

**GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE
MASTER'S THESIS**

2009-2010

ED 695: THESIS

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

Course Description

Involves either theoretical research or empirical research that identifies an issue or question, reviews literature, designs a study, gathers and analyzes data or evidence, and presents interpretations or conclusions.

Prerequisite: 27 credit hours; ED 660; Application required

Difference between a Project and a Thesis

A project involves curriculum or program development and applies theory to practice, while a thesis is a traditional research project where the candidate gathers data, analyzes that data, and presents the results along with their interpretations. Whereas a project creates a product that is often used in a professional capacity by the candidate, a thesis uses data analysis to investigate a problem of interest to the candidate.

Human Research Review Committee approval

If the study you plan to conduct involves the gathering of data from human subjects, it is imperative that you get the approval of the Grand Valley Human Research Review Committee before you commence data collection.

For more detailed information regarding the university's policies on research involving human subjects as well as the application for review, please go to the following website:

http://gvsu.edu/research_dev/index.cfm?id=B27B6479-FEBF-9BF7-BDA6D693E6DC0773

Required Style Manual

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, D.C.: author.

You can also find examples of how to properly cite electronic sources at the following website sponsored by the American Psychological Association (APA):
<http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html>

Goals

- To provide the candidate with an opportunity to work directly on a topic that is relevant to schools and/or pupils.
- To demonstrate graduate level knowledge and skill in research: problem identification, summarizing applicable work done by others, development of an appropriate research design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of findings.
- To carry out a scholarly study that is mutually beneficial to the school and/or its pupils and the graduate candidate.

Course Objectives

The candidate will:

- Identify a problem within an educational context.
- Review scholarly literature relevant to the problem.
- Design a study.
- Gather and analyze data.
- Formulate and present interpretations and conclusions.

Candidate's Role

Prior to beginning the study the candidate is expected to:

- (a) Obtain the advisor's approval of the topic.
- (b) Obtain permission from the HRRC, if necessary.

Once appropriate approvals are obtained, the candidate is expected to:

- (c) Confer with the advisor frequently and obtain the advisor's approval at every phase of the project.
- (d) Submit work that is typed, and proofed for spelling and grammatical errors.

The candidate is held accountable for planning, implementation, and analysis. The advisor's role is to help shape the content, not serve as a proof-reader.

Typically studies are conducted individually. If you intend to co-author a study you must first get the permission of your 695 advisor. Please be aware that not all faculty members permit joint authorship.

University Resources

As you conduct your research, you will want to take advantage of the various resources available to you at GVSU.

Online database searching capability is available at the GVSU Libraries located on the Allendale, Pew, or Meijer Campuses. Scholarly research journal articles may be found in the Educational Research Index and ERIC via CSA databases. These two databases are excellent starting places for locating the literature associated with your topic. ERIC documents are kept on microfiche on the fourth floor of Zumberge Library though many are now available online and full text through ERIC. ERIC documents that are not available online and are 20 pages or less in length may be requested through document delivery.

The Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Yearbooks of the National Society for the Study of Education and Handbook of Research on Teaching are examples of good secondary sources of research.

For primary sources of research, consult research journals such as: *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Sociology of Education and TESOL Quarterly*. If you know of a person who is an expert in the field, it may be a good idea to consult him/her to gain greater insights.

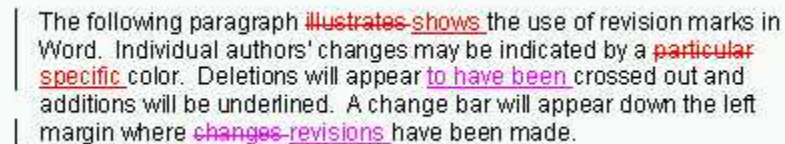
In addition, candidates may use the online full-text databases available through the GVSU library webpage (<http://www.gvsu.edu/library>). Reference librarians can be of help to you as well. You are encouraged to make an appointment with Rita Kohrman, Education Resource Librarian (616-331-2622 or kohrmanr@gvsu.edu), for assistance with your research.

For general assistance with writing (e.g., grammar, style, format, etc.), contact the Grand Valley State University Writing Center at (616) 331-2774.

For assistance with statistical analysis, contact the Statistics Consulting Center, located in Hoobler Living Center at (616) 331-3355.

Microsoft's Reviewing Toolbar

Microsoft Word allows multiple users to edit the same document and to leave revision marks on that document to indicate insertions, deletions, and formatting changes by each reviewer. One may track the changes and then decide to view them on screen, on printout, or not at all. See the following text that provides illustrations of revision marks available in Word.



The following paragraph ~~illustrates~~ shows the use of revision marks in Word. Individual authors' changes may be indicated by a particular specific color. Deletions will appear ~~to have been~~ crossed out and additions will be underlined. A change bar will appear down the left margin where changes-revisions have been made.

To turn the Reviewing Toolbar on:

- Click on the View menu.
- From the View menu, click on Toolbars.
- Click on Reviewing.

The Reviewing toolbar will appear on the screen. Allowing your mouse pointer to hover over each button will give you a Screen Tip which labels the button and describes its use.

(Taken and adapted from: Information Technology, Phillips Exeter Academy. (n. d.). *Document Review, Revisions and Change Tracking in Word*. Retrieved on November 30, 2003, from <http://help.exeter.edu/Documentation/Wordtrackchanges.html>)

Additional Resources

- American Psychological Association. (2005). *Concise rules of APA style*. Washington, D.C.: Author.
- Fraenkel, J.R. & Wallen, N.E. (2009). *How to design and evaluate research in education*. Boston: McGraw Hill.
- Johnson, A. P. (2002). *A short guide to action research*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Locke, L.F., Spirduso, W.W. & Silverman, S.J. (1993). *Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McMillan, J. H., and Schumacher, S. (2000). *Research in education: A conceptual introduction* (5th ed.). New York: HarperCollins.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

SECTION II: OVERVIEW OF THE MASTER'S THESIS

The entire thesis is comprised of five chapters plus a title page, table of contents, references, and appendices. Your thesis must be double-spaced (except references and appendices), and completed in a scholarly manner following the standards and current guidelines of the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA).

All pages must have a 1.5 inch left margin to allow for binding. Use a 1.25 inch right, bottom and top margin on all pages except appendices. The exception is the title page, which is centered. See below for details.

Preliminary material

Title Page

The title of your paper should be a description of your main topic and should identify the actual variables (major ingredients) or theoretical issues under investigation. Your title must be centered, 2.25 inches from the left and right edges of your paper and 3 inches from the top edge of the page. Single space the title and use all caps. Six (6) lines below the title, type the word "by" (centered) directly below the title. On the line directly below "by" type your first, middle, and last names (centered). Please refer to the sample title page in Section VII of this document.

Acknowledgment Page

This page is generally optional. Please refer to sample acknowledgement page in Section VII of this document.

Abstract

The abstract is a 100 to 250 word summary of your thesis. See sample abstract in Section VII of this document.

