

Guidelines for the Preparation of the Master's Thesis

2019-2020

ED 695: Master's Thesis

Grand Valley State University
College of Education
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GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Section I: Introduction

Please read the university's Guidelines for Preparation for Theses and Dissertations found at: <http://www.gvsu.edu/gs/thesis-and-dissertation-information-135.htm>. Here you will find not only the guidelines, but other details and forms pertinent to the completion of your study.

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. Offered every semester. Prerequisites: 27 Credit hours; EDF 660; Application Required

Difference between a Project and a Thesis

In a project the candidate applies theory and empirical research to create a product (e.g. program, curriculum, or intervention) that is designed to address (i.e. solve, remediate, or improve) a practical educational problem.

A thesis is a systematic inquiry into an issue or phenomenon. The candidate identifies an educational issue or phenomenon to investigate, articulates the question(s), issue(s), problem(s), or argument related to that issue or phenomenon, and gathers, analyzes, and interprets information to arrive at conclusions.

Human Research Review Committee Approval

If the study you plan to conduct involves the gathering of data from human participants, 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 participants as well as the application for review, please go to the following website: <http://www.gvsu.edu/hrrc/>

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training for Graduate Students

College of Education graduate students must complete RCR Training prior to completion of 50% of the graduate program or prior to engaging in any research activity. Certification expires after 3 years and must be current while engaging in any research activity. Additional information on Responsible Conduct of Research may be found at <http://www.gvsu.edu/rcr/>. Students can access the RCR Training and Certification program at <https://www.gvsu.edu/rcr/online-rcr-training-and-certification-29.htm>. Please check with your ED 695 thesis chair for further information.

Required Style Manual

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed., 3rd printing). Washington, DC: 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/>

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:

- Obtain the thesis chair's approval of the topic.
- Obtain permission from the HRRC, if necessary.

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

- Confer with the thesis chair frequently and obtain the thesis chair's approval at every phase of the project.
- Submit work that is typed, and proofed for spelling and grammatical errors.

The candidate is held accountable for planning, implementation, and analysis. The thesis chair's role is to help shape the content, not serve as a proofreader.

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

Committee's Role

Thesis Committee Chairperson

Qualifications:

The committee chairperson is required to hold full graduate faculty status in the College of Education and be capable of mentoring graduate students in scholarly activities. The chairperson must have an understanding of the College of Education's ED 695 Thesis Handbook and the University's Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations. The College of Education further requires any student earning a Master's in Education and electing the thesis

option have a thesis committee consisting of at least two College of Education faculty, including the committee chairperson. The committee chairperson will assist the student in coordinating the appropriate committee structure.

Responsibilities:

The primary responsibility of the chairperson of the committee is to mentor the student with the goals of having the student complete a worthwhile study that (a) has rigor, (b) contributes new knowledge to the field, and (c) has an appropriate scope such that the student can complete it within a reasonable amount of time. Additionally the chairperson should challenge the student to develop and use the skills of critical inquiry, evidenced-based decision-making, reflection, presentation, and scholarly writing.

The committee chairperson will help the student conceptualize the study, that is, formulate an appropriate research question, select an appropriate investigative approach compliant with ethical standards, develop data collection instruments, determine appropriate data analysis procedures, and support the student in navigating the proposal through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process if necessary.

The committee chairperson will work with the student drafting all the chapters, providing constructive feedback, editorial comments, and suggestions for improvement to the student. Upon completion of the first round of edits, the chairperson will forward the edited draft to the committee for review. The chairperson is expected to critically evaluate the final documents.

The committee chairperson is responsible for assisting the student with the formation of the committee and for scheduling, announcing, and conducting the public defense of the proposal and the final thesis. The committee chairperson is responsible for calling committee meetings, coordinating the activities of the committee, and setting the tone for fair, honest, and equitable assessment of the student's academic work. The chairperson will seek input from the committee to determine the grade, working to ensure a successful, satisfactory outcome for both the student and the committee. The chairperson will assist the student in collecting the Academic Dean signature on their final Approval Form and ensuring that the final approval form is submitted to The Graduate School.

The committee chairperson is responsible for communicating the timelines with the student.

If the student is not successful in completing his/her thesis in the semester in which he/she enrolls in ED 695, the chairperson needs to confirm with the student the need to continually enroll in ED 696 until the thesis is successfully defended. The chairperson will also notify the Student Information and Services Center that a permit is required for the student to enroll in ED 696.

