Master of Arts in Education

Thesis Project Preparation Guide
# Wittenberg University
## Master of Arts in Education
### Thesis Preparation Guide

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GENERAL INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

This handbook has been prepared by the Graduate Studies in Education Committee at Wittenberg University as an aid to students writing theses. The handbook should be used in conjunction with the current edition of the APA Publication Manual for references, table and figure format, and other stylistic considerations. It is the student’s responsibility to be familiar with the requirements for thesis submission and defense, and all other requirements for graduation.

Introduction

This guide provides information for the preparation of theses for the Master of Arts degree at Wittenberg University. The guide includes student and committee responsibilities, as well as, timelines. It specifies the requirements for the completion of the proposal and the final document.

The completion of the thesis fulfills one central purpose of graduate study at Wittenberg. The program’s theme affirms an ongoing commitment to social change and improving the conditions of teaching and learning. In Wittenberg’s Master of Arts program, practitioners examine their own purposes and mission. They develop research questions that will help them better serve their students, schools, and community. The research provides evidence of scholarship and the scholarship provides evidence of the commitment to community leadership.

The research model that guides work toward the Master of Arts degree at Wittenberg is described generally as “action research.” The model seeks to honor the contextual and ever-changing character of a teacher’s work. It understands that teachers must ground their everyday work in the best knowledge about human development, curriculum and pedagogy. It also understands that teachers must be involved in research every day of their practice and that such research unavoidably is tied to sustaining and building relationships with young people. In this type of scholarship, both the teacher and the students are involved. At stake is the mutual project of academic and social improvement. In addition, it is expected that the candidate will observe Wittenberg University’s “Code of Academic Integrity” available at (www4.wittenberg.edu/academics/academic integrity) as a guide for upholding personal academic integrity throughout the research and thesis process. A copy of the honor statement is included in this publication and must be signed and returned with the Thesis Sign-Off Form.

As a final requirement of the thesis research, candidates must defend their work in an oral defense to the committee. In addition, candidates must share their research at the next Department Research Forum. Teaching can be an isolating occupation. The practice of sharing teacher research breaks down such barriers and provides for the community of scholarship necessary for school improvement.
The faculty of Wittenberg applauds the accomplishments of the Master’s candidates and encourages their continued scholarship. Such study conveys the commitment to service and to becoming teacher leaders.

**Thesis Roles and Responsibilities**

**Candidate Responsibilities**
- Select a thesis committee chair, establish a thesis committee, and present the names of the committee members to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval.
- Design and submit a proposal for committee approval.
- Meet with committee to discuss proposal. Submit a signed thesis proposal form to Director of Graduate Studies.
- Communicate to the Committee Chair and the committee members the type of guidance that would best facilitate the completion of the thesis; schedule regular meetings for continual review of the thesis progress.
- Take the initiative in communicating any problems or difficulties that may arise during the thesis process (research or writing), thereby contributing to a constructive, effective, and collaborative working relationship.
- Progress through the thesis process in accordance with the schedule written with the Committee Chair; this includes providing sufficient time for the chair and committee members to work with the candidate at each stage of the thesis process.
- Submit University Internal Review Board (IRB) forms if it is determined that it is needed.
- Ensure that the thesis is submitted within the required time.
- Submit two completed copies of the thesis to the Director of Graduate Studies according to established guidelines, with payment for binding and publication, and Thesis Sign-off form. Submit three copies of completed thesis if candidate desires a bound copy.

