



# Master of Education Capstone Experience Guide

## Introduction

All Master in Education candidates are required to complete a thesis or integrative graduate project. This capstone experience is an opportunity for the student to integrate the knowledge and skills gained throughout their graduate studies. Students are expected to identify an area of inquiry which addresses an important issue in education that they find interesting, personally and professionally. Based on the topic of interest, students will develop and conduct an empirical study (Thesis), or synthesize knowledge of educational theory and research into a new product (Project).

This guide provides the student and advising faculty an overview of the general process, as well as details regarding each step in the process. Samples and examples are also included.

## **General Process**

When the student has completed their coursework as well as the research sequence (EDUC 5060, EDUC 5240, and EDUC 5250), they will begin with the culminating experience (thesis or project). The procedures and processes are described as follows:

### *The Proposal*

Sample drafts of a thesis or project proposal are created in the educational research methodology course-Quantitative Research (EDU 5250) or Qualitative Research (EDU 5240). These drafts provide a template for the final draft of the thesis or project

proposal that is completed by the student under the advisor's supervision. The final draft of the three chapters is then shared with the committee members and presented in a formal PowerPoint for approval. The proposal is an important starting point for the graduate student and needs to be worked out as thoroughly as possible. Minor changes may be made to the proposal as the investigation progresses. Major changes will need the approval of the advisor and committee members. Figure 1 provides the elements to include in a thesis or project proposal.

The proposal must be well-written and substantial. Once approval of the proposal have been granted, the student may begin the process of writing the thesis or project, including the IRB application, if necessary.

## The IRB Process

The purpose of the Internal Review Board (IRB) is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of human and animal subjects in research. This is done by requiring all students and faculty, who are collecting data from human subjects, to go through a review process that begins by submitting the appropriate application review form. There are three categories for review. A full proposal must be submitted in two situations: full review is for studies where there is more than minimal risk involved; while standard review is necessary for studies with minimal risk. For studies where there is no risk to participants, student-researchers may file a request for exemption.

There are a number of types of exempt research. An application for exemption may be filed if one of the following criteria is met:

- Research is being conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as: research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
- Research involves the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be

identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing, employability, or reputation.

- Research involves the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under the above point if: the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or federal statutes(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

- Research involves the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

- Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: public benefit or service programs; procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

After completing the IRB training modules and obtaining the pdf file of certification,

each student-researcher will work with their thesis chair/EDU 5550 course instructor to make preliminary determination as to whether or not the research activity is exempt from IRB review based on the criteria presented above. If they determine that the proposed research is exempt, they will provide the application for *Request for Review of Research Activity Involving Human Subjects for Determination of Exempt Status* which can be found in Appendix C. Note: only the thesis chair, as Principal Investigator, can upload the necessary documents to irbnet in order to submit the IRB application for review.

The review board is responsible for reviewing the requests for exempt status and for making final institutional determinations of whether research activities qualify for exemption from coverage under the Federal guidelines. Documentation of research activities that do qualify for exemption will be kept on file in the Carthage College IRB. Documentation of research activities that are determined not to be exempt will be returned to the student-researcher for incorporation into a Carthage College IRB application. The application and guidelines for Human Subject Research can be found at <https://www.carthage.edu/academics/experiential-learning/research/institutional-review-board/>

### *Sequential Components and Content*

This section describes the content that should be included in each chapter. Both the project and the thesis follow a five chapter format.

#### Chapter 1-Introduction

Chapter 1 is the Introduction. It contains three elements. First, is a general overview of the state of affairs of the topic to be investigated. The facts and reality regarding the topic should be discussed. Citations are appropriate. Next is the Statement of the Problem. This section should clearly and concisely explain what is occurring in the educational arena (the problem) that necessitates the research. The third section is the Purpose Statement. This should be a clear, concise, definitive purpose statement, along with research questions (thesis) or guiding questions (project). The topics from the guiding questions become the major headings in the literature review, as well as the general criteria topics in Chapter 3.

Some thesis and projects may benefit from a Definition of Terms section. In this section, all terms pertinent to the topic of study are defined in a list. When the term first appears in the narrative of the thesis or project, it must be defined. From then on, the reader may consult this list when the term is mentioned again. The definitions may be direct quotations cited from texts or paraphrases.

