that group the parts of your framework= Level 3
  - Summary = Level 2

Conceptual Framework Subheadings
- Are your categories tied to the research questions?
- Do you have at least one category per research question?
- Are your descriptors based on the literature? Do they make sense?
- Did you forget any descriptors?
- Are your descriptors in the best order?

Suggestion!
- Find and read several conceptual/theoretical frameworks in Ed.D. leadership dissertations to get a sense of how they might look.