Table of Contents

This page is usually completed last. Please refer to the sample table of contents page in Section VII of this document.

Chapter One. Introduction

It is expected that this chapter will be written and approved prior to all additional work regarding the Thesis. An outline of the contents of Chapter One can be found in Section III. You can expect to write and rewrite this chapter several times before you begin the extensive review of the literature and commence data collection. If your study involves the use of Human Subjects you must procure the permission of the Human Research Review Committee before you begin data collection. Candidates

should anticipate that any proposal written as part of ED 660 will probably require substantive editing before it is accepted by the 695 advisor.

Chapter Two. Literature Review

Once your topic has been approved, you will review primary sources related to the topic. This literature review should include empirical studies that have been conducted on your topic or on key variables in your study. It should also include a discussion of the theoretical framework that guides your study. An outline of the contents of the Literature Review can be found in Section III. The information you synthesize for this chapter will serve as the knowledge base for your thesis. Your review of literature must be complete and scholarly. All statements or assertions need to be backed up with research or writings and documented in citations. The Literature Review becomes the second chapter of your thesis.

Chapter Three. Research Design

In Chapter Three you will describe the details of your research design. This includes: the subjects or participants involved in the study (if relevant), instruments and steps used for gathering data, and the treatment and analysis of gathered data. An outline of the contents of Chapter Three can be found in Section III.

Chapter Four. Results

In this chapter you provide the results of the data analyses and the findings of the study. An outline of the contents of this chapter can be found in Section III.

Chapter Five. Conclusion

In Chapter Five you present the conclusions that can be drawn from your analyses and findings. You also discuss the implications of these findings and present recommendations for policy and practice as well as for further research. An outline of the contents of the concluding chapter can be found in Section III.

References

The reference list is found at the end of the fifth chapter. All sources used in Chapters One through Five of the thesis need to be documented in a reference list. Conversely, each entry in the reference list must be cited somewhere in the text. Do not include references for articles or chapters that are not cited in any chapter. Follow APA formatting style for all citations and references.

Appendixes

An appendix allows you to provide the reader with detailed information that would be distracting to read in the main body of your paper. Examples of common appendixes include: copyright permission letters, lists, copies of a survey instrument, data tables, etc.

Arabic page numbering continues through all pages of the appendixes

Data form

The 695 data form will need to be completed and included as the last page of your Master's thesis. A sample of this form is included in Section VII of this document. On it you will list a descriptive title of your Master's thesis, your complete name, the semester of your completion, and a list of at least five to seven ERIC descriptors that identify the topic of your thesis. **Your 695 advisor must sign the data form as an indication that your Master's thesis is acceptable and complete.**

Note:

You must include written permission to include copyrighted material in your project. For a discussion of permissions that may be required please see Section VI of this document. If you are uncertain as to whether or not you need copyright permission, please contact Rita Kohrman, Education Resource Librarian at 616-331-2622 or Kohrman@gvsu.edu.

SECTION III: CHAPTER DESCRIPTIONS

Chapter One: Thesis Proposal

Problem Statement

Your proposal should begin by introducing the specific problem, issue or topic of your research. The first sentence should be a simple, clear statement of the problem under study. The problem statement explains what is problematic about the issue and identifies the variables or aspect of the problem that need further investigation.

Use data and scholarly references to demonstrate the existence of the problem.

Note: Page one of the thesis is the first page of Chapter One. However, this first page does not receive a page number. Page numbering (in Arabic numerals) should begin with page 2 of Chapter One with page numbers at the upper right-hand corner of the page.

Importance of the Problem and Rationale for the Study

In this section you demonstrate the importance of the problem and establish the need for your study. Explain why this problem is worthy of study. Provide compelling reasons why something needs to be done about it. What are the consequences of ignoring the problem?

Use citations to strengthen your case.

Background of the Problem

Give a succinct history of your problem or topic, including facts and pertinent data. When did the problem emerge? How have scholars discussed/addressed the problem in the past?

Present data to demonstrate the degree to which the problem exists today. Summarize what is currently known about the problem. What are the different explanations for the problem? Are there controversies of which the reader should be aware?

What aspects of the problem need further investigation? Discuss, briefly, the ways in which others have tried to address the problem.

Statement of Purpose

After you have introduced the problem, justified why it is important, and developed the background material, you are in a position to tell the reader what you propose to do. State the main purpose of conducting this study. Explain how your study will either help to solve the problem or add to the existing knowledge base. Identify the audience for the study and how the results will be beneficial to them.

You must clarify how your purpose for this study addresses the problem you identified.

Research Questions

The research questions operationalize the problem in terms of specific variables and relationships to be examined. Research questions also suggest the research design for the study and serve as the basis for the conclusions to be drawn in Chapter Five. List one or two central questions and any sub-questions that will guide your study.

In a qualitative study the research question is often general whereas in a quantitative study it is specific. Use terms that will convey to the reader the design of the proposed research, for example, “explore,” “describe” or “compare.” Avoid the use of Yes-No research questions.

Hypotheses

If you are doing an experimental or quasi-experimental study, list the research hypotheses that guide the study. Hypotheses are predictions regarding the relationship between variables in your study.

Design, Data collection and Analysis

Specify the research site and the participants for the study. Studies involving the use of human subjects require the permission of Grand Valley’s Human Research Review Committee.

Give a brief description of data collection strategies and the data that will be gathered. Discuss the instruments you are going to develop. If you are going to use existing instruments, you will need to procure appropriate permissions.

Explain the data analysis procedures. If you are doing a quantitative study you need to specify the statistics you will be using to analyze data. For qualitative studies describe the techniques you will use to analyze observations, interviews and documents.

Definition of Terms

Be sure to define key terms you will use in your study. These may be terms that appear in your title, problem statement, statement of purpose, research question, theoretical rationale or research design. Include terms that are unusual or common terms that have special meaning in your study. Acronyms (except those in common usage) need to be defined at this point. You may want to make a list as you work on your proposal. Be sure that you define each important term in the context of your study. Technical terms taken from other sources need to be supported with references. Terms are to be presented in alphabetical order.

Delimitations of the Study

In this section you discuss the scope of the study. Delimitations are factors within the researcher’s control that affect the external validity or generalizability of the study. What decisions have you made regarding variables, subjects, and sites that affect the ability to generalize the results of your study to other populations and settings?

Limitations of the Study

In this section you discuss some potential weaknesses of this study that might affect the internal validity of your study. These include factors that are beyond your control, including inherent limitations of the selected design.

Organization of the Thesis

In the final section of Chapter One, summarize the organization of chapters that follow. This helps the reader locate pertinent information without searching through the entire thesis.

