

KEY ARGUMENTS, EDIT INPUTS: DISSERTATION

(Please note that the identity of those involved has been changed in order to protect the innocent)

Font in blue italics = examples of how something can be reworded, or written differently. Font in orange = editorial comments where editor is tentative in observation.

Assumptions:

1. “*Supervisor uber alles*” – your supervisor rules! Please ignore commentary that has been covered already in discussion with the supervisor.
2. Improving flow requires that:
 - sections/ paragraphs are linked;
 - a “golden” thread runs throughout;
 - the introduction captures attention/draws you in within the first paragraph and tells the reader what they can expect and sets the “problem” statement; and
 - the conclusion summarises the argument of the chapter, asserts what has been proven and then sets up the next chapter.

Purpose of chapter is to:

- Cover relevant literature.
- Describe what an ideal XX method looks like (qualities & outputs).
- Explain what the current status of the XX landscape is.
- Describe what the current status shortcomings are.
- Explain why a novel/new method is required.
- Sets the baseline of terms and concepts.

General comments:

- Latest literature references end at 2014 – what’s happened since?
- Generally feels like sections have been parachuted in (no links/ no golden thread).
- Methods mentioned run like a list that the author feels compelled to name but relevance to argument is not expanded upon.

Specifically:

- Chapter 2’s intro paragraph opens with “As a branch of XX, YY is concerned with...” This appears to be a duplication of Chapter 1 which opens with “XX, a sub-field of YY, concerned with learning from data or experience...” Besides the repetition, neither sentence engage/draw in the reader.
- The golden thread appears to be twofold: the idea of limiting human (expert) input and that an algorithm that hits the spot fulfills four criteria: **accuracy, usefulness, completeness** and **efficiency**. Perhaps each algorithm type needs to be measured against each of these four criteria, with the ultimate idea being to show that current methods fail and thus there is a need for a novel approach.
- Pg. 12 paragraph on “regression” is followed by paragraph on “cost function” followed by paragraph on “accuracy” & “phases”.

Continuity/linkages/flow is lacking. How does the one relate to the next? These bits can do with some unpacking? Seem important, but are being glossed over.

1. Pg. 14 relevance of discussion/reference to “port information”? Why is this important?
2. Pg. 20 while Darwin adopted “survival of the fittest” in later works, Herbert Spencer first coined the term in 1864 – *pedantic clarification useful for Trivial Pursuit but is it NB for treatise?* What may be useful is to discuss how “fittest” is understood in Darwinian theory, i.e. not the organism that is physically strongest/ most enduring, but organism that best fits the opportunity/gap the environment provided at the time?