**Committee Chair**
- Give guidance about the nature of research and the standard expected, the plan of the research program, literature and sources, and in general, contribute to a constructive and effective working relationship.
- Maintain contact through regular meetings, as agreed to in discussions with the candidate.
- Be accessible to the candidate at other appropriate times when he or she may need advice.
- Give detailed advice on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work so that the whole may be submitted within the scheduled time.
- Request written drafts at regular intervals and returning drafts with constructive comments within a reasonable amount of time.
• Assist with the writing process but not providing proofreading or editing; referring candidates to the appropriate campus resources for additional assistance with writing and/or communications.
• Schedule regular meetings to discuss the progress on the thesis with the candidate.
• Communicate clearly to the candidate when he/she is not making adequate progress or their level of work does not meet the standards expected of a master’s level candidate. If the committee chair is of the opinion that a candidate is unlikely to complete his/her thesis in order to obtain the degree, the Committee Chair should notify the candidate, the Director of Graduate Studies and the Chairperson of the Department.
• Provide additional assistance to the candidate who may have language differences that interfere with their progress on a thesis.
• Provide an independent written assessment of the thesis as part of the examination process.
• Sign the thesis and any other related documents to verify its successful completion.
• Schedule the thesis oral defense with the Director of Graduate Studies and other committee members.
• Attend the oral defense of the thesis and provide a written assessment of the thesis defense as part of the examination process.

Committee Member Responsibilities
• Provide feedback on stages of the conception, research and writing of the thesis.
• Read candidate work on thesis as needed or requested by the candidate or Committee Chair.
• Meet with the candidate or the entire committee as needed.
• Attend the oral defense of the thesis and provide a written assessment of the thesis defense as part of the final examination process.
• Read the final copy of the thesis and sign when approved.

Director of Graduate Studies Responsibilities
• Verify that an acceptable committee has been established to oversee Master’s thesis work; obtain Graduate Committee Approval for outside committee members.
• Decide with Graduate Committee whether University IRB approval is necessary.
• Ensure that reports on candidate's progress, if required, are received regularly according to the normal departmental procedures.
• Facilitate assistance when requested by candidate.
• Post and invite campus community to scheduled candidate presentation of thesis research at the appropriate Department Research Forum.
• Receive the two completed copies of the approved thesis and verify that submission standards have been adhered to.
• Communicate with the Registrar’s Office that the thesis has been received and accepted and that all degree requirements have been met.
General Thesis Procedures

1. Select a thesis committee chair and in collaboration with the committee chair, select at least two other committee members. One committee member must be faculty in the Education Department. The third faculty member may be from another department at Wittenberg University or from outside the university. A committee member from outside the university must submit a current vita to the Director of Graduate Studies. After committee selection has been made submit the Approved Thesis Committee form to the Director of Graduate Studies.

2. In collaboration with Thesis Committee Chair and/or thesis committee members a schedule for the research and writing of the thesis should be planned. This may include defining the topic and writing or revising a research question.


4. Submit the Thesis Proposal Approval form to the Director of Graduate Studies.


6. Schedule regular meetings with the committee chair and committee during the research and writing phases of the thesis work.

7. Submit a draft of the thesis to committee chair and committee by midterm of the intended graduation semester.

8. Upon approval of committee chair, schedule an oral defense no later than the 12th week of the intended graduation semester.

9. Prior to the defense, prepare one copy of the Thesis Approval form for each bound copy of the thesis being prepared (2 minimum). See paper and ink requirements for bound copies. Prepare the signature forms by typing in student and faculty full legal names and avoiding use of degrees and titles except as pre-printed on sample form.

10. Make changes to manuscript as suggested by committee and supervised by committee chair.

11. Submit final copies to committee chair for approval and signature on Final Reading Approval form.

12. Submit final copies, Honor Statement form, binding fee, Archival Release form, and electronic copy to the Director of Graduate Studies for final approval of the fulfillment of requirements for the master’s degree.