Thesis Committee Members

Qualifications:

The thesis committee members are required to hold graduate faculty status at GVSU and be capable of mentoring graduate students in scholarly activities. At least one committee member must be from outside the specific research or disciplinary area of study.

Responsibilities:

The responsibilities of the committee members are to work with the student and committee chairperson to ensure a successful, satisfactory outcome that is assessed in a fair, honest, and equitable manner. Members are to make active contributions to improve the thesis. They will lend their expertise and knowledge to help the student conceptualize the study, that is, formulate an appropriate research question, select an appropriate investigative approach compliant with ethical standards, develop data collection instruments, and determine appropriate data analysis procedures. Members also are expected to critically read and evaluate the initial proposal and final documents, sharing constructive feedback, editorial comment, and suggestions for improvement with the student and the committee chairperson in a collegial manner. The committee members will attend the public thesis proposal defense, attend the public thesis defense, and offer input on the final grade.

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 through university libraries databases and are excellent starting places for locating the literature associated with your topic. 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 for assistance with your research.

For general assistance with writing (e.g., grammar, style, format, etc.), contact the Grand Valley State University Writing Center, located in room 120, Lake Ontario at (616) 331-2922 or at www.gvsu.edu/wc/.

For assistance with statistical analysis, contact the Statistical Consulting Center, located in 178 Mackinac A-1 at (616) 331-3355 or at www.gvsu.edu/scc/.

Student Responsibilities Prior to Enrollment in ED 695

Approximately halfway through your Master's degree program (*Note: These activities could occur over several semesters.*):

1. Meet with graduate program advisor and/or thesis committee chair to discuss a topic of study and investigative approaches for your thesis.
2. Identify a Thesis Committee Chair if initial meeting was with graduate program advisor. Chair must hold full graduate faculty status within the COE.
3. Begin developing proposal for presentation to committee.

In the 1st semester of ED 695, a candidate must:

1. Identify two additional graduate faculty members to serve as committee members. Share your research topic and verify members' willingness to serve on your committee. Chair might be able to suggest other members with relevant expertise.

2. Gain approval of the committee from the Dean of The Graduate School. Download and fill out the committee member endorsement form (<http://www.gvsu.edu/gs/thesis-and-dissertation-information-135.htm>). Send to the College of Education Dean's Office (coeserve@gvsu.edu) and The Graduate School office (gradschool@gvsu.edu).
3. Submit a proposal including draft versions of your research question, literature review and investigative approach to committee members within four weeks of entering ED 695.
4. Work with the Chair to schedule a proposal defense at least two weeks prior to the end of the 1st semester of ED 695.
5. Complete any required revisions, additions, and deletions resulting from defense.
6. If your study involves research with human participants, you must have satisfied the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training requirement before submitting your protocol to the Human Research Review Committee (HRRC). The HRRC website (<http://www.gvsu.edu/hrrc/>).
7. If your study involves research with human participants, you must apply for IRB approval through the HRRC (your committee chair's approval is required as part of this process).

Additional Resources

- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Concise rules of APA style* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Fraenkel, J., Wallen, N., & Hyun, H. (2015). *How to design and evaluate research in education*. (9th ed.). New York, NY: 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., & Schumacher, S. (2000). *Research in education: A conceptual introduction* (5th ed.). New York, NY: 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).

The body of the manuscript, including appendices, must adhere to the following margins:

- Left margin: 1.5 inch for hardback binding; 1 inch for spiral binding or PDF
- Right margin: 1 inch
- Top margin: 1 inch
- Bottom margin: 1 inch

See The Graduate School Guidelines for Preparation for Thesis for more information:

<http://gvsu.edu/gs/thesis-and-dissertation-information-135.htm>.

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. Per The Graduate School, its title is to be bold. 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. Per The Graduate School, its title is to be bold. See sample abstract in Section VII of this document.

Table of Contents

This page is usually completed last. Per The Graduate School, its title is to be bold. 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 participants, 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 EDF 660 will probably require substantial editing before it is accepted by the 695 thesis chair.

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. You are required to use a *minimum of 25 sources* in your thesis. The vast majority of these sources will be presented in the Literature Review which 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 this chapter 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](#).