You will submit this chapter (usually six to ten pages) first since it needs to be approved before proceeding. The proposal chapter is foundational to the rest of the thesis and also provides information necessary for your application to the GVSU's Human Research Review Committee. Your professor will want to receive your first draft proposal early in the semester. Proposals written for ED 660 require the approval of your 695 advisor and may therefore need substantial editing in order to meet his or her approval. It will be quite normal if you rewrite the proposal two or three times. Use the guiding questions for each chapter, provided in Section V of this document, to help direct your writing.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In this chapter, you provide a comprehensive review of literature related to the problem you are investigating. This review expands upon the information presented in the background section of Chapter One. In Chapter One the focus is on the background of the problem, but in this chapter you focus on specific studies that have addressed key variables relevant to your study.

The information you synthesize for this chapter serves as the knowledge base for your thesis. It helps identify what is known and what is not known about the problem.

Every source reviewed must be related to the study. Since you are reviewing studies done by others make sure you provide appropriate citations.

Introduction

The introduction of the literature review chapter should provide an overview of the topics that are to be discussed in the chapter. It indicates how the chapter is organized and explains the subsections that follow.

Theoretical framework

In this section you present the theories that inform your interpretation of the literature reviewed in this chapter. The theoretical framework explains what issues are identified as problematic, why they are problematic and suggests ways to investigate these issues. It also provides a framework within which to interpret the results of your study.

Synthesis of Research Literature

There will be a great deal of information being synthesized in this section. Articles that have been reviewed are to be presented by topic and not by author. Important concepts or key findings may emerge as you review various scholarly works on your topic. You may group together concepts or findings that are similar or are related. Such groupings will provide the headings and sub-headings under which findings are to be categorized and discussed. Use as many sections and subsections as necessary to logically present the information. It may be helpful to use an outline to organize your ideas.

Your review of literature must be complete and scholarly. Frequently, a literature review is presented in the form of a funnel going from research and writings that provide a general background for your study to the more specific research and/or policies that directly address your thesis. All assertions and generalizations must to be supported with references.

The review of literature should synthesize the major findings in a clear and compelling manner. It should read smoothly. The most major sources used in the development of your thesis **MUST** be discussed fully in the literature review.

Summary

In this section you highlight the most important studies and summarize their key findings. A reader should be able to read only the summary section and acquire a good sense of the theoretical and empirical basis for your study.

Conclusion

In this section you inform the readers what conclusions can be drawn from the research you have reviewed. You discuss the literature and explain how your study addresses the gap(s).

Sources

The majority of the research discussed in this chapter should have been obtained from primary sources published in peer-reviewed journals. The use of secondary sources should be limited. The problem with secondary sources is that you are allowing another author to summarize and interpret someone else's research. You have no way of determining the accuracy of that interpretation.

Citation of Sources

As you read and take notes for your specific research topic, don't forget to write down your bibliographic source material along with the notes you take so you have it handy when it comes time to cite the information in your thesis. Be sure you have all of the information you need for the APA reference style. Use of ideas from other authors must be cited and quotations must be indicated using a standard citation form. All sources cited must be included in the "References" at the end of the thesis Chapter Five. Only works cited are to be included in the reference list.

Chapter Three: Research Design

In this chapter you discuss the specific steps used in the collection of data for the study. The information should be detailed enough to permit a replication of the study by other researchers. Address the research design and why it was selected over other possible designs.

Introduction

In the introductory paragraph, restate the purpose of your study and the research questions that guide your study. Indicate the major sections to be discussed in this chapter and the manner in which they are organized.

Participants/Subjects

Next, describe the subjects/participants who were involved in your study and describe how they were selected.

Instrumentation

In this section describe instrument/s used to gather data from the sample. If possible, instrument reliability and validity should be addressed. Include permissions to use copyrighted materials.

If you developed the instrument, include a discussion of the source of items of the instrument as well as a description of the instrument itself. Instruments developed by the researcher should be pilot tested or reviewed by an expert in the field.

For qualitative designs, where the researcher is the instrument, explain the subjectivities that guided the inclusion and exclusion of data. Also provide descriptions of observation and interview protocols used to gather data.

Actual instruments used can be included in the appendix.

Data Collection

This section describes when, where and how the data were obtained. Details such as when a survey was distributed, how it was distributed, what cover letter accompanied it, and how you dealt with non-respondents are to be discussed in this section.

For qualitative studies, discuss the role of the researcher and the degree and nature of involvement in the setting. In this section discuss issues such as triangulation, member checking to ensure validity of findings, and amount of time spent in the field to accomplish data saturation.

Data Analysis

Describe in detail the treatment and analysis of the data. Include how it was tabulated, coded and the statistical procedures used. For qualitative studies discuss how the data were coded and analyzed for themes and patterns.

Summary

Conclude with a brief summary of the research design.

Chapter Four: Results

In this chapter you provide the results or data analysis and the findings of your study. Begin the chapter with an overview of the sections included in the chapter.

Context

Describe the demographic characteristics of the participants in the study. If dealing with survey data present the response rate, so that the reader can understand the composition of the respondents.

In qualitative studies provide a description of the context within which the study was conducted.

Findings

In this section report the findings related to the research questions being answered or to the hypotheses being tested.

Data are to be reported in tabular or graphic form accompanied by text that discusses the salient information included in each table. Very long and detailed tables are to be placed in the appendix.

Look at the following example (*Pottorff, Phelps-Zientarski, & Skovera, 1996).

RESULTS

The analysis of results is reported in the form of chi-square computations. Chi-square goodness of fit tests were used as a means of categorically looking at relationships between two or more variables. They were used to compare obtained frequencies on specific variables with expected frequencies, thus providing an indication of probability that significant differences were actually found. The hypothesis proportions were one-third each and the statistical calculations were accomplished by PROC CATMODE and SAS.

Research Question 1 – Who is better at these activities: (a) reading, (b) reading to younger children, (c) writing stories?

Analysis of data relating to the three independent variables studied in research question 1 was accomplished and all were found to be significant. For the first variable, “Who reads better?” chi squares were computed and resulted in a significance of $x^2 = 178.72$; $p < .0001$; $df = 2$. The second, “Who reads better to young children?” resulted in a significance of $x^2 = 256.82$; $p < .0001$; $df = 2$, while the third, “Who writes stories better?” resulted in $x^2 = 170.02$; $p < .0001$; $df = 2$. A statistical summary is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Who is better at these activities?

	Boys		Girls		Both		No Response	Number
	N	N	%	N	%	N	N	
Reading	37	371	50.8	317	43.4	5	.007	730
Reading to younger children	37	460	63.0	228	31.2	5	.007	730
Writing stories	69	281	38.5	374	51.2	6	.008	730

p<.001 for each

The analysis revealed that the 730 students in the survey viewed girls as being more capable readers, as being more capable of reading to younger children and as being more capable story writers than boys. The perceptions remained remarkably constant across grade levels and across demographic school populations although second graders appeared to be slightly less gender biased on these issues than students in grades four through eight.

*Source: Pottorff, D. D., Phelps-Zientarski, D. & Skovera, M. E. (1996). Gender perceptions of elementary and middle school students about literacy at school and home. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 29(4), 203-212.