## Chapter 2-Review of the Literature

This chapter presents a review of the literature that expands on the context, background and purpose of the thesis or project. The purpose statement should be restated as the first sentence of this chapter. Key words in the statement of purpose will become the subtopics for the review of literature. This chapter should be a logical, sequential, exhaustive review of literature, which reflects the ideas implicit and explicit embedded in the thesis or project.

The majority of the literature reviewed should be primary sources and should also be empirical studies. Sources used should have been published within the past ten years. A minimum of 20 different sources should be cited. When citing sources, the past tense should be used since the authors have already done their studies and published their finding. Proper APA citation format must be used. See the APA Style at Carthage section of this guide for extensive detail on how to follow APA style in writing a thesis or project.

### Chapter 3-Methods (thesis) or Criteria (project)

Chapter 3 begins with a restating of the purpose of the thesis or project. This section is divided into two parts-elements for a thesis and elements for a project.

Elements of a thesis. This is the section that describes the method of collecting and analyzing the data. It is the step-by-step recipe that others could follow to replicate the study and has various elements. It begins with the identification of the design. Next is a description of the individuals (such as schoolchildren) or objects (such as text books or trade books) that were studied, along with how this sample was selected. Third is a complete description of the measuring tools or instruments, including information about reliability and validity. The next section describes the procedures that were followed in conducting the study, along with any procedures used to meet ethical considerations and maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Finally, a description of the data analysis plan is described.

Elements of a project. This is the section that introduces the Expert Panel the



researcher has recruited to evaluate their project and also describes the criteria developed through the guiding questions. It presents the detailed elements that should be included in an ideal project. The criteria have a theoretical and research foundation which was previously discussed in the literature review. The criteria then become the framework for the development of the project as well for the expert review of the project.

For each project, an outside panel of experts (minimum of three) must be consulted regarding the components and content of the project and the process for conducting this 'expert review' must also be explained in this chapter. An expert can be defined as the individual who would be expected to use or implement the project, or an individual who has an expertise in the content area. Feedback must be collected and analyzed from the expert panel in a systematic manner. Tools such as a checklist, interview, or survey may be appropriate methods for collecting feedback. The procedure for collecting and analyzing the feedback must be delineated. The next chapter presents the obtained feedback, a discussion of how the project was modified based on the feedback and the actual project in its revised form.

#### Chapter 4-Results or Project

This chapter presents the results from the data analysis (thesis) or the actual project. It should begin with the purpose statement.

In a thesis: The writer should explain how the data will be presented in order to answer the research questions that were stated in Chapter 1. Results from all measures discussed in Chapter 3 must be presented. Data may be presented through tables, figures

or narratives. Tables and figures must be uncluttered and self-explanatory. They should stand alone, but also must be discussed in the text; patterns and trends should be noted. Evaluative statements should be avoided; the presentation of results should be clear and concise.

In a project. This is the chapter that presents the created project (i.e. curriculum, guide, etc). It should begin with a presentation of the results from the expert review and a discussion of how the project was modified based on these results. The project should follow. The presentation of the project should be organized according to the criteria, presented in Chapter 3. The project writer may also choose to place the entire project in an Appendix at the end of the paper. This option allows the writer to use a more creative format than allowed by the APA guidelines.

## Chapter 5-Discussion

This is the final chapter, and should begin with the purpose statement. This chapter presents the conclusions, recommendations, limitations and implications regarding the completed research or project.

Conclusions must be based on the information presented in the previous chapter. Recommendations and limitations are directed to other educators and researchers. Recommendations and limitations for a thesis may endorse the intervention made, suggest modifications to the intervention, or discourage the use of the intervention. The recommendations section for a project should discuss the next steps in terms of implementation as well as a plan for disseminating the new product. For both the thesis

and the project, this section should also discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the research or project. From the limitations, the writer should be able to offer suggestions for areas of future inquiry.

The final section of the thesis or project is a discussion of the implications. This is a summary of what was learned and how this information can benefit the educational community-the importance of the study. The writer should also bring the discussion full circle by explaining how the thesis or project contributes to the field, and aids in addressing the problem discussed in Chapter 1. Chapter 5 is followed by a list of the References and any Appendices. Figure 3 presents a summary of the sequential components and content.