Appendixes

Per The Graduate School, the Appendix is found at the end of the fifth chapter. 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.

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 the Education Resource Librarian at 616-331-3500.

References

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.

Section III: Chapter Descriptions

Chapter One: Introduction

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 in 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 and/or Propositions

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. If you are doing qualitative research, state the propositions that are helping to narrow the focus of your study. Propositions are tentative, flexible statements that can come from multiple sources (e.g., theoretical and empirical research literature or professional and experiential knowledge), used to help guide the collection and analysis of qualitative data.

Design, Data Collection and Analysis

Specify the research site and the participants for the study. Studies involving the use of human participants 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/or 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 unusual terms 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, participants, 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 by your committee 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 proposal defense must be scheduled with your committee members and then publicly announced. You will need to submit your proposal to your committee members at least one week before the proposal defense.

Your thesis chair will want to receive your first draft proposal early on to help you through the proposal defense process. Proposals written for EDF 660 require the approval of your 695 thesis chair 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 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

You are required to use a *minimum of 25 sources* in your thesis. The vast 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 $\chi^2 = 178.72$; $p < .0001$; $df = 2$. The second, “Who reads better to young children?” resulted in a significance of $\chi^2 = 256.82$; $p < .0001$; $df = 2$, while the third, “Who writes stories better?” resulted in $\chi^2 = 170.02$; $p < .0001$; $df = 2$. A statistical summary is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Who is Better at These Activities?

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

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 the Education Resource Librarian at 616-331-3500. 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.

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.

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 participants 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 participants 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: Guiding Questions

Chapter One: Introduction

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?

Per The Graduate School, there is no title in the page header at the top of every page?

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 (bottom, centered)?

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 Human Research Review Committee permission included? Are copies of consent forms included?

Does the thesis represent graduate level work?

Page Numbering

Arabic numbers are used for thesis pagination. Page numbers do not appear on Page 1 (Title Page) and Page 2 (Approval Page). Page numbers appear with the Dedication Page and are centered .5” from the bottom 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
Research
Parent Involvement
Utilizing needs assessments. Your text would automatically follow this “heading.”

Note: The title of the chapter does NOT count as a level 1 heading. Only the headings count within the various levels.

Note: The level 3 heading is tabbed in the same amount of space as a paragraph tab. It is bold, 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 thesis chair. For more information on permission see sections 2.12 and 8.04 of the APA manual.

If your thesis includes data collected from **human participants**, 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 participants 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 participants 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 Participants

All projects within Grand Valley State University involving human participants (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 participants as well as the application for review please go to the following website: <http://www.gvsu.edu/hrrc/>

Prior to submitting your application you must consult with your 695 thesis chair and committee members.

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 Permission Letters

Request 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

Request Permission to Use Materials Developed by a 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 participants’ 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

Note: 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.edu.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 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 from <http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-5644-2089--,00.html>

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 re-publication 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 the Creator of Original Material

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/m-ed-capstones-resources-35.htm>

Sample Title Page

An Examination of the Role of Technology

in Elementary Language Arts

Susan Marie Student

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Education

Literacy Studies

August 2019

Sample Acknowledgments Page

[The Acknowledgments page is optional and follows 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 page is numbered as page 3 or 4, centered, and .5" from 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 an Arabic numeral, centered and .5” from the bottom of the page.

Sample Table of Contents

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Note: The Table of Contents is numbered with an Arabic numeral, centered and .5” from the bottom of the page.

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, participants, 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 Master's Thesis will be assessed using the guidelines included in this document. In addition, your Master's Thesis will be assessed for completeness, consistency, accuracy, quality, scholarly writing, relevance to the educational community and completion in a timely manner.

Rewriting various sections of the Master's Thesis and its components is expected. In general, no grade will be assigned until the thesis is in acceptable form. In addition, students are vigorously encouraged to strive to have their paper published such that others in the educational community may benefit from their work.