Summary

Conclude the chapter with a summary of the highlights of the findings and provide a transition to Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Summary of the study

The chapter begins with a brief summary of the entire study. It recaps the problem, design and findings.

Conclusion

What conclusion can be drawn from the findings of the study? Conclusions may provide answers to research questions and hypotheses presented in Chapter One. A conclusion is generally broader than a finding and several findings may be incorporated into one conclusion.

Discussion

In this section the researcher explains the findings and conclusions of the study. You interpret your results in light of your theoretical framework. Compare your findings with research that has already been done on this topic and to studies that were discussed in the literature review.

Recommendations

In this final section you present recommendations that arise from the study. This section includes both recommendations for practice as well as recommendations for further study. Recommendations for practice are usually prescriptive in nature and are based on the results of the study. Recommendations for further study address the limitations and delimitations of the study, which future researchers could address.

References

Follow the most recent edition of APA manual when formatting your reference list. All references cited in the body of the thesis should be included in the list of references. There should be no references listed that did not appear as citations in the paper.

Appendixes

You can include raw data, units, lesson plans, tests, questionnaires, etc. used in your study. You MUST include written permission to include copyrighted material as well as a copy of your permission letter from the Human Research Review Committee (HRRC) and examples of consent forms used. If you are uncertain as to whether or not you need copyright permission, contact Rita Kohrman, Education Resource Librarian, at 616-331-2622 or kohrmanr@gvsu.edu. You should also check GVSU's Library website for information on requesting copyright permission. The Library website is accessible at <http://www.gvsu.edu/library>. See also the Copyright section in Section VI of this document.

Note: Arabic page numbering continues through all pages of the appendixes, except material copied with permission.

SECTION IV: RESEARCH TYPES

Descriptive

The goal of descriptive research is to describe systematically a situation or area of interest. Examples: Population census studies, public opinion surveys, fact-finding surveys, status studies, task analysis studies, questionnaire and interview studies, observation studies, job descriptions, surveys of the literature, documentary analyses, anecdotal records, critical incident reports, test score analyses, and normative data.

Developmental

The researcher explores patterns and sequences of growth and/or change as a function of time. Examples: A longitudinal growth study following an initial sample of 200 children from six months of age to adulthood; a cross-sectional growth study investigating changing patterns of intelligence by sampling groups of children at ten different age levels; a trend study projecting the future growth and educational needs of a community from past trends and recent building estimates.

Correlational

Examines the extent to which variations in one factor correspond with variations in one or more other factors based on correlation coefficients. Examples: To investigate relationships between reading achievement scores and one or more other variables of interest; a factor-analytic study of several intelligence tests; a study to predict success in college based on inter-correlation patterns between college grades and selected high school variables.

True Experimental

The researcher investigates possible cause-and-effect relationships by exposing one or more experimental groups to one or more treatment conditions and comparing the results to one or more control groups not receiving the treatment (random assignment being essential). Examples: To investigate the effectiveness of three methods of teaching reading to first grade children using random assignments of children and teachers to groups and methods; to investigate the effects of a specific tranquilizing drug on the learning behavior of boys identified as “hyperactive” using random assignment to groups receiving three different levels of the drug and two control groups with and without a placebo, respectively.

Quasi-Experimental

The researcher approximates the conditions of the true experiment in a setting which does not allow the random assignment of subjects to groups. The researcher must clearly understand what compromises exist in the internal validity of his or her design and proceed within these limitations.

Causal-Comparative or “Ex-Post Facto”

This type of research investigates possible cause-and-effect relationships by observing some existing condition and searching back through the data for plausible causal factors. Examples: To identify factors related to the “drop-out” problem in a particular high school using data from records over the past ten years; to investigate similarities and differences between such groups as smokers and nonsmokers, readers and nonreaders, or delinquents and non-delinquents, using data on file.

Single Subject Research

Data are collected and analyzed for only one subject at a time. It is used when group designs are not appropriate or there are not enough subjects to make a group design possible. Single subject research is often used to study change in behavior following some intervention or treatment.

Historical

Historical researchers seek to reconstruct the past, often in relation to the tenability of a hypothesis. Examples: A study reconstructing practices in the teaching of spelling in the United States during the past fifty years; tracing the history of civil rights in the United States education since the civil war; testing the hypothesis that Francis Bacon is the real author of the “works of William Shakespeare.”

Case Study

An in-depth exploration of a bounded system (individual, activity, event or process) based on extensive data collection. The researcher seeks to develop an in-depth understanding of the case by collecting multiple forms of data. The researcher also locates the case within the larger context.

Ethnography

Ethnographic designs are qualitative procedures for describing, analyzing and interpreting the patterns of behavior, beliefs and language of a culture-sharing group. The goal is to document and analyze the everyday experiences of a particular society, group, institution, or setting. The ethnographer typically spends considerable time in the field, interviewing, observing and gathering documents.

Narrative Research

In narrative research designs researchers collect stories about people’s lives and write narratives about individual experiences. The stories provide the raw data that are analyzed for themes or categories. Narrative research includes autobiographies, autoethnographies, biographies and oral histories.

Mixed Methods

A mixed methods research design combines both quantitative and qualitative research designs for collecting and analyzing data. It consists of merging, integrating and linking the quantitative and qualitative strands. It is used when you have both

quantitative and qualitative data and both types of data, together, yield a better understanding of the research problem than either type by itself.

Action Research

Systematic procedures adopted by practitioners to gather information about, and improve the practice of education. The focus is on specific local problems and it involves an action plan to address the problem. Examples: The implementation and evaluation of in-service training program to help teachers develop new skills in facilitating class discussions; to experiment with new approaches to teaching reading to bilingual children; to develop more effective counseling techniques for underachievers.

SECTION V: ED 695 GUIDING QUESTIONS**Chapter One: Thesis Proposal***Problem Statement*

- Does the first sentence clearly state the problem?
- Is the problem supported by at least 2-4 supporting sentences?
- Have data and references been used to document the existence of the problem?

Importance of the problem and rationale for the study

- Have scholarly references been used to support why this problem must be addressed?
- Has data been provided to document the extent of the problem?
 - Nationally or internationally?
 - Locally or regionally?
- Is the problem worthy of study?

Background of the problem

- Has the history of this problem been identified?
- Have significant data, information, facts already available on this topic been included?
- At the end of this section, does the reader have a sense of how this problem fits into the larger educational context?

Statement of Purpose

- Is the overall purpose of the study clear?
- Does the purpose of the study directly address the problem?

Research question

- Are the research questions stated clearly?

Research design

- Is there a clear description of the research design?
- Have population and sample for this study been clearly defined?
- Have the sources of data been identified?
- Have the steps in the data analysis been described?
- Have the instruments been described?
- Have appropriate permissions been obtained?

Definition of Terms

- Have key terms been defined?
- Are technical terms supported with scholarly citations?

