Place the Title of Your Research Paper

Here, Using Inverted Pyramid

Formatting Style

by

Your Name

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the

Master of Arts Degree

in

Education

(Optional)

California State University San Marcos

Semester, Year

# Thesis Abstract

A completed abstract page including preliminary information formatted as above as well as an abstract is part of the research report requirement for each graduate major at the California State University San Marcos. The completed page following the format as illustrated by this document is to be collated within the report immediately following the title page. As with all preliminary pages, the abstract page is paginated using lower case Roman numerals (ii) at the bottom of the page. The abstract is to be typed double spaced using the same margins as in the balance of the paper.

Abstracts should be about 200 words in length. Consult the APA manual for some very good tips regarding the qualities of a good abstract. Pay close attention to grammar and spelling; papers with misspellings and typographical errors will be returned as will abstracts that do not follow the format as illustrated in this document.

*Keywords:* List keywords from your paper to help researchers find your work in databases. Your words can be words or phrases listed in alphabetical order.

Acknowledgments

Many students like to acknowledge people who have significantly contributed to their graduate education on this page and are welcome to do so. Remember, however, that *Acknowledgments* are not part of the scholarly work; *Acknowledgments* and its page number are not listed in the Table of Contents.

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If you’ve constructed more than a couple of tables include a list of them here. List the number, name and page on which the table can be found (example above). If you only have a couple of tables, include them in the Table of Contents in their appropriate place in the pagination order.

Note: Not all papers will have a List of Tables.

List of Figures

If you’ve included more than a couple of figures list them here. List the number, name and page on which the figure can be found (same format as for Tables). If you only have a couple of figures, include them in the Table of Contents in their appropriate place in the pagination order.

Note: Not all papers will have a List of Figures

Chapter One: Definition of Problem

Write this chapter in present tense. Use double spacing, 12 point Times New Roman or Arial font. Indent every paragraph by 5 spaces. Use level one headings for the key sections – center, bold and title case. Write a brief introduction to your topic. Capture your reader’s attention. Preview the headings for the entire chapter: purpose of the research, preview of literature, preview of methodology, significance of research, and definition of key terms.

Purpose of Research/Statement of the Problem

State the problem that your research will address, including the basic difficulty, area of concern, and/or perceived need for the study. Discuss the goal – emphasize practical outcomes or products. Articulate the research questions for your study.

Preview Literature

Identify the 2-5 key areas of your literature review. Cite the leading authors of each area.

Preview Methodology

Describe the kind of research you will conduct (qualitative/quantitative). Briefly describe the steps you will take to conduct the research. Cite any authors that you are modeling your research after.

State how this research can improve education. How will it affect students, teachers, administrators, families, and the community at large? How will it build upon previous literature? Is it filling a gap? What educational practices will it change?

Summary of Chapter

Summarize the heading topics and transition to the next chapter.

Definitions

List in alphabetical order all the terms in your research questions, abstract, literature review and methodology. This is your opportunity to clarify how you will use these terms. Check with your chair on where the definitions should go: at end of chapter or integrated within chapter one.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Write this chapter in present tense. Write a brief introduction to your topic, recapping the research questions. Preview the key literature review themes.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Theme One)

Articulate the first theme in the literature. Do not summarize the articles. Avoid writing an annotated bibliography. Rather present the research as a theme and then use the research and key authors to make a case for the theme. Distinguish between the different research studies. Articulate how each work supports or opposes each other. Lay out a foundation of the work that supports and informs your research. Provide enough detail about the context and key findings of each study to explain how it relates to your work.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Theme Two)

Articulate the second theme in the literature. Do not summarize the articles. Avoid writing an annotated bibliography. Rather present the research as a theme and then use the research and key authors to make a case for the theme. Distinguish between the different research studies. Articulate how each work supports or opposes each other. Lay out a foundation of the work that supports and informs your research. Provide enough detail about the context and key findings of each study to explain how it relates to your work.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Theme Three)

Articulate the third theme in the literature. Do not summarize the articles. Avoid writing an annotated bibliography. Rather present the research as a theme and then use the research and key authors to make a case for the theme. Distinguish between the different research studies. Articulate how each work supports or opposes each other. Lay out a foundation of the work that supports and informs your research. Provide enough detail about the context and key findings of each study to explain how it relates to your work.

(Provide as many themes as needed. Make sure you cite all authors with the name and date. Include the page number if you use a quotation. If you quote more than 40 words indent to follow APA format.)

Summary of Chapter

Summarize the heading topics and transition to the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter is written in past tense. Write a brief introduction to your topic, recapping the research question and previewing the methodology for conducting the research. Preview all the sections of the chapter: design, participants, setting, instruments, procedures, and analysis.

Design

Describe the type of research you will be conducting (qualitative verses quantitative) and a brief description of the procedures. For example, qualitative focus group interviews. Explain how this design is a good match to answer the research questions.

