Rhetorical Moves[1] in Thesis Introductions in English: Create A Research Space (CARS) Model
(Adapted from: Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Bunton, D. (2002). Generic moves in Ph.D. thesis introductions. In J. Flowerdew (Ed.). *Academic discourse* (pp. 57-75). Toronto: Longman; Samraj, B. (2008). A discourse analysis of master's theses across disciplines with a focus on introductions. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 7*, 55-67.)

This macro-structural model for thesis Introductions adapts Swales (1990) Create A Research Space (CARS) Model for research article Introductions. At a macro-structural level, the two models share substantive features, for example, the three moves and many steps in each move. This is particularly the case for Moves 1 and 2. However, given that the thesis is a lengthier manuscript than the research article, "Move 3: Occupying the Niche" has comparatively more Steps.

This may also be the case because writers of theses are not yet accredited members of the discipline or profession. Given the apprentice-like status of thesis writers, the literature review involves lengthier and more numerous summaries of the relevant previous studies, and the summaries may demonstrate a more deferential stance to others' arguments than is typical of writers of research articles, whereby authors are assumed to be members of the discipline or profession. Furthermore, as a result of the thesis writer's status, at a fine grained level, arguments and claims may be advanced with greater humility to soften the strength of claims: the thesis writer must make an original contribution while acknowledging those who came before.

Importantly, in the thesis Introduction, these moves likely occur in cycles: given the length and complexity of the manuscript, thesis writers may return to previous material to remind readers of the main arguments, the relationship of the current study to previous research, the original contribution, and so on.

Move 1: Establishing a Territory (i.e., known, established knowledge)
In this first rhetorical (persuasive for readers) move, the author sets the context for the current research, providing necessary background on the field. This move includes one or more of the following steps:

Step 1: Claiming Centrality
The author asks the disciplinary community or members of the profession to accept the current study as part of a significant or well-established research area. This step occurs in many disciplines and professions; however, when staking a claim for centrality, thesis writers must demonstrate greater deference or humility to others than experts.

and/or

Step 2: Making Topic Generalizations
The author makes statements about current knowledge, practices, or phenomena in the research field. Depending on the discipline, this step may include defining terms; or terms may be defined or more fully defined in Move 3. In Move 3, the return to terms already defined in Move 1, in order to more fully define them or remind readers of their definitions, is an example of a cycle (mentioned above) in the thesis Introduction.

and/or

Step 3: Reviewing Previous Research
The author secures the topic generalizations in the research field: writers cite who has found what and point to the relevance for the current study. When citing others, authors use *integral citations* (the author's name is part of the grammatical construction of the sentence) or *non-integral citations* (the author's name occurs in parentheses, typically at the end of a clause or sentence, or appears as a numerical superscript keyed to a footnote or endnote). The literature review situates the study within the real world context and/or the research context, depending on the discipline or profession.

Move 2: Establishing a Niche (i.e., lack of knowledge; research deficit)
In this second rhetorical move, the author argues that there is an open "niche" in the existing research, a space that needs to be filled through additional research. The author establishes a niche in one of four ways:

Step 1A: Counter-claiming
The author refutes or challenges earlier research by making a counter-claim. However, this step is somewhat atypical in theses because of the apprentice-like status of thesis writers.

Step 1B: Indicating a Gap, Problem, or Need
The author demonstrates that previous research does not address existing questions or problems or gaps in research. This step is typical in many disciples and professions and may arise out of and connect to the real world and/or the research world.

Step 1C: Question-raising
The author asks questions about previous research, suggesting that additional research needs to be done. This step is typical in the humanities and social sciences.

Step 1D: Continuing a Tradition
The author presents the research as a useful extension of existing research. This step is typical in STEM fields.

Move 3: Occupying the Niche (i.e., contribution to knowledge)
In this third rhetorical move, the author turns the lack of knowledge established in Move 2 into the *research space*:

Step 1A: Outlining Purposes, Objectives, & Arguments
The author describes the background, defines key terms, indicates the study objectives, and reviews the main arguments of the thesis.

Step IB: Announcing Present Research
The author describes the methodology (including reviewing previous research), describes the study design, data, data collection practices, materials, and subjects, and acknowledges the limitations of the study. In this step, depending on the discipline or profession, the writer introduces the study's hypotheses and /or research questions.

Step 2: Announcing Principal Findings
The author previews the principal results of the research for readers, including the study's significance and provides justifications for carrying out the research.

Step 3: Indicating the Structure of the Thesis
The author provides an overview of the organization of the thesis. The overview may include the objectives and principal findings of each chapter, in the order they occur.

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[1] The term "move" refers to a segment of text (e.g., background context; literature review; research question, problem, or hypothesis; and so on) with a particular purpose or function.