Thesis	Common to Both Types	Project
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION		
	Context or Background	
	Statement of the Problem	
	Purpose Statement	
Research Questions		Guiding Questions
	Definition of Terms	

CHAPTER II		
LITERATURE REVIEW		
	Key words from Purpose Statement and Questions become subtopics to be discussed in the review	
CHAPTER III		
METHODOLOGY		RESEARCH BASED CRITERIA
Design, sample, instruments, procedure, data analysis		Explains the criteria used to develop the project-should be research based and come from the key words from the Purpose Statement and Guiding Questions
CHAPTER IV		
RESULTS		PROJECT

Tables, figures and narratives presenting the results of data collection and analysis, along with identified trends		Actual guide, curriculum, etc. or examples presented, with entire project included as an appendix
CHAPTER V DISCUSSION		
	Draw conclusions, present strengths and limitations, areas for further research, and implications for the educational setting	
	REFERENCES	
	APPENDICES	

Figure 3. Summary of chapters and content required in each.

### *The Oral Defense and Final Steps*

The oral defense is the final step in the Thesis or Project process. Once the writing of the thesis or project is complete and the thesis chair has approved the next step, the oral defense can be scheduled. The writing must be complete by the following deadlines:

- First semester graduates-end of November;
- Second semester graduates-end of April;
- Summer graduates- end of July.

At this point, the thesis chair and candidate schedule the defense with the remaining

committee members. A general invitation to the educational community may also be issued, including the date, time, and location of the oral. It is recommended that 1.5 hours be allocated for the oral defense.

For the defense, the candidate should prepare a PowerPoint of their project or thesis. After the presentation, audience members, including the committee, may ask questions of the presenter regarding their work. This collegial interchange is to evaluate the candidate's ability to communicate ideas related to the capstone experience and program of study. Finally, the three committee members will complete the M.Ed Thesis/Integrative Project Rubric. The committee chair will combine the evaluations to determine whether or not the candidate has successfully completed their thesis or project. After defending the thesis or project, if necessary, the candidate must make all revisions indicated by the Committee. Link to [Carthage College M.Ed Thesis/Integrative Project](#)

## Rubric



Carthage College  
Master of Education Capstone Experience  
Thesis/Integrative Project Rubric

Candidate:

Date:

Committee Member (Please print and sign):

## PART ONE: WRITTEN THESIS/PROJECT

Attribute for Written	Does Not Meet Expectations (CM: provide a brief rationale for each attribute you rate in this category.)	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Overall Quality of Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arguments incoherent, flawed, or incorrect</li> <li>Objectives poorly defined</li> <li>Rudimentary analysis</li> <li>Fails to demonstrate understanding of content</li> <li>Lacks synthesis, originality, insight, or creativity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arguments coherent &amp; clear</li> <li>Objectives are clear</li> <li>Average analysis</li> <li>Understands content</li> <li>Synthesizes</li> <li>Shows originality</li> <li>Shows insight</li> <li>Creative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Superior arguments</li> <li>Well-defined objectives</li> <li>High-level analysis</li> <li>Mastery of content</li> <li>Strong synthesis</li> <li>Exceptionally original</li> <li>Keen insight</li> <li>Highly creative</li> </ul>
Contribution to Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacks evidence of discovery</li> <li>Fails to expand on existing research</li> <li>Limited significance</li> <li>Poor publication impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of discovery</li> <li>Builds upon existing research</li> <li>Reasonable significance</li> <li>Adequate publication impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High level discovery</li> <li>Clearly expands on existing research</li> <li>Exceptional significance</li> <li>Strong publication impact</li> </ul>
Quality of Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing is weak</li> <li>Poor mechanics</li> <li>Poorly organized</li> <li>Fails to cite sources &amp;/or has limited number of appropriate sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average writing ability</li> <li>Appropriate number of mechanical errors</li> <li>Organization is clear</li> <li>All sources are cited and appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exceptional writing ability</li> <li>Little to no mechanical errors</li> <li>Organization has strong flow</li> <li>Sources are all cited and referenced in APA 7<sup>th</sup> ed.</li> </ul>
[For Project Only: Overall Strength of Project]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacks connection to research</li> <li>Fails to demonstrate use of Expert Panel feedback</li> <li>Project does not reflect or answer Guiding Questions</li> <li>Unclear potential use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All aspects are connected to research</li> <li>Expert Panel feedback is received and integrated</li> <li>Guiding Questions answered</li> <li>Clear potential use for project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exceptional research-based creation</li> <li>Outstanding use of Expert Panel feedback</li> <li>Clear connections to Guiding Questions</li> <li>Strong potential use for project</li> </ul>
Comments			