Participants

Describe who will participate in the research study. Share selection criteria and demographics of the population.

Setting

Describe the setting for your research: geographic location, political climate, community, school and demographics. Describe some of your considerations based on this setting data. (This section can be combined with the Participant section.)

Instruments

Describe and provide copies of any tools you will use to conduct the research. For example if you are doing interviews, provide the recruitment flyer, interview questions, interview process and analysis tools. Describe if the instrument was created for this purpose or if it was borrowed, where did you find it and how was it used before.

Procedures

Describe in detail the chronological steps you will take to conduct the research. Use subheadings to emphasize each step. If you have written an IRB, pull it out as a guide for writing this section.

Analysis

Describe the theoretical lens you will use to analyze your research data (grounded, critical, postmodern theory…). Describe what process you will use to make sense of the data. What will you look for and why? Will you model your analysis after another researchers?

Summary of Chapter

Summarize the heading topics and transition to the next chapter.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

This chapter is a presentation of the research data. For the introduction to the chapter, write a paragraph recapping the problem statement and how the research conducted addresses this problem. Preview the names of all of the headings for this chapter. As per APA format, do not use a heading for the Introduction.

Data Presentation

Describe the research findings within the setting, research questions and field of education. You may organize the findings to reflect the themes in the literature review. Provide visual representations of the data, such as tables, figures, quotes, photos or other evidence.

Data Analysis

Analyze the data and explain how you made sense of the findings. The analysis can be a separate section or you can combine it with the data presentation above. Consider how the reader will make sense of the data presentation and analysis based on the flow and format.

Interpretations

Interpret the data and analysis as related to the research questions. How do the findings relate to education practices? How can education benefit from the research? What insights can be gained from this research?

Summary/Conclusion

Summarize the key concepts of the research questions, data findings, analysis and interpretations. Provide a transition to chapter 5 – the educational recommendations.

Chapter Five: Thesis Recommendations

This chapter is your personal reflection on the research process. You can write this in first person. For the introduction to the chapter, write a paragraph recapping the problem statement and how the research conducted addresses this problem. Preview the names of all of the headings for this chapter: Summary of findings, interpretations, educational implications, limitations, and future research directions. As per APA format, do not use a heading for the Introduction.

Finding Summary/Interpretations

Recap the findings and educational interpretations as related to the research questions. Assume that the reader did not read any of the previous chapters. This chapter needs to stand alone to explain your work. Provide reference to past research and educational needs, including student demographics.

Lessons Learned/Educational Implications

This can be 1-10 paragraphs long. Describe what you personally learned by conducting this research. What can you recommend to educators based on what you learned? What can you recommend for best practices and educational research? Suggested process: 1. Write a list of the lessons you learned by conducting this research; 2. Cluster the lessons by theme; 3. Write a paragraph for each theme cluster.

Limitations of Research

What are the limits of this research? What do you wish you had done differently if you had endless resources and support?

Future Research Directions

What do you suggest for future educational research, curriculum development and instruction? How can this research lead to curriculum development? How can this research lead to effective instruction? How can this research be extended?

Summary/Conclusion

Summarize the entire research - chapters 1-5. Include the key concepts of the research and provide a meaningful and engaging ending.

References

Make sure that everything you cite in text is also in the reference list. The *APA*

*Manual* contains the correct format for each type of reference. Be especially careful about how you reference and format on-line sources. **Each entry should be in a *hanging indent format*. This paragraph is typed using hanging indent format.** See examples of types of references below:

Bormann, C. A., & Stone, M. H. (2001). The effects of eliminating alcohol in a college stadium: The Folsom Field beer ban [Electronic version]. *Journal of American College Health*, *50*(2), 81-88.

Crowl, T. K. (1993). Qualitative Research Methods. In P. Geller & S. Schmidt (Eds.). *Fundamentals of Educational Research* (pp. 432-456). Dubuque, IA: Brown and Benchmark.

Federal Initiative Supporting School-to-Work Transition. (2000). Retrieved October 5, 2002, from http://www.transitioninschools.org

Liswood, L. A.  (1999, March 31).  Gender politics and the oval office: Why don't women run for president? [Electronic version].  *Baltimore Sun*, A23

Pierson, A. (2000). *Perceptions of high school faculty of the educational programs held at libraries.* (ERIC Document Reproduction No. ED ### ###)

Rusch, F., Conley, R., & McCaughrin, W. (1993). Benefit-cost analysis of

supported employment in Illinois. *Journal of Rehabilitation, 59*(2)*,* 31-36.

Skrtic, T. M. (1996). *Research methods*. Menomonie, WI: Plenum Press.

Appendix A: Pagination

This template is paginated correctly. Notice that the introductory pages (title page, abstract, acknowledgments, and table of contents) are in Roman numerals while the rest are in Arabic numerals.

Appendix B: How to Thrive in Graduate School

Appendix C: How to Survive the Research Paper Experience