(See Suggested Thesis Project Timeline on the next page.)
Suggested Thesis Project Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Committee Formed</td>
<td>Following the completion of EDUC 590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal Submitted &amp; Approved</td>
<td>During EDUC 595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with Chair &amp; Committee</td>
<td>Upon approval of proposal &amp; at least 1 time per semester during the thesis process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft of Thesis Submitted to Committee</td>
<td>By midterm of the anticipated graduation semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Defense</td>
<td>No later than the 12th week of the anticipated graduation semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of Final Copy</td>
<td>No later than the final week of the anticipated graduation semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation at Research Forum</td>
<td>At the next scheduled Department Research Forum following successful oral defense of thesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coauthored Theses

A single thesis that a student has coauthored with another student (or students), each of whom is a candidate for a master’s degree, may be submitted provided the thesis committee gives prior recommendation and approval to each student’s role in the collaboration, the thesis represents the work equivalent of a single, independent thesis for each coauthor (i.e., the scope, depth of analysis, and sophistication of approach reflect the work of more than one author), and it is evident that each student has made a significant contribution to the thesis. All research, writing, and submission procedures are the same as for a single author thesis.

Thesis Proposal

Essentially, a strong thesis proposal makes for a strong thesis, and conversely, a weak proposal generally speaking yields an equally weak thesis. The following is a suggested outline for a master’s thesis project proposal.

- Introduction
  - Presentation of the general problem to be investigated
  - Significance of the study
  - Scope of the Study
- Statement of the problem
  - Clear concise statement of the specific problem under investigation
- Research question(s)
- Definitions of terms
  - Operational definitions of terms that are highly technical to a particular discipline or are used in a unique way in the study
• Presentation of review of related literature necessary to develop or focus the general problem. A critical, synthesized, and organized summary of previously published material which help consider the progress of research toward clarifying the problem. This section should be clearly organized and should identify relations, contradictions, gaps, and inconsistencies in the literature (APA, p. 10).

• Methodology
  A brief description of the methodology used in the investigation of the problem:
  • type of research
  • participants
  • context
  • length
  • intervention/treatment
  • measurement instrument(s)
  • data analysis procedures

• Statement of concordance with Institutional Review Board guidelines and approval of MA committee.

A proposal should be limited to a maximum of 10 pages, double-spaced, font size of 12 using Times New Roman or Arial font.

CONTENT, ORGANIZATION and STYLE

Thesis Components

It is difficult to describe the exact contents of each and every thesis, especially given the wide variety of topics and methodologies that might be selected by the prospective thesis candidate. The following descriptions are offered as a guide. Each component of the thesis is listed in the order it should occur. Format details are specified for each page and samples can be found in the Appendices.

Some components are required and others are optional. Each component is identified with a major heading unless otherwise noted. The major heading should be centered and have a 2-inch margin.

Preliminary Pages - listed in order of appearance:
• Title Page
• Thesis Approval
• Final Reading Approval
• Honor Statement
• Dedication (optional)
• Table of Contents
• Lists of Tables
• Lists of Figures; and
• Acknowledgements (optional)
The preliminary pages are counted in sequence (except the copyright page, which is neither counted nor numbered). The title page is counted, but no page number is typed on the page. Preliminary pages are numbered with lower case Roman numerals centered within the thesis margins one line above the 1-inch bottom margin.

Chapter 1: Introduction

A. This section of the thesis should serve the following goals:
   1. Introduce the topic: give the thesis question, outline how the topic/question will be investigated
   2. Briefly relate key studies and issues that constitute the current state of knowledge about the topic.
   3. State the significance of the study and relevance of the question.

B. This section should be concise.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A. The literature review should be an in-depth, exhaustive look at the extant research on the proposed topic.

B. The review should be organized according to key concepts or variables, types of samples used, methods employed or some similar device that focuses the information on the proposed topic.

C. The literature review should end with a summary statement which includes what we know/don't know about the topic and, if appropriate, why the latter is the case.

Chapter 3: Methodology

A. A statement of the methods and design utilized in completing the thesis research should be clearly stated, including, where appropriate, a justification of the specific methods to be employed.

B. Indication of the source and availability of the participants and data should be included.

C. The operationalization of key variables should be discussed.

D. Where appropriate, the research hypotheses should be stated.

E. If historically available data are to be subjected to secondary analysis, all articles, monographs or reports based on the data should be cited, along with any limitations and proposed remedies for these limitations.