Delimitations of the Study

What is the scope of this study?

What will it address? What will it not address?

To whom and to what settings can generalizations be made?

Limitations of the Study

What are the threats to the internal validity of the study?

What are the intervening or confounding variables that may affect the results of this study?

What are the limitations of this research design?

Organization of the study

Has the organization of the chapters that follow been summarized?

Chapter Two: Literature Review*Introduction*

Does the initial paragraph provide an overview of the chapter by informing the reader what concepts and sub-concepts (i.e., sections) will be reviewed?

When the introduction is finished, is the organization of Chapter Two clear to the reader?

Theoretical Framework

Does this section state the theoretical rationale that drives this thesis?

Is there a clear relationship between the theoretical rationale and the literature review?

Is there a clear relationship between the theoretical rationale and research design?

Is there a clear relationship between the theoretical rationale and the conclusion of the study?

Research (Under this heading, provide various sub-headings based upon the major concepts found in the literature that has been reviewed)

Have the findings been organized conceptually with logical headings and subheadings?

Does this section provide a general understanding of the topic?

Does this section provide a detailed understanding of the research and writing specifically appropriate to the components of this thesis?

Are empirical (i.e. originating in or based on observation or experience) research results cited?

Are original, primary sources used?

Summary

Does the summary succinctly summarize the key research reviewed in this chapter?

Could someone read just the summary and have a general idea of how the research was organized in this chapter and what the key points were?

Conclusion

Does the conclusion synthesize the literature review and clearly indicate a need for this study?

Does the conclusion provide a smooth transition from Chapter Two to Chapter Three?

Overall Structural Considerations

Are over 25 separate sources used and cited to develop Chapters One and Two?

Is the literature review organized in a logical manner (i.e., either chronological, sequential, topical, problem-solution, or cause-effect)?

Does this organizational pattern help to develop the rationale for the study?

Are explicit transitions used to connect ideas among sections?

Are ideas within individual paragraphs logically connected?

Does each section flow coherently?

Is there a brief summary at the end of each section?

Are sections identified appropriately according to APA and the content within the section?

Is every generalization or assertion cited appropriately?

Have quotations been limited and properly cited according to APA formatting?

Chapter Three: Research Design

Introduction

- Does the introduction restate the problem and research question?
- Is there an overview of how this chapter will be organized and presented?

Participants/Subjects

- Are the subjects/participants of this study described?
- Is there an explanation as to how and why the subjects/participants were selected for the study?

Instrumentation

- Have you described how you developed your data-gathering instrument?
- Have you addressed the rationale for inclusion of various items on the instrument?
- Have issues of validity and reliability been addressed?
- Was permission obtained to use copyrighted material?

Data Collection

- Have the following issues been addressed?
 - Procedure for gathering data?
 - When the data was collected?
 - Where the data was gathered?
 - The role of the researcher?
 - Steps taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the data?

Data Analysis

- Has the treatment of the data been discussed in sufficient detail to enable replication of analysis procedures?
- Is it clear how the data were coded and tabulated?
- Are the statistical procedures described?
- For qualitative studies, are the coding and categorizing procedures described?

Summary

- Is there a clear summary of the research design?

Chapter Four: Results

Demographic Information

Have the demographics of the participants been clarified so that the reader can determine the generalizability of the findings?

For qualitative studies, has the site or setting been adequately described?

Findings

Are data presented in a manner that actually answers the research questions asked in Chapter One?

Have data been compiled and summarized in a concise fashion?

Do charts, tables, graphs, etc. follow APA guidelines?

Is there a narrative description of the findings of each table?

Summary

Does the summary highlight the findings?

Is there a smooth transition to Chapter Five?

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Summary

Is there a summary of the problem, research question, research design, data collection, data analysis and findings?

Conclusions

Do the conclusions provide answers to the research questions presented in Chapter One?

Discussion

Have the theory and research from Chapter Two been used to interpret the conclusions?

Have findings of this study been compared with the findings of other studies discussed in Chapter Two?

Have the educational implications of the findings been discussed?

Recommendations

Do the recommendations for policy and practice arise logically from the findings of the study?

Do the recommendations for further research address the limitations of this study?

Do the recommendations address questions that remain unanswered about this topic?

Format and Style Issues

- Does the format follow the guidelines specified in this handbook?
- Are all chapters and sections present?
- Are separate sections designated using APA format?
- Are citations in the body of the paper written in correct APA format?
- Are all quotations cited, noted, and using APA format?
- Does the reference list use APA style?
- Does the title page follow the guidelines in this handbook?
- Is the paper double spaced?
- Is the left margin 1.5 inches?
- Are pages numbered?
- Is the paper easy to read and understand?
- Does the paper flow?
- Is it written in a consistent style (third person or first person)?
- Is the language appropriately clear and specific?
- Is nonsexist and other non-biased language used?
- Are specific terms defined in context?
- Are all words spelled correctly? Are you sure?
- Is there subject/verb/referent agreement? Is correct grammar used?
- Has permission been gained to use copyrighted material? Is the letter of permission included in an appendix? Is a copy of the GVSU'S Human Research Review Committee permission included? Are copies of consent forms included?
- Does the thesis represent graduate level work?

Page Numbering

The acknowledgement page, abstract, and table of contents should be numbered with lower case roman numerals (centered at the bottom of the page) in the order listed. Numerical pagination begins on page two of Chapter One with number "2" on the upper right-hand corner of the page.

Headings

Regardless of the number of levels of subheadings within a section the heading structure follows the same format.

Level 1 Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading

Level 2 Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading

Level 3 Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.

Level 4 Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph ending with a period.

Level 5 Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph ending with a period.

Three levels of headings (see section 3.03 of the APA Manual) look like this:

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Parent Involvement

Utilizing needs assessments. Your text would automatically follow this “heading” like this.

Notice that the 3rd level is tabbed in the same amount of space as a paragraph tab. It is italicized, and only the first word is capitalized. A period is placed at the end, and your text immediately follows.

SECTION VI: PERMISSIONS

It is necessary to request and receive permission to include the work of others in your project or thesis. You should prepare the letters so that you are granted the specific permission you are requesting. You may use the samples provided as models. Be sure to include both the letters of permissions you create and the responses in their own appendix in your bound document. If the appropriate permissions are not included, your project may not be accepted. Discuss options with your 695 supervisor. For more information on permission see sections 2.12 and 8.04 of the APA manual.

If your thesis includes data collected from **human subjects**, including adults or children, you must submit a proposal to the GVSU'S Human Research Review Committee. This process can take up to two weeks and is required **before** you may begin to collect or use data for your project or thesis.