This research should be able to be completed in one semester. Your final Master's Thesis is needed before the end of the semester if you want your grade recorded on time. The grades "PS" (Pass), "PD" (Pass with Distinction), "W" (Withdrawal) and "NC" (No Credit) are the only grades that may be assigned as the *final grade* for a graduate thesis. The "W" grade is available only for students that wish to voluntarily and permanently terminate their degree program. The grade "X" (Deferred) is the only grade that may be assigned to a graduate thesis that has not been completed and for which the instructor of record (or 695 supervisor) does not intend to award a

final grade during the semester of enrollment. The grade of X is not a permanent grade and must be resolved prior to graduation. If your Master's Thesis is not received in final form in time for your professor to grade it or if it is received and still needs revision, you may end up with an "X" (Deferred) grade, which requires you to enroll for XXX-696 (Continuous Enrollment) each semester for at least 1 credit hour until thesis is completed.

Once enrolled for XXX-696, the grade of R (Research) is the only grade that may be assigned each semester to a continuous enrollment course for a graduate project or thesis (xxx-696). The R grade is permanent and not affected by the final grade assigned to the project, thesis, or dissertation. All grades assigned for a project, thesis, dissertation, or a related continuous enrollment course bear no quality points and do not affect the calculation of any grade point average.

Pass versus Pass with Distinction

Evaluation of the project (ED 693) is based on the following areas:

- Originality
- Problem statement and significance
- Theoretical framework
- Literature review
- Methods/approach
- Interpretations and conclusions
- Writing and organization

Pass with distinction is assigned only to those candidates whose performance is superior in each of the areas identified above and whose drafts require minimal revision.

Pass is the usual decision. It may also be superior in some but not all of the areas identified above.

To guide you in your writing, sample theses may be obtained from your 695 supervisor. Additionally, some student theses are located at the Steelcase Library (Pew Campus) for your review and projects winning the *COE Dean's Award for Outstanding Master's Thesis* can be accessed by following this ScholarWorks@GVSU link

<http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/coeawardwinners/> .

Considerations for Assigning the <i>Pass with Distinction</i> Grade	
Originality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates originality through one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Addresses unique question or area of application ○ Extends, replaces or integrates existing paradigms ○ Provides fresh insight ○ Uses innovative approach
Problem Statement and Significance	• Clearly identifies a problem
	• Supports the existence of the problem with compelling evidence
	• Provides a clear and compelling rationale for examining the problem
	• Demonstrates clear, significant value to or impact on the field or profession
	• Presents complex argument, including counter argument, if applicable
Theoretical Framework	• Includes insightful, sophisticated and consistent use of theories to support question, methods/approach, interpretations and conclusions
Literature Review	• Draws from primary sources /best literature in the field
	• Displays deep and critical understanding of literature
	• Synthesizes literature and integrates own work into existing literature
Methods/Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a novel approach to the problem through one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Uses new methods, tools or analyses ○ Creates innovative application or solution to the problem ○ Advances the discussion
Interpretations and Conclusions	• Demonstrates compelling connection between the problem, literature review, and findings/solutions/conclusions
	• Provides sophisticated and convincing interpretations, implications and analyses
Writing and Organization	• Writes clearly with a strong academic voice
	• Fits components together seamlessly
	• Uses citations accurately and correctly
	• Suitable for publication or presentation at a peer-reviewed venue, in part or whole

Thesis and Dissertation Defense

All theses and dissertations must be publically defended. A thesis or dissertation announcement must be posted electronically on an academic program or departmental website, distributed electronically to appropriate list-serves, and posted on appropriate bulletin boards at least 7 calendar days prior to scheduled proposal date.

A successful thesis or dissertation defense occurs when the majority of your committee members approve of your thesis or dissertation work. Your committee members will document the approval of your research, scholarly or creative work with written signatures. Committee members and your college dean attest to the acceptability of the document from all standpoints when they sign the approval page after you have successfully defended your thesis or dissertation.

Credit Hours

You must enroll in the course(s) appropriate to your academic unit for the semester(s) you are working on your thesis or dissertation. Consult your academic unit or contact your graduate program director for guidelines on registration for classes and credit hours for your particular degree.

Sample Theses

To guide you in your writing, sample theses may be obtained by going to <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/coedeansaward> and <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/grcp/>.

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: Scholarworks@GVSU Submission Requirements

All Master's theses are included in GVSU's Scholarworks@GVSU Institutional Repository. Completed theses that have been approved by your department and The Graduate School should be submitted electronically to Scholarworks@gvsu.edu. Submissions must include your complete thesis, along with a copy of the signed Thesis Approval Form and a signed Thesis Submission Agreement for ScholarWorks.