

EDU 7900

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Class Notes: Spring 08



Dissertation Components

Chapter 1 – Introduction: about (12-18 pages)

- Background Information
 - Local Level – District - Town
 - State Level
 - National Level
- Problem statement
- Purpose of the Study
- Significance of the Study – Why does this matter? This is important because.. .use words like “May, Could, Might”.
- Definitions – “The following terms will be defined” . . . “For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will be defined”...
- Conceptual Rationale or Framework or Theoretical Framework – This can be in either chapter 1 or 2.
- Methodology – A brief paragraph about what form the research will take. Qualitative vs. Quantitative.
- Limitations(outside) and Delimitations(you impose the factors)

Chapter 2 – Literature Review: (about 15-30 pages)

- Problem Statement drives literature review
- Search for supporting data
 - Teacher’s College Record, Harvard Educational Review, Ed. Leadership, ASCD, “Referee Journals”
- What you read will support or not support what you are researching
 - Tells you what others are doing in the area

- What kinds of methodology other people use
- Use citations and reference lists from other researchers
- When do I stop? When you find repetitive patterns in the material, when you find no more new material, when you can speak to the various parts of the literature
- Call it evaluating, organizing and synthesizing the literature
- Compare and contrast theories
- Describe general trends
- Identify discrepant or contradictory findings
- Identify general themes
- Guidelines to writing Lit Review:
 - Focus
 - Discuss studies, research, scholarly writings as it relates to your problems
 - Organize structure from broad to specific
 - Do not reproduce the author's ideas
 - Cite sources
 - Summarize, revise, get ADVICE and FEEDBACK
 - A good lit review describes the findings and recommendations of others who investigated similar problems, will provide a good rationale for studying the problem, as well as identifying possible resolutions to the problem. The conclusion of this section is a summary of the major recurring themes of the literature which will serve as the basis of your study.

Chapter 3 – Methodology: (about 8-15 pages)

“If you can draw it you can do it”

- 1st Paragraph – Purpose
- 2nd Paragraph – Research Questions
- 3rd Paragraph – Setting (can be long (description of district))
- 4th Paragraph – Subjects How many, gender, age, # of students, etc
- 5th Paragraph – Data Collection - Instrumentation
- Interviews

- Focus groups
- Observations
- Anecdotal Notes (speaking with someone, records)
- Archival Data (Make a summary table)
- Patterns, Themes, Discrepancies
- 6th Paragraph – Data Analysis Techniques
- 7th Paragraph – Summary of what you are going to do
- 8th Paragraph – What Chapter 4, 5 are going to do

Chapter 4 – Findings: about 10-15 pages

- What you found in terms of your research questions (look at all questions).
- 20-25 pages (any more, you are spinning your wheels)
- Keep opinion out! – Objective Voice
- Quantitative – You are answering in terms of statistics
- Qualitative – Report in terms of patterns, themes, and discrepancies
- End of chapter 4, do a little summary
- Archival data is reported in a filled in chart

Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Recommendations: about 7-20 pages

Demonstrate your ability to think outside the box. If you can't draw a conclusion on something, leave it out. Then recommend what you would do based upon your questions and then make recommendations for future research.

Always write in an "objective voice" until chapter 5

After the 5 chapters are REFERENCES.(5-10 pages)

After the REFERENCES (title - centered in the middle of the page - alphabetical by last

name) are the APPENDICES (which are listed in alphabetical order)