Written permissions need to be included for the following:

- A. **Permission to conduct your study:** If you are including human subjects in your thesis, you will need to complete and include three types of permissions: 1) approval from the GVSU'S Human Research Review Committee, 2) written permission from the person in your district (your principal, supervisor or whoever is authorized to grant such permissions) to proceed, and 3) written permission from the parents of students who are under 18 or the study subjects themselves if they are over 18, giving their informed consent to participate in the study. In each of these permissions, you should describe clearly and completely what will be done and how will the information will be used and reported. Attach sample data collection forms if appropriate. These permissions must be received prior to your beginning the collection of data.
- B. **Permission from institutional owners:** (e.g., district, schools, foundations). You need to request permission for use of materials produced by them or their employees for use in your paper (e.g., district scope and sequence).
- C. **Permission to use an individual creative product:** (e.g., yours, a professor's, workshop presenter's). Permission should state how the materials included in the project may be used by others (e.g., copied for classroom use, disseminated with credit given to author).
Note: If permission cannot be secured, then you can describe work and refer reader to where material can be purchased or found (e.g., AIMs materials).
- D. **Permission to use materials developed and disseminated by the state or other standards organizations:** (e.g., state standards, program administrative rules, etc.). Write to the state or standard's group to ask permission to include these in your work. If permission is not received prior to the deadline, include a copy of your letter in the appendix. *Note:* This permission is necessary if you are including major portions of the work (> 30%). Shorter sections may be cited without additional permission.

E. **Other permissions:**

1. Schools may give permission to use school data such as MEAP scores. Data may be used in its aggregated format only.
2. Written permission from parents of children under 18 and from adults over 18 to have a work sample or picture included in the project.

Note: If anonymity is requested, you may include a sample letter of permission in the appendix and state that the author has the signed permission on file. Retain these for your records.

Protection of Human Subjects

All projects within Grand Valley State University involving human subjects (e.g. a survey administered to students or faculty) performed at GVSU and/or by GVSU candidates must be reviewed and approved prior to beginning the research. For more detailed information regarding the university's policies on research involving human subjects as well as the application for review please go to the following website:

http://gvsu.edu/research_dev/index.cfm?id=B27B6479-FEBF-9BF7-BDA6D693E6DC0773

Prior to submitting your application you must consult with your 695 advisor.

Policy on Research Integrity

The university has developed policies and procedures to comply with the Federal Government's regulations regarding dealing with and reporting possible misconduct in science. Allegations of misconduct in science should be referred to the appropriate dean or appointing officer and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (excerpted from *Grand Valley State University Policy and Procedures for Handling Allegations of Misconduct in Science*; for the complete policy refer to the *Faculty Handbook*). Candidates involved in research who suspect that an incident of misconduct in science has occurred should report the incident to the dean of their academic division or college.

Sample letter requesting permission for student to participate in a study.

Date _____

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am currently taking a course at Grand Valley State University in which we are learning about the educational needs and preferences of students. I am requesting your permission to learn more about your child's educational needs. This information can help your child be an even more successful student. I will share what we learn and make some recommendations about learning experiences which seem appropriate for your child.

Participation in this is voluntary. If you are willing to have your child to participate, I would appreciate your signing and returning this letter to me. Any information that is disseminated will not identify your child. If you have any questions about your rights in the study, you may contact the Chair of Grand Valley State University Human Research Review Committee at 616-331-3197 or email: hrrc@gvsu.edu.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Your name

I give permission for my child _____ to participate in this project.

Signed _____ Date _____
Parent or guardian

Sample letter to use materials developed by your school district or to study students in your district.

The letter should be addressed to your principal, supervisor or whoever is responsible for granting such permission in your district.

Date

To own district/school:

May I receive permission to conduct my study in my classroom/my school using _____ materials and summary data obtained from students using _____? I will not be using any individual student data that could be traced to the student (such as copies of writing or test scores).

I plan to use student work and/or test scores in summary form only. If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at _____. If you have any questions about the human subjects' rights in the study, you may contact the Chair of Grand Valley State University Human Research Review Committee at 616-331-3197 or email: hrrc@gvsu.edu.

Your name and position

Approved by: _____ (*signature, position and date*)

Date

To Whom It May Concern:

Your name has the permission of the _____ District to use and include the following materials in her Master's Project for Grand Valley State University:

1. _____ District materials pertinent to her study and included in her Master's Project.
2. Materials created by _____ staff which are pertinent to this body of work.
3. Materials developed by *your name* for this study.

All materials pertaining to _____ Public Schools as well as all materials produced by employees of _____ district may NOT be reproduced without written permission from the district.

Sincerely,

Signature, Position

School District Name

Copyright permissions

Signed evidence of permission is required when including a copyrighted item in a 695 thesis. As you consider whether something you are including is covered or not, ask yourself the following questions: *How important is the item for the success of the thesis/project? Can I describe the item in the text of my thesis/project without actually reproducing or adapting the item? Do I have enough time to request AND receive a reply from the copyright holder?* Consult the APA manual, section 2.12 and section 8.04 for further information.

Finding out who is the copyright holder

Books: check with the publisher. Publisher telephone numbers, web pages, or email addresses are often included following the title page. A librarian at any of our libraries can assist you in finding out information about publishers.

Journals: check with the publisher. Publisher telephone numbers, web pages, or email addresses are often located in a section providing information about the journal. A librarian at any of our libraries can assist you in finding out information about publishers.

Web/Electronic Sources: look for the hyperlinks labeled “Contact Us,” “About Us,” copyright, permission, email address. Sometimes it is easier to find the telephone number on the web page.

Citation Format

See page 38 of the APA manual for instructions for how to note copyright permissions when an item is used within the body of the thesis/project.

If the item is placed in the appendix, the citation is placed under the item. The citation should be in the format stated in APA manual, section 2.12, or in the manner requested by the copyright holder.

A copy of the signed permission letter, email, or fax from the copyright holder is included in the appendix.

See a sample of a letter requesting permission to include material letters below.

Seek permission for:

Pages from Journal or Book

Obtain permission to include pages of another person’s work in the thesis/project. Permission may be in the form of a letter, email, or fax. The

citation should be in the format stated in the APA manual, section 2.12 and 8.04

Government Materials

Not all state and federal published materials are copyright free. Contact the publishing agency to verify if the item is copyrighted.

U.S. Dept. of Education: “Unless specifically stated otherwise, all information on the U.S. Dept. of Education’s web site at www.ed.gov is in the public domain, and may be reproduced, published or otherwise used without ED’s permission. This statement does not pertain to information at web sites other than www.ed.gov, whether funded by ED or not.”

- United States Department of Education. (n.d.) *Copyright status notice*. Retrieved February 4, 2005 from <http://www.ed.gov/notices/copyright/index.html>

Michigan Dept. of Education: “All copyrighted material and other means of proprietary or copyright identification must be kept intact and unmodified. Modification of the materials or use of the materials for purposes **not granted** by the State of Michigan is a violation of Michigan’s copyright and other proprietary rights.”

- Michigan Department of Education. (2005) *Michigan terms of use and linking policy*. Retrieved February 4, 2005 <http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-5644-2089--,00html>

Citations should be in the format stated in the APA manual.