Chapter 4: Findings

A. This section should report the data, as well as provide an accurate analysis(ses) of the data.

B. Summary, discussion and application of the findings should also be included.

Chapter 5: Discussion

References

Appendices
The bound copy of a Master’s thesis is the public record of the extensive research and analysis done by Master’s candidates in partial fulfillment of their graduate work. The university will collect and bind the candidate’s Master’s thesis and make it publicly available to other students, faculty, and outside researchers in the university library. These documents will become a visible and permanent measure of the quality of scholarship expected at Wittenberg University. In order for the thesis to be bound, it must adhere to uniform standards of format and construction.

**Thesis Style and Fonts**

The document should be typed using Times New Roman or Arial 12 pt. This style and font applies to all aspects of the document except photo records or others facsimiles that may be part of the data collection. All page numbers should be centered at the bottom of each page. The title page counts as a page, but does not have a printed page number. The copyright page does not count as a page. All preliminary page numbers are represented with lower case Roman numerals. All candidates must use the current edition of the APA Style Manual for pagination, citations and references.

**Paper**

The copies of the thesis being submitted for binding must be printed on 8 1/2” x 11” unbound white paper of 20-24 lb. weight. The paper must also meet the specification of 100% cotton rag content (i.e. acid free) and must not contain lines, smudges, spots, or shaded background. Watermarks identify cotton content, and therefore appear on each page. Copies from a laser printer or commercial copier service are required. **ALL PRINTING SHOULD BE ONE-SIDED.**

**Margins**

All pages of the final copies of the manuscript must be within the following limits:

left margins: 1.5 inches  
right margins: 1 inch  
top and bottom margins: 1 inch  
main (title, chapter, etc.) pages, top: 2 inches  

Pages of text should be of consistent length. Pages with full-page tables and figures will vary in length depending upon the amount of data displayed in the table or the size of the figure. Pages of text with a small table or figure beginning or ending the page must be the same length as pages of straight text. Because freestanding subheadings must be followed by at least two lines of text, the bottom margin may vary slightly on pages with freestanding subheadings. At least two lines of text must be placed on the last page of any section/chapter of the manuscript. If a chapter ends with only one line of text on a page, a line from the preceding page must be moved to the last page.
THESIS REVIEW PROCESS

Each committee member evaluates the written thesis and oral defense using the rubric shown below. At a meeting of all committee members a final evaluation of the thesis and oral defense is conducted and one final rubric score in each category is determined. The final rubric will be placed in each candidate’s file and a copy given to the master’s degree candidate.

**Thesis Rubric: Part I**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Emerging/Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Pass with Distinction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing mechanics</td>
<td>Several errors or poor grammatical elements that hinder understanding</td>
<td>Few errors</td>
<td>Error-free, a clean final draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Confusing or illogical development of ideas</td>
<td>Research, evidence, and analysis is clearly and reasonably presented</td>
<td>Research, evidence, and analysis presented with strong, reasonable, and vivid illustrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adherence to APA style</td>
<td>APA style evident, but needs major revisions</td>
<td>Complete adherence to current edition of APA style with references and in-text citations</td>
<td>Complete adherence to current edition of APA style with references and in-text citations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization (structure of thesis)</td>
<td>Structure incomplete or confusing.</td>
<td>Structure is evident and appropriate.</td>
<td>Structure is clearly evident, focused, full, and purposeful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis**

| Analysis of literature review (synthesis and integration of material) | Little or incomplete analysis | Clear, if not sophisticated, analysis of sources. Appropriate research and references identified | Analysis is clear and well organized. Integrated and representative of more than one discipline |
| Area of Focus | Area of focus for the study not evident; without clear understanding of variables and modes of inquiry | Research question is focused, clear, relevant, and tied to research strategies | Research question is significant, precise, focused, with a clear alignment to research approach and understanding of extended application |
| Data Collection | Few data sources are evident. Data sources do not match the research question | Multiple data sources are evident. Data sources match the research question | Multiple data sources are evident and there is an attempt to triangulate the data. Data sources match the research questions |
| Data Analysis | Minimal or weak understanding and analysis of data. Identified some implications, but failed to point out gaps and/or contradictions. | Data analysis is accurate. Identified implications, gaps and contradictions | Strong data analysis. Explored implications in thorough detail, noting gaps and contradictions |
| Conclusions | Some evidence of drawing conclusions | Conclusions consistent with findings | Interpretation of data is original and demonstrates a high level of insight; suggestive of further research and intervention |
## Thesis Rubric: Part II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral Defense</th>
<th>Clarity</th>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Research design and implementation</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responses to questions were at times unclear</td>
<td>Familiar with the major sources and major issues related to the research question</td>
<td>Effectively evaluates the research design used and meaningfully discusses other approaches that could be used to study the research question further</td>
<td>Effectively defends the validity of the conclusions. Indicates limitations of conclusions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THESIS SUBMISSION PROCESS

Submission to the Graduate Program

Candidates must submit two copies of their approved thesis to the Director of Graduate Studies, both of which must be signed by all members of the thesis committee on the thesis signature page, thesis committee chair on final reading approval form, and Master’s degree candidate(s) on the Honor Statement. These signatures indicate that the thesis committee has accepted the thesis. **ALL SIGNATURES MUST BE IN BLACK INK.** One copy will be kept in the Education Department archives; the other will become part of the circulating collection. A third copy may be submitted for binding if the candidate wants a personal bound copy.

After a successful thesis defense, the candidate must prepare two official copies of the thesis. The candidate must also:

1. Obtain signatures of the thesis committee on the signature page that will accompany each official copy at the conclusion of a successful oral defense (two copies required on specific weight and content paper). This is generally completed at the oral defense.

2. Obtain Thesis Committee Chair signature on the Master’s Thesis Sign-Off Form and Final Reading Approval form after all recommended changes have been made.

3. Make an appointment with the Director of Graduate Studies to submit the two copies of the thesis and all signature pages.

4. Bring to appointment with the Director of Graduate Studies the following:
   - two official copies of the thesis;
   - completed signature pages;
   - Master’s Thesis Sign-Off Form (signed by the thesis Chair)
   - Binding fee for the two official copies of the thesis

If the thesis and all other documents are acceptable, the Director of Graduate Studies will accept all documents. A copy of the Master’s Thesis Sign-Off Form (with the signature of the Director of Graduate Studies) is given to the candidate as a receipt, certifying that the graduate program has accepted the submission of the thesis.

5. The Director of Graduate Studies sends the Master’s Thesis Sign-Off Form to the Registrar’s Office and they will, in turn, notify candidate, the thesis Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies when the candidate’s record reflects completion of all degree requirements.

6. The Director of Graduate Studies forwards both thesis copies and signature pages to the Library for binding.
Thesis Submission Flowchart

1. Candidate, committee chair, committee, and Director of Graduate Studies schedule the thesis oral defense. The student provides copies of the thesis to all committee members at least two weeks prior to the oral defense.

After successfully defending the thesis, the candidate makes revisions that were required/suggested by the thesis committee.

Thesis Approval Form signed. (Use appropriate paper for official copy)

The candidate should refer to the published guidelines to ensure that the style, the type of paper and the margins are correct. The thesis must use the current edition of the APA Style Manual. If there are any questions, these can be directed to the Director of Graduate Studies.

After the changes have been made, the chair of the thesis committee signs final reading approval form (on appropriate paper).

The committee chair signs the Master’s Thesis Sign-Off Form.

The candidate makes an appointment with the Director of Graduate Studies to submit the two official copies of the thesis. The student also brings the binding fee, Final Reading Approval Form, and the Master’s Thesis Sign-Off Form. If the copies of the thesis are acceptable (correct size and weight of paper, cotton content, margins, legibility) the Director of Graduate Studies accepts the thesis and the binding fee, and signs the two forms. A copy of the signed form is given to the candidate.

The Director of Graduate Studies sends the Master’s Thesis Sign-Off Form to the Registrar’s office and the two official copies of the thesis to the library for binding.

The Registrar’s Office notifies the candidate, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the thesis chair that the Master’s Thesis Sign-Off Form has been received and that all degree requirements have been met.
Institutional Review Board
Petition to Approve Proposed Research Project

The federal government and university policy require the review of all research involving human subjects. This includes biomedical, behavioral, and survey research. The source of funding, the identity of the research subjects, and the status of the investigator (faculty member, student, or staff) have no bearing on whether the IRB has jurisdiction.

The reviews are designed to safeguard research subjects’ rights and welfare. Federal regulations give IRBs the responsibility to evaluate the risks of participation, to modify projects when risks can be reduced, and to assure that subjects give their informed consent to participate. The IRB’s approval is not permanent and can be revoked. Continuing projects must be reviewed and approved at least annually. The IRB has the authority to suspend or terminate its approval if a project is not being conducted according to its approved protocol or has been associated with unexpected serious harms to subjects.

If you wish to conduct research involving human subjects, you must complete this form and attachments, and submit them to the IRB. The IRB must conduct its review even if there is “minimal risk” of harm to the subjects. Either a hard copy or an electronic copy (CD, disk, or email attachment) of the petition should be sent to:

Jeff Anstrom
Assistant Provost
Chairman, Institutional Review Board
209 Recitation Hall
jankrom@wittenberg.edu

A complete petition consists of:

- This petition form
- Copies of all survey instruments, interview scripts, or prompts
- Copies of all other written or spoken information to be presented to the subjects (e.g., instructions, cover letter, debriefing information)
- Copies of all consent / assent forms to be used.

The IRB reviews research that meets ANY of these conditions:

- Wittenberg sponsors the research.
- University property or a university facility is used in the research, including the university mail room or email system.
- A Wittenberg employee conducts or directs the research (whether or not it is in connection with the employee’s University responsibilities).

In routine cases, in which there is minimal risk of harm, the IRB needs three to four working days to evaluate an application. Non-routine cases may require more time. To avoid delays, you should seek IRB approval as soon as possible, as its review of research protocols, informed consent forms, and related matters can be lengthy. Please keep in mind that the IRB does not ordinarily meet during breaks unless special arrangements have been made.
Appendices
ADOLESCENT ATTITUDES TOWARD AUTHORITY

Center the title, ALL CAPS! Bold-faced!

by

Johnnie B. Good

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Wittenberg University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Education Department

Wittenberg University

May 2011
Chapter One

Introduction

Beginning
• Begin with a brief opening that leads the reader into the subject of your paper.
• May choose to start with a relevant quote centered in italics under the heading, and the author off centered under the quote. If including quote, write additional text to connect the quote to the subject of your study.

Background (headings and subheadings are always bold print)
• 1-2 pages
• Write in narrative format in past tense throughout to indicate this report was written after completion of the study.
• Describe background information such as:
  Where study was conducted
  Size of school, location, population, and other demographics;
  Performance levels and other relevant instructional information;
  A description of who you are; and
  Any other information that sets the stage for your study
Use school report card information (testing results, demographics, etc.)

Importance of the Study
• 1-2 paragraphs
• Describe why you are undertaking this study, why it is significant, and what it is that you hope to change.

Statement of the Problem
• 1 paragraph
• State the purpose of the study immediately in your first sentence, “The purpose of this study was . . .”

Research Questions
• Write a short introductory sentence, such as, “One major question was explored throughout the course of this research” or “Several questions related to students’ engagement in independent reading guided this study.”
• Write the research questions in a numbered list.