Overall Assessment (please circle or highlight): Pass/Fail/ Meets expectations if edits and suggestions are addressed

Please return completed form to Thesis Committee Chair &amp; Patty Rieman, Director of M.Ed. Program

Once the defense has been completed, signatures are collected. All members of the committee sign the Supervising Instructor Designation Form, which becomes a part of the student's official record in the Registrar's Office. The Masters Thesis Binding form is also filled in, indicating the number of final copies to be bound. Each student is also given a document to be submitted with the pages ready for binding.

Final unbound copies of the thesis or project are made and submitted to LIS in Hedberg Library.. The copies must be printed on a good quality white bond paper, acid free, 8.5 by 11 inches, 25% or higher cotton (rag) content, standard 20 pound weight. The number of copies to be submitted will be determined at the oral defense. At least three copies must be submitted. Two of them are given to the Hedberg Library. One copy will be shelved for circulation. The other will be placed in the College archives. The third

copy is given to the Director of Graduate Studies. Some professors/departments may request additional copies for their personal libraries. Additional copies can be submitted for binding if the student wishes to have personal copies of his or her thesis or project. Please note that prepayment must accompany each personal copy.

The Registrar will not release the student's record until the final copies have been filed with LIS. Advisors should remind graduate students that they must file candidacy for the Master in Education degree in the Registrar's Office by December 1. Degrees are awarded only at the Spring Commencement. A transcript from the Registrar indicating that all degree work has been completed and/or a letter from the Director of Graduate Studies is generally sufficient for school boards until the graduation date. Graduate students may obtain copies of their transcripts through written requests to the Registrar's Office.

### **General Writing Guidelines**

HINT: USE THE MASTER OF EDUCATION THESIS TEMPLATE PROVIDED TO YOU BY YOUR EDU 5550 INSTRUCTOR! Writing is a process, and an end product requires time to complete. There is no specific length to a capstone experience, however, it must be written concisely and clearly. In beginning the writing process, students can save time by following the guidelines listed below:

- Left margins should be 1.5 inches while the top, bottom and right margins should be 1 inch. The first page of each chapter should have a 2 inch top margin.
- Paragraphs should be indented .5 inch.
- The entire text, including blocked quotes and the reference list should be double



spaced. For rules of formatting paragraphs, long quotations, etc. consult the guidelines for APA.

- Page numbers are placed in the upper right hand corner, but must not appear in the margins. Please note that the page number in the first page of each chapter must be centered one inch up from the bottom of the page.
- Recommended fonts include Arial, Times New Roman and Helvetica, 12 pt.
- Only color laser or color photography is permitted; however, it is important to remember that future readers may only photocopy in shades of gray. This means that color-coded charts and graphs or photography may be indecipherable. The Carthage College Media Services in Hedberg Library should be consulted for instruction on including color materials.
- Carthage College expects nonsexist language in the text of a thesis or project.
- The entire document should be written in third person and past tense.
- Sentences should flow, creating unity of thought.
- There must be quality paragraph structure; main point to each paragraph with supporting evidence (citations). If the reference is over five years old, there needs to be contemporary verification of validity of the ideas.
- Ideas in each paragraph and between paragraphs must exhibit a logical, sequential development and should be supported (citations).
- Adequate references need to show that all sides of the issue have been explored and there needs to be overwhelming evidence to support one direction of the persuasive argument.
- Your paper must be proof read and edited so that there are no grammatical or

spelling errors in the document. Consulting a tutor in the Writing Center may be beneficial for students struggling with the writing aspect of their paper.

The guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychology Association* should be followed, with only the above items as exceptions (i.e. margins, spacing). See the APA Style at Carthage section of this guide for extensive detail on how to follow APA style in writing a thesis or project.

### Final Format and Sequence

This section explains the pagination of the thesis or project. It also describes any additional pages that are part of the final document. Figure 4 lists and describes the various pages to be included. Appendix E provides examples of the various pages. The writer must decide which format they prefer-upper and lower case mixed in the heading or all capitals. This format must be followed consistently throughout the paper.

Item	Pagination
Abstract  This is a summary of the thesis or project. It should be no more than ½ page.	Not counted  Not numbered
Acknowledgements  This page is optional.	Not counted  Not numbered
Title Page	Counted (small Roman numeral i)

<p>Table of Contents</p> <p>Provides the reader with the sequence of items presented in the paper</p>	<p>Counted (small Roman numeral ii, iii, ...)</p> <p>Not numbered</p>
<p>List of Tables and Figures</p> <p>Any Tables or Figures inserted into the thesis or project should be listed</p>	<p>Counted</p> <p>Numbered at the bottom center of the page, consecutively from Table of Contents with small Roman numerals (ii, iii....)</p>
<p>Chapter 1-5</p>	<p>Numbered consecutively throughout document, beginning with Arabic numeral 1. On the first page of each chapter, the page number is located at the bottom center of the page. All remaining page numbers are located in the upper right corner of the page.</p>
<p>References</p> <p>This listing provides the information needed to identify and retrieve each source</p>	<p>Arabic numbers continuing from last chapter</p>
<p>Appendices</p> <p>If there is only one appendix, it should be labeled Appendix</p> <p>Multiple appendices should be lettered consecutively A through Z (Appendix A)</p>	<p>Arabic numbers continuing from Reference list</p>

*Figure 4.* Final format checklist.

Every thesis or project is expected to follow the standard format provided here. This format is based on the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association-Seventh Edition (APA Manual). For more detail, please refer to this edition.

## Writing

This section presents some common principles to follow when writing your thesis or project.

Paragraph length. Single sentence paragraphs are abrupt and should be avoided. The other extreme should also be avoided. Paragraphs that are longer than one double-spaced page should be broken up into two or more paragraphs.

Subject/verb agreement. Each verb must agree with its subject (i.e. singular subject-singular verb form). For specific examples, see pages 78-79 of the APA Manual.

Noun/pronoun agreement. When using a pronoun to replace a noun, the pronoun should be in agreement in both number and gender. For example: He or she refers to a student, while they refers to many students. More examples are presented on pages 79-80 of the APA Manual.

Orderly presentation of ideas. The content of the paper should flow. One way to ensure flow is through the use of punctuation. Punctuation should be used to show continuity of ideas. They cue the reader to what is usually heard in speech. One way to check sentence structure, punctuation, and flow is to read the paper out loud, noting and making changes wherever it sounds awkward.

Another way to ensure the flow of the paper is to use headings. When minor subheadings are used, an explanation of what is included in each minor section should be provided. Transition statements or words should also be used to enhance the natural flow from one paragraph to another or to a new major heading or subheading.

Headings (levels). In general, headings should appear as follows. For a more detailed discussion of levels of headings, see pages 62-63 of the APA Manual.

Chapter X

Chapter Title

Text.....  
.....

Major Subheading

Text.....  
.....

Minor subheading. Text

.....

All headings should be in bold.

Seriation. When presenting a series of key points, it is important that all items be syntactically parallel. Steps can be identified by an Arabic numeral followed by a period. The first word should be capitalized and correct punctuation should complete the

sentence. An example:

1. Text follows.....
2. Text follows.....

It is also acceptable to use bullets if the use of a numbered list would connote an unwanted ordinal position. Another example follows:

- Text follows.....
- Text follows....

For further detail, see pages 63-65 in the APA Manual.

Use of numbers. In general, numerals should be used to express numbers 10 and above and words should be used to express numbers below 10 (i.e. nine, eight, seven...). Exceptions include numbers that precede a unit of measurement (8 cm of), numbers that represent percentages, ratios, or percentiles and quartiles (37%), and numbers that represent time, dates, ages, or scores (6-year-olds).

