

GUIDE TO M.ED. THESIS, PAPER/PROJECT, AND COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

Department of Special Education

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**University of Hawaii at Manoa
College of Education
Department of Special Education**

**THESIS, PAPER, OR COMPREHENSIVE EXAM REQUIREMENT
Master of Education Degree Program Only**

M. Ed. candidates in the Department of Special Education may elect to follow either Plan A or Plan B.

Plan A

Plan A is a **thesis** and may involve additional work in statistical analysis and research design above the minimum program requirements.

- * Six credit hours of SPED 700 are required.
- * Plan A theses committees are comprised of three faculty members who are members of the College of Education graduate faculty. The chair of the thesis committee is the student's advisor.

The **thesis** must be a report of comparative, descriptive, or qualitative research, and is submitted to the Graduate Division.

Students who select the Plan A (thesis) option should secure a copy of *Instructions for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations* from the Graduate Division (<http://www.hawaii.edu/graduate/thesis/thesis.html>). The booklet outlines all procedures for the thesis including admission, candidacy, typing, and publication information.

Students who plan to pursue a doctoral degree are strongly encouraged to follow the Plan A program requirements.

Plan B

Plan B requires completion of either a scholarly paper (e.g., original review of the literature or report of research), project (e.g., curriculum development) **or** a written comprehensive exam.

- * At least one credit hour of SPED 699 is required.
- * Plan B paper/project committees are comprised of two faculty members who are members of the College of Education graduate faculty; the chair of the committee is this student's advisor.

The Plan B written comprehensive exam requires students to write in-depth answers to essay questions in general special education and their area(s) of emphasis. (See Department of Special Education *Student Handbook*).

General Purpose of the Paper/Project/Thesis Requirement

As noted above, Plan A requires development and satisfactory completion of a thesis;

Plan B requires a paper/project or comprehensive exam. The purposes of these requirements are to:

- * provide students with new information and skills;
- * familiarize graduate students with the research literature in special education and their areas of interest;
- * provide a vehicle for graduate students to demonstrate application, analysis, and synthesis of research and professional literature in special education; and
- * add to the knowledge base concerned with improving opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Well-developed writing and research skills are **expected** of individuals who possess a Master of Education degree and are particularly important for teachers and other human services personnel. Advisors work closely and individually with students to guide them through the development and completion of the Plan A or Plan B requirement.

The Plan A thesis and Plan B paper/project **cannot** be a job requirement related to the student's employment setting.

Types of Research Projects or Papers

The thesis or Plan B paper may report comparative or descriptive research. Other options for the Plan B project include an extensive and original review of the research literature or a project (e.g. curriculum development). In all cases, the topic is chosen by the student with the assistance and approval of the advisor. The advisor has the prerogative to veto a proposal if the selected option or topic is not appropriate.

Descriptive research involves reporting data that describe a situation. The research question(s) answer: "What currently exists with regard to this issue?" Types of descriptive research include surveys, observational studies, and reports of test scores or demographics. Examples: What are teachers' beliefs and attitudes about inclusion? or What are the most common reasons that teachers leave special education?

Comparative research usually involves measuring the effects of an intervention. The research design is typically experimental (including single-subject) or quasi-experimental. Comparative research also examines the differences between groups such as male and female, students with and without disabilities, or treatment and control groups.

Qualitative research includes naturalistic observations, interviews, and narrative reports. Historical reviews also fall into this category. Qualitative research examines processes, and how people perceive and make sense of events and situations. Results are reported through narrative rather than numbers.

A **review of the literature** is **not** simply a report of the findings related to a particular topic. The major purpose of a review is to summarize and synthesize knowledge concerning a certain topic or to highlight important professional issues that have not been resolved in

prior research.

Products/Projects may include (a) curricula, (b) assessment tools, (c) audio-visual training guides, and (d) computer software. The projects must address a need in the field of special education and often are developed to solve specific teaching or community agency problems. The final product must be accompanied by a paper that states the problem, establishes a need, and explains the processes used in its development. As in all Plan A and Plan B options, these projects must have consent of the advisor **before the student** begins.

All students should purchase an **American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual** (5th edition available at the UH Bookstore) and follow the guidelines and referencing system for all theses, paper/projects, literature reviews and comprehensive exams.