School District Materials

All communications and materials developed by a school district employee belong to the school district. The citation should be in the format stated in the APA manual.

Adaptations (APA section 8.04)

Obtain permission to reproduce OR adapt all or part of a table or figure. Include citation at the bottom of the adaptation, with statement: Reprinted (or adapted) with permission. The citation should be in the format stated in the APA manual, section 2.12.

Tests and Questionnaires

Determine who owns the copyright; obtain permission for print **AND** electronic reuse. Include citation at the bottom of the test or questionnaire. The citation should be in the format stated in the APA manual, section 2.12.

Professional or commercial tests/questionnaires **often DO NOT** allow for the use of even one question.

Photographs

People: obtain a signed release from the person, parent, or guardian. Place a copy of the signed permission letter in the appendix. Keep the original letters of the signed release in your files.

Photo: obtain written permission for reuse of any photo (print or electronic) from the copyright holder. Include citation (copyright holder/photographer) at the bottom of the photo. Place a copy of the signed permission letter in the appendix. Keep the original letters of the signed release in your files. The citation should be in the format stated in the APA manual, section 2.12.

Web/Electronic Sources

Just because it is found on the Internet, does not mean that the item can be included freely in the thesis or project.

Communications

The person who wrote the communication (letter, memo, email, etc.) owns the item.

Sample of a Copyright Permission Letter

Date

Name and Address or Email
of Copyright Holder

Dear _____:

I am currently enrolled in the Grand Valley State University (GVSU) Graduate Studies in Education Program, and I am writing a thesis for the completion of my Master’s in Education. My *thesis* is entitled “Title.” May I receive permission to include in the appendices a copy(ies) of the following item(s)?

Author and full citation of work

Description or title of chart, picture, list, letter, survey, etc. you wish to include in the appendices. (Attach a copy of the piece to be reproduced.)

Your signature at the bottom portion of this letter confirms your ownership of the above item. The inclusion of your copyrighted material will not restrict your republication of the material in any other form. Please advise if you wish a specific copyright notice to be included on each page. My *thesis* will be cataloged in the GVSU library and will be available to other students and colleges for circulation.

Sincerely,

Name

Address

Phone Numbers

Fax Number

E-mail



PERMISSION IS GRANTED to you (Your Name) to include the requested material(s) in (his or her) GVSU Master’s of Education *thesis*.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____

Use the following permission signature format if a publishing house or other organization owns the copyright.

Name of Company/Organization

Permission granted by: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Sample permission from person who created original material that you are using in your work.

To Whom It May Concern:

Your name has my permission to use the _____ forms that I developed in her research and to report on its use in her EDG 695 paper. She also has permission to continue to use it in additional staff development applications should she want to as long as credit is given.

Sincerely,

_____, Professor
College of Education

Sample e-mail permission in a project.

From: Joseph Renzulli [renzulli@uconnvm.uconn.edu]
Date: Friday, July 02, 2003 2:23 PM
Subject: Permission

To: *Your name*
From: Joseph Renzulli

Permission to Include Published Material

Permission is hereby granted to include the Interest-A-Lyzer in the Master's Project of *your name*.

SECTION VII : SAMPLE PAGES

Templates for the following sample pages can be found at the following website:

http://www.gvsu.edu/coe_grad/index.cfm?id=5EA8B09A-07DC-91BD-233261887FDEF9D4

Sample Title Page

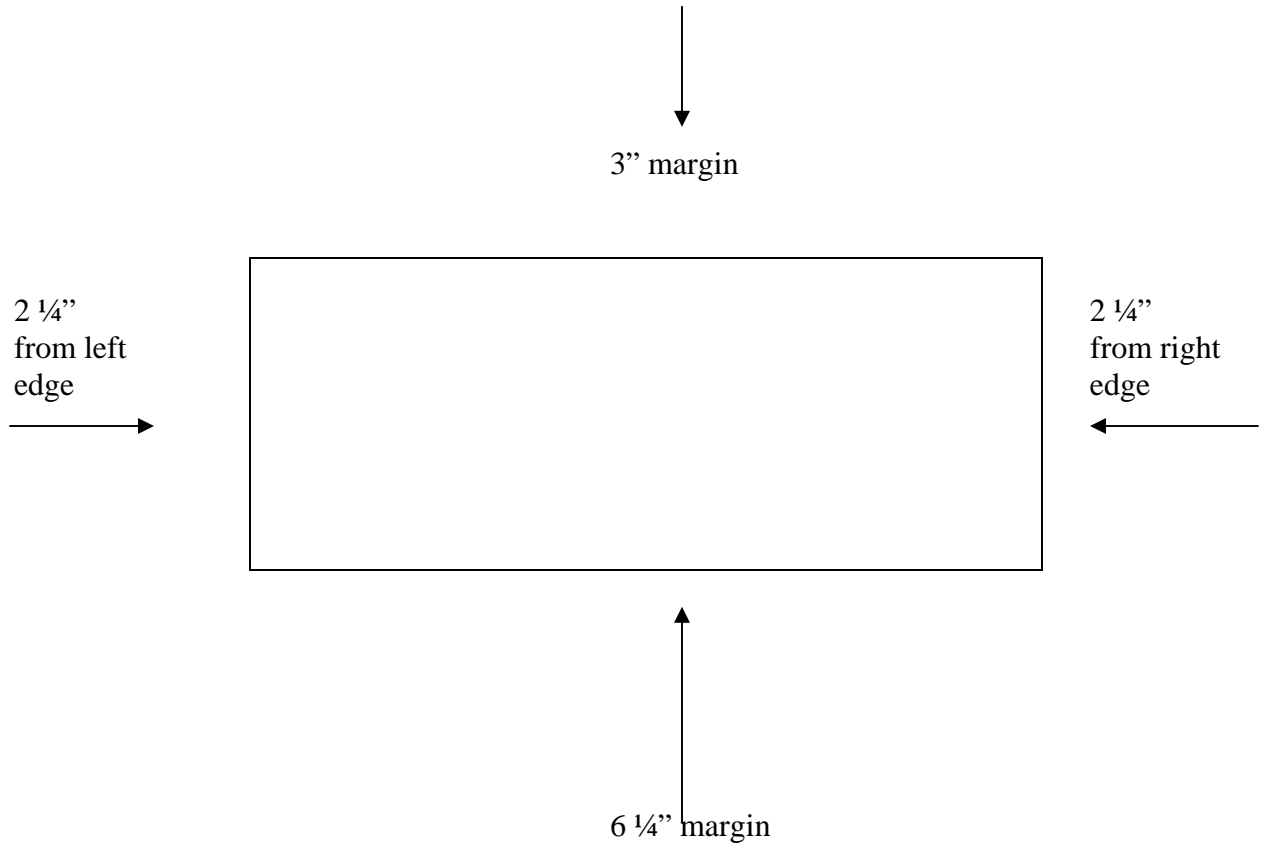
An Examination of the Role of Technology
in Elementary Language Arts
by
Susan Marie Student
December 2008

Master's Thesis
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty of the College of Education
At Grand Valley State University
In partial fulfillment of the
Degree of Master of Education

Grand Valley State University

Window Dimensions for Projects and Theses

Please follow the measurements below for the placement of your title on the title page in order for the title to be visible through the window of the binding cover.