Any number that is used to start a sentence should be expressed as a word. Whenever possible, the sentence should be reworded to avoid beginning with a number. More detailed rules for the use of numbers can be found on pages 111-115 of the APA Manual.

## Citations

In the process of completing a thesis or project, the works of other authors will be

consulted. When the student-researcher incorporates the ideas, theories or research of others into his or her paper, credit needs to be given to the originator in the form of a citation.

Citation of sources. The APA Manual (7<sup>th</sup> ed) follows an author-date citation system. This system provides the reader with the information necessary to locate the source in the reference list. All sources cited in the text must appear in the reference list, and only sources cited in the text should appear in the reference list. \*The [Carthage College Writing Center](#) is an outstanding resource for those who need helping navigating writing with APA style.

Direct quotes/block quotes. When words cited from a source are the exact same words used by the original author, it is considered a direct quote. Direct quotes must include the author, year and page number of their source. Direct quotes must also be contained within quotation marks. The following examples provide different ways to format direct quotes and contain all the necessary information:

“Such activities must set up children for success so that they see themselves as independent readers – the ultimate goal of guided reading” (Ford & Opitz, 2002, p. 9).

According to Ford and Opitz (2002), “Such activities must set up children for success so that they see themselves as independent readers – the ultimate goal of guided reading” (p. 9).

If a quotation consists of more than 40 words, the quote should be blocked. Blocked quotes start on a new line and the entire quote is indented .5 from the left

margin. A period should follow the last word of the quote. The author, year and page number must still be included, either when the quote is introduced (which is followed by a colon prior to the actual quote) or following the period at the end of the quote, within parenthesis. Two examples are presented.

Poem routines need to be taught and modeled for students so that they will be able to eventually work independently at a poem center completing various literacy tasks. Teachers can set up daily poem routines and change the routines quarterly, increasing in difficulty. (Goyke, 2009, p. 74)

According to Goyke (2009):

Poem routines need to be taught and modeled for students so that they will be able to eventually work independently at a poem center completing various literacy tasks. Teachers can set up daily poem routines and change the routines quarterly, increasing in difficulty. (p. 74)

Paraphrasing. When the work of another is summarized in the words of the student-researcher, it is considered a paraphrase and still must be cited. The author and year must be provided. For example: Research has confirmed the effectiveness of repeated reading on phonological awareness (Ziolkowski & Goldstien, 2008).

More than one author and et al. When there are two authors in a work to be cited, both authors should be listed every time when referenced in the text. When there are more than two authors but fewer than six, list all the authors the first time the reference



appears in the text. Subsequent citations should use the last name of the first author followed by et al. When a reference has more than six authors, et al. should be used initially. It (et) is not italicized and it should have a period following al. More details can be found in the APA Manual, pages 175-176.

Two or more citations within same parenthesis. When citing more than one source within parenthesis, citations should be listed alphabetically as they would appear in the reference list. A semicolon should separate each citation. For example: Many studies have also been completed on the effectiveness of using cooperative learning (Krol, Janssen, Veenman, & van der Linden, 2004; Morrow, Rand, & Young, 1997).

Secondary sources. As citations go, secondary sources should be used sparingly, if at all. When using this format, name the original work and give the citation for the secondary text. In the reference list, the secondary source should be listed. As an example: Morrow (as cited by Stone, 1996, p. 1) stated that “.....” In the reference list, Stone should be listed, not Morrow.

Ampersand use in text. The symbol of the ampersand is &. It is used to replace ‘and’ in the citation process; however, it should only be used within parenthesis. When multiple authors are cited in the text, such as Brown and Brown (2010), the word should be used. When multiple authors are used within parenthesis, the symbol should be used; for example (Brown & Brown, 2010). The ampersand should also be used in the reference list.

## Reference List

The purpose of a reference list is to provide readers with the necessary information to identify and retrieve each source. This includes author, year of publication, title, and publishing date. Specifics on how to construct a reference list can be found on pages 180-224 of the APA Manual. The entire reference list should be double spaced and entries should have a hanging indent.