Ethical Considerations

Conducting research. If a M.Ed. degree candidate is using human participants in a research project, the research proposal must be approved by the Committee on Human Studies (CHS). (808) 539-3955, <http://www.hawaii.edu/irb>

Many forms of educational research are considered exempt by the CHS. Therefore, students may wish to follow the procedures in filing an exemption. These procedures are found on: <http://www.hawaii.edu/irb/exemptions.htm>

In any event, students should have their research procedures reviewed by the CHS to ensure that they strictly adhere to ethical research practices. The advisor will assist the student in obtaining approval from the Committee on Human Studies.

Student conduct. An obvious form of student misconduct is plagiarism--copying or quoting directly from source material without providing quotation marks or crediting the source. A more subtle form, but equally improper, is paraphrasing material or using an idea that is not properly introduced and documented (i.e., no reference citation provided). The Department of Special Education follows the Student Conduct and Discipline Policy from the current University of Hawai'i at Manoa Catalog (*Academic Integrity* section of the University of Hawai'i Student Conduct Code). *As defined in those documents:*

"Plagiarism includes but is not limited to, submitting, to satisfy an academic requirement, any document that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without identifying that individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation a documented idea that has not been assimilated into the student's language and style; paraphrasing a passage so closely that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved; and 'dry labbing,' which includes obtaining and using experimental data from other students without the express consent of the instructor, utilizing experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of the course or from previous terms, and fabricating data to fit the expected results." (UH Manoa 2005-2006 Catalog, p.584-585)

STUDENT AND FACULTY ROLES

General Procedures

As noted above, the student's advisor is generally the first reader (in the case of a Plan A thesis, the advisor is the committee chair). As first reader or committee chair, the faculty member will approve the student's topic and proposal. He or she will also guide the student through the entire process of conducting and completing the M.Ed. paper/thesis.

It is the student's responsibility to ask another faculty member to serve as the second reader for a Plan B paper, or in the case of a thesis, to find two additional faculty members who are willing to serve on the committee. Most importantly, it is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the literature in his or her areas of interest. Based on this literature, the student presents the advisor with one or more topics/research ideas and works collaboratively with the advisor in developing, conducting, and writing the paper/thesis.

Role of Instructors when Part/Whole of the M. Ed. Paper/Thesis is Developed in Conjunction with Graduate Level Classes

It is the **instructor's responsibility** to provide general guidance and constructive feedback in the development of paper-related activities associated with a particular course. These activities may be graded by the instructor. **The grade assigned by the instructor has no bearing on the acceptability of the work as it relates to the M. Ed. paper/thesis requirement.**

ALL aspects of the paper (i.e., topic, literature review, research design, methods, etc.) must be approved by the student's advisor; instructor approval does **not** imply or guarantee advisor approval.

It is the **student's responsibility** to obtain advisor approval and maintain communication with the advisor throughout the process of developing and implementing a project that will be used for the M. Ed. paper/thesis.

Faculty roles and responsibilities when a student wishes to work with a faculty member on the M. Ed. paper/thesis when the faculty member is not the student's advisor.

* This situation may occur when a student wishes to work on a project associated with the faculty member's research.

* The advisor must approve the topic.

* The advisor remains the first reader on the paper; the other faculty member is the second reader.

* It is the **student's responsibility** to schedule a meeting with **both** faculty members in attendance. The advisor and other faculty member review the student's proposal and specify how they will share responsibilities for supervision of the student's work. For example, an advisor may assume primary responsibility for the student's writing and development of all

sections of the paper/thesis with the exception of the research design and methods sections. The other faculty member assumes responsibility for the design and methods sections. Primary responsibility means that the faculty member guides the student through the work and provides most, if not all, of the input in the initial development of the work. The faculty member who does not have primary responsibility provides input informally and/or in reviewing the work when it is well underway.

The Paper/Thesis Process and Timelines

1. Discuss a paper topic with your advisor. Decide on a topic for your Plan A/B paper approximately two semesters prior to finishing your coursework and advanced practicum. All planning related to a master's paper, project, or thesis should be discussed with and approved by the student's advisor.
2. Get advisor approval of your paper topic. This is also necessary when you are developing your proposal in conjunction with a course.
3. Once a student's topic has been approved, the next task is to develop a proposal.
(See Table 1)
4. Talk with your advisor and propose a second reader (or two additional committee members for a thesis). Ask these individuals to serve in your committee.
5. Draft your "Introduