COMMON THESIS AND DISSERTATION ERRORS

The following is a list of common errors made by graduate students in their thesis or dissertation:

Fuzzy Thinking

- Factual inconsistency
- Contradictions
- Unexplained acronyms
- Terms used without first having been identified
- Misplaced emphasis
- Implication that the events happen by magic (no agent)
- Overemphasis or unnecessary information
- Tells too little
- Lack of transition
- Irrelevant or unclear example
- No context
- Not saying what you mean
- Use of etc. or and so on for unspecified set

Style and Usage

- Inconsistent terminology
- Wordiness
- Like vs. as
- Wrong word
- Overuse of the passive voice
- Word choice (that vs. which, may vs. can, between vs. among, affect vs. effect)
- Run-on sentences
- Capitalizing common nouns for no apparent reason
- Unnecessary quotation marks

Grammar and Syntax

- Misplaced or dangling modifier
- Wrong verb form
- Missing or wrong punctuation
- Missing or extra comma

- Nonparallel structure or idea within a sentence or between paragraphs
- Shift in tense
- Missing or extra apostrophe
- Subject and verb agreement

Technical Accuracy

- Misscount
- Conversion errors
- Numeric inconsistency
- Misinterpretation of data
- Factual error
- Wrong number of zeros or the wrong exponent

Judgment, Taste and Sensitivity

- Inappropriate language: vocabulary, slang, jargon, cuteness
- Inappropriate tone
- Sexist language
- Poor taste

Typography and Graphics

- Inconsistent use of hyphen
- Illustration introduces technical or factual error
- Inconsistency between text and example or figure
- Bulleted list, table tile or figure caption inconsistently capitalized
- Bulleted list, table tile or figure caption inconsistently punctuated
- Chapter heads inconsistently capitalized
- Double-spacing after periods

Proofreading Oversights

- Double words (especially the the and and and)
- Typos