Order. The reference list of the thesis or project should be organized alphabetically by last name, followed by first name initials. Additional guidelines include:

- When the same author has several works (or when the same order of authors have several works), they should be arranged by publication year, with the earliest listed first.
- One author entries come before multiple author entries beginning with the same last name and references with the same first author and different second or third author are listed alphabetically by the last name of the second author, or third author.
- When a reference has an agency, association, or institution as its author, it should be listed in the reference list by the first significant word of the name (i.e. American Psychological Association).
- If a reference has no author, it should be listed in the reference list by the first significant word in the title.

Elements of references. In composing a reference list, certain pieces of information need to be included, and a specific format should be followed as explained:

- The year of publication should be in parenthesis. If no date is available, write *n.d.* in

parenthesis. The closing parenthesis should be followed by a period.

- Only the first word of the article title and of the subtitle (if any) should be capitalized.

Proper nouns should also be capitalized. The title should be followed by a period. The title should not be italicized or placed within quotation marks.

- The title of a journal should be italicized, and written in upper and lowercase letters.

- The volume number for the journal should follow the title and also be italicized.

Include the issue number in parentheses, not italicized, when the journal is paginated separately by issue.

- For books and reports, also provide the city and state of where it was published, followed by a colon and the name of the publisher.

- For electronic sources, provide the digital object identifiers (DOI): doi:xxxxxx

- If there is no DOI, provide the home page URL of the journal, book or report publisher.

Examples of references. The following reference list provides examples of different types of sources.

Arquette, C. (2007). Multiple activity literacy centers: Promoting choice and learning differentiation. *Illinois Reading Council Journal*, 35(3), 3-9. Retrieved from Education Research Complete database.

Bus, A. G. (2002). Joint caregiver-child storybook reading: A route to literacy development. In S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook of Early Literacy Research* (pp. 179-191). New York: The Guilford Press.

Cunningham, P. M. (2005). *Phonics they use: Words for reading and writing* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.).

Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

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## Displaying Results

Throughout the thesis or project, the student-researcher may find it useful to display information in either a table or figure. Tables are primarily used for information that can be displayed in a row-column structure. Any information that cannot be displayed as a table (i.e. charts, graphs, photos, drawings, illustrations) can be displayed as a figure. Both tables and figures should supplement the text rather than repeat it. Tables and figures should also be self-explanatory. The APA Manual (pages 125-167) provides more detail regarding the design and placement of tables and figures.

Numbering and placing tables/figures in text. Prior to the placement of a table or figure in the text, it must be introduced. When mentioned in the text, tables and figures should be numbered with Arabic numerals in the order that they are mentioned (i.e. Table 1, Table 2, Figure 1, Table 3, Figure 2).

Figures. The format for a figure is exemplified in various places throughout this document. Each figure must have a caption that is placed underneath the figure. Note the use of italic in the figure title, followed by a period. The caption title should describe what is contained in the figure (i.e. *Figure 3. Summary of chapters and content required in each.*).

Tables. The format of a table differs from that of a figure. It begins with the table number followed, on the next line, by a concise title in italic with no period at the end (see Table 1). The table should be encased by lines above and below the actual information. Heading should be used to identify each column and only the first letter of the first word should be capitalized.

## Appendices

Appendices contain materials that supplement your thesis or project and are the final component. Items suitable for an appendix include student-researcher created instruments or surveys, consent forms, and projects in their entirety. If the thesis or project has only one appendix, it must be introduced in the text as such (i.e. A copy of the Student Survey is located in the Appendix). If the thesis or project contains numerous appendices, they are placed at the end in the order they are introduced in the text and each labeled with a capital letter (i.e. The Proposal Form can be found in Appendix B. In Appendix C is the Exempt Form to be filled out and turned in to the IRB).

Each appendix should begin on a separate page and have its own preceding title page. The text on the title page should be centered and in bold. This format is exemplified

in the appendices attached to this document.

#### Helpful Sites

- APA style info: <https://apastyle.apa.org/>
- Concise guide to following 7th edition APA style:  
<https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/concise-guide-formatting-checklist.pdf>
- To access published theses:  
<https://www.carthage.edu/academics/library/archives-special-collections/>