Establishing the Study
• 2 - 4 pages
• Briefly describe the steps and measures you would take to establish or implement the study in your classroom, school, and/or district.
Limitations and Assumptions

- 1-2 paragraphs
- **Examples of limitations:** You are limited to your class, school, district, number of students, types of data collection tools, district approved tests or texts, and length of time for your study. Your research would be limited by students who begin the study but do not finish. The implementation of your intervention was limited due to the fact that more than one researcher conducted the study, and there was no way to ensure that each researcher implemented the study in precisely the same manner.
- **Examples of assumptions:** You assume tests given currently will continue to be given at the end of this project, such as OAA, ACT, Achievement Tests, or others.

Definition of Terms

- 1/2 - 2 pages
- Begin with an introductory statement such as “The researcher used the following terms consistently throughout this study.”
- Define relevant educational terms with appropriate citations.
- Write in bulleted list in alphabetical order.
- Terms should be bold and in italics.

Summary

- 2-6 sentences
- Review the focus of your study
- Include transition sentence that leads the reader into Chapter Two
Chapter Two

Literature Review

• Introduction—brief opening that reviews the subject of your study
• List the topics you will include in your review
• First topic will be broadest—theoretical foundations, historical review, policies
• You must use at least 15 – 20 scholarly resources for your completed review when you turn in your thesis.
• Citations must be in correct APA format. Consult your APA manual (6th edition) for assistance.

Guidelines for writing the body of your literature review
• The topics that were listed in the introduction become your headings for the subsequent sections of the chapter.
• Headings are set up as shown in the two samples on the next page (pages 62-63 in the APA manual).

EXAMPLE:

Chapter Two

Literature Review

(Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading)

History of Spelling (Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading)

Debate over Instructional Methods

Traditional methods of instruction. (Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period)

Developmentally appropriate methods of instruction. Start your first sentence of the paragraph immediately following the period.

Effective Instructional Practices
(Example format and suggested headings)

Chapter Three

Methodology

Brief opening
• No heading
• Size 12 font; Times New Roman or Arial
• Review the subject of your paper, what you are planning to do, or how you are planning to proceed

Participants
• Who was involved?
• Why were these students participating?
• What was their demographic information?
• What behaviors did they demonstrate related to your study? (for example, if you chose fluency, describe students’ oral reading fluency; if you’re studying spelling, describe their spelling abilities based on the Developmental Spelling Inventory (Bear, et al., ____))
• If you have more than one researcher, you must have a separate paragraph or section in which the participants are described for each researcher—Researcher A, Researcher B, etc.

Setting
• If you have more than one researcher, you must have a separate paragraph or section in which the setting is described for each researcher—Researcher A, Researcher B, etc.
• Describe the environment, the specifics, of your room
• Physical arrangement of the room
• Any elements that are applicable to your specific study (for example, describe your classroom library if your study is related to leveling books; describe your whole group gathering area if your study is about interactive read alouds, etc.)
• Point of time in your school day in which your topic was studied or your intervention implemented; this aspect may have some bearing on your results

Data Collection and Analysis
• Brief introductory paragraph telling the reader what measures you chose and what data were being collected by each measure for your study
• Thoroughly describe each tool you used to collect your data.
  Commercially available instrument—give author & publication date; tell what the tool measures and how it was administered to the participants
Researcher-developed instrument or collection strategy—describe how you designed the tool, what data you wanted to collect, and how it was administered to the participants or used to collect data.

Recall that you gave this information in Chapter One, so make sure this correlates.

- Describe how you will analyze the data collected in your study: basic descriptive statistics (mean, median, percentages, totals, etc.) for numerical data; themes and patterns for qualitative data.

Procedures

- As you describe your procedures, keep this question in mind—Could someone else duplicate your work from your writings?

- Organize this section in chronological order

- What did you do? Be specific and provide all the details!! (For example, if you conducted a parent information night, tell the date & time, tell in which building and room your meeting was held, number of attendees, your program for the evening, any handouts you provided, etc.)

- When did you implement each step? Give dates, not just general times. (for example, September 28, 2008 rather than fall 2008)

- Were specific directions given to the participants?

- How did you implement measures? Were data collected pre- and post-intervention, did you collect student samples throughout your study?

- Refer reader to Appendix for samples of checklists, surveys, worksheets, etc. (see Appendix A)

Summary

- 2-6 sentences

- Review the steps in your methodology

- Include transition sentence that leads the reader into Chapter Four
Brief opening to review the subject of your paper

Organization of the chapter

- Your research questions should guide the headings for this chapter; bold print, left justified. (Under each question, write a short descriptive paragraph introducing the data that will be presented.
- Above each table or graph, write a short paragraph introducing the data being presented in the table or graph. You must specifically refer to the table or graph by name (i.e. Table 1) AND the table or graph must appear IMMEDIATELY after the paragraph in which you referred to it. If the table or graph does not fit on the page, you must move to the next page to insert it (with no new paragraph in between).
- Insert the table or graph
  Number each table or graph; the numbering begins in chapter 1 and continues throughout the paper
  Tables are labeled as Table _____
  Graphs are labeled as Figure _____
- Tables and graphs are labeled differently
  Table—Located above the table; table number in top line (no period); table title in second line with capitalization and italics (no period)—see p. 129 in APA manual for example & p. 150 for a checklist.
  Graph—Located below the graph; Figure number is italicized and followed by a period; caption follows after the period in regular font with only the first word capitalized; followed by a period—information and examples begin on p. 150; see p. 167 for a checklist.
- Continue your narrative under the table or graph, write descriptions pointing out important or interesting data presented in the preceding table or graph—highlight some of your information!!
- If there are multiple researchers, conclude the section for each research question by writing a paragraph or two in which the findings for the researchers are compared and contrasted.

Summary

- 2-6 sentences
- Review the steps in your methodology
- Include transition sentence that leads the reader into Chapter Five
Chapter Five

Discussion

Brief opening
- Review the subject of your paper; let the reader know you are offering opinions and comments about the project.

Organization of the chapter
- Your research questions should guide the headings for this chapter; bold print, left justified.
- Under each question, write a short descriptive paragraph introducing the conclusions that were drawn from your findings.

Research Question #1 (restate the question)
- Discuss each finding for your question
- Tie the literature review into your discussion – this will add credibility to what you have done and learned. Was the finding different from the literature or similar to the literature? Offer your conclusions regarding these results. Remember, you are working with a small sample in your research.

Research Question #2 (restate the question)

Research Question #3 (restate the question)

Reflections
- Reflect as the researcher and think about the study and research process in general.
  - What was successful?
  - What would you do differently? Why?
  - What are the implications of your study to your school, distinct, education in general?
  - What do you recommend a future researcher do with your work?
  - What have you learned through this entire action research process?

Summary
- Summarize entire action research project in a paragraph
- Conclude with general statement of what you learned
ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO HELP GUIDE YOUR REFLECTIONS
AT THE END OF CH. 5

Ideas taken from The Power of Questions: A Guide to Teacher and Student Research (Falk & Blumenreich, 2005)

Questions to answer as you write your conclusions (p. 157)
- What did you learn?
- How does what you learned from your study fit together with what you know about this topic before?
- What do you think about what you learned?
- What would you like to find out about this topic or a related topic in the future?

Describe personal/professional changes that may have taken place (from pp. 176 – 181)
- **New learnings** (consolidate new knowledge, learn about new issues, develop new teaching methods and strategies)
- **Making meaning in new ways** (gain new understandings about ideas or practices that were already “learned” before)
- **Affirmation** (gain affirmation for ideas and practices that were previously intuitive but now supported with data & research)
- **Experiencing oneself as a learner** (seeing themselves as learners in a new way as a result of developing and exploring their own questions)
- **Motivation for learning** (motivated by exploring an issue of personal interest)
- **Changed attitudes and practices**
- **Self-efficacy and possibility** (given a sense of competence and a feeling that changes are possible)
- **Becoming part of a professional community** (led to a new awareness of what it means to be a professional)
- **Making new beginnings** (introduction to a new way of teaching—brings up questions, engages interest, provides resources, and facilitates learning)