Hints/Tips!

1. Set Left and Right Margins at 2.25".
2. Set Top margin at 3.0" and set Bottom margin at 6.25".
3. Center Title Page both Horizontally and Vertically.
4. To check if the Title Page fits within the Window, put it on top of this sheet and hold it up to the light. The Title Page should fit within the above square.

If you have any questions contact:

Sarah Pepper

210 JHZ Library

Grand Valley State University

Allendale, MI 49401

(616) 331-2621

Grand Valley State University

Allendale, MI 49401

(616) 331-2621

Sample Acknowledgments Page

[The Acknowledgments are optional and follow the title page. A sample format is indicated below.]

Acknowledgments

In writing this final project, I have benefited from the encouragement, advice, and constructive criticism of Professors William B. Mabie, Susan L. Jones, and James M. Montgomery. My thanks go to them, as to the many others at Grand Valley State University, who have given much needed help. The financial benefits of a fellowship, and the intellectual training from the faculty in the College of Education, have made graduate study a pleasure and a privilege in a country that is not my own.

Steven Anthony Michael

(Note: Name only--no titles)

Note: The Acknowledgment is numbered with a Roman numeral, centered at the bottom of the page.

Sample Abstract

Abstract

Research has revealed important information about learning and effective teaching, yet most teacher evaluation systems in public schools throughout the country, including Thesis Central High School, have not been revised to reflect this new information. This thesis explores the recent history of teacher evaluation systems as well as contemporary thought regarding how to improve these systems. An effective teacher evaluation program must acknowledge the differing needs of teachers at various points in their careers and must expand beyond a traditional model that is based exclusively on administrator observation. The Teacher Evaluation System for Thesis Central High School addresses the varying needs of new teachers, experienced teachers, and struggling teachers. Additionally, it combines summative elements of evaluation that will assist administrators in making employment decisions, with formative elements of evaluation that will serve to support and encourage professional growth.

Note: The abstract page is numbered with a Roman numeral, not an Arabic numeral.

Sample Table of Contents

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(Note: The Table of Contents is numbered with a Roman numeral, centered at the bottom of the page.)

695 DATA FORM

**GRAND VALLEY STATE
UNIVERSITY
ED 695 Data Form**

***This page will need to be recreated on your word processor using a 1 1/2" left margin.**

NAME: _____

MAJOR: (Choose only 1)

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| _____ Adult/High Ed | _____ Elem. Ed. | _____ Sp. Ed. Admin |
| _____ CSAL | _____ Ed. Diff. | _____ Early child/ECDD |
| _____ Lib. media | _____ Mid or Sec.. | _____ EI |
| _____ Ed Tech | _____ Reading | _____ LD |
| _____ Ed Leadership | _____ School Counseling | _____ TESOL |

TITLE: _____

PAPER TYPE: Thesis **SEM/YR COMPLETED:** _____

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE OF APPROVAL _____

Using key words or phrases, choose several ERIC descriptors (5 - 7 minimum) to describe the contents of your project. ERIC descriptors can be found online at http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=Thesaurus&_nfls=false. **Please delete these instructions from your data form.**

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

**** Note:** This page must be bound as the last page in your Master's thesis.

SECTION VIII: EVALUATION OF THE THESIS

ED 695 Thesis Competencies

Domain 1 – Identification, Definition and Context

- 1a. Demonstrates knowledge of problem
- 1b. Demonstrates knowledge of importance/rationale
- 1c. Contains clear statement of purpose
- 1d. Demonstrates knowledge of background
- 1e. Identifies key terms and limitations

Domain 2 – The Literature Review

- 2a. Synthesizes existing research on the topic
- 2b. Analyzes key work in the field
- 2c. Develops an argument for the project
- 2d. Identifies any gaps in the literature
- 2e. Identifies a theoretical perspective that drives the project

Domain 3 – Research Description

- 3a. Restates the problem and research question
- 3b. Describes study design, sampling, subjects, instrumentation, procedures
- 3c. Describes data gathered, data analysis and results
- 3d. Interprets results and draws conclusions and implications
- 3e. Describes plans for dissemination

Domain 4 – Format

- 4a. Aligns chapters with APA standards
- 4b. Uses APA citation style
- 4c. Matches reference list to citations, includes at least 25 items, aligns with APA standards
- 4d. Formats title page, table of contents, and appendices correctly
- 4e. Describes project adequately by means of the abstract

Grading Criteria

The thesis and supporting documents will be assessed using the guidelines included in Section V of this document. In addition, your thesis will be assessed for completeness, consistency, accuracy, quality, scholarly writing, relevance to the educational community and completion in a timely manner.

Rewriting of the thesis and its components is expected. In general, no grade will be assigned until the project is completed in an acceptable form. In addition, candidates are vigorously encouraged to strive to have their thesis identified as

“distinguished” so that others in the educational community may benefit from their work.

This research should be able to be completed in one semester. Your final thesis document is needed before the end of the semester if you want your grade recorded on time. If your thesis report is not received in final form in time for your professor to grade, or if it is received and still needs revision, you may end up with an unsatisfactory grade. Grades of “Incomplete” are not awarded without proof of extenuating circumstances. If you are awarded a grade of “Incomplete” you will then have one semester to complete the unfinished work. If it is not completed, the grade of “Incomplete” automatically becomes an “F.” To remove an “F,” you would need to take and pay for 695 again. When a candidate repeats a course, the final attempt counts towards the candidate’s GPA but the grades for all attempts still show on the transcript.

To guide you in your writing, sample theses may be obtained from your 695 supervisor as well as on the 9th floor of the Eberhard Center. Theses are located at the Steelcase Library. Limited number of theses may be accessed online by clicking the “Current Research @ GVSU” link on the GVSU Database list (<http://wwwlib.umi.com/cr/gvsu/main>)

Plagiarism

Any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged. Offering the work of someone else as one’s own is plagiarism. The language or ideas taken from another may range from isolated formulas, sentences, or paragraphs to entire articles copied from books, periodicals, speeches, or the writing of other candidates. The offering of materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgment also is considered plagiarism. Any candidate who fails to give credit in written or oral work for the ideas or materials that have been taken from another is guilty of plagiarism.

Such activity may result in failure of a specific assignment, an entire course, or, if flagrant, dismissal from Grand Valley. For further information, see the *Student Code*.

SECTION IX. BINDING REQUIREMENTS

For the master's thesis publishing and binding process please check the following website:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/library/index.cfm?id=F65E06F9-BEE4-7CDC-A2CE6EA38399D5D3#project>

Please check with your thesis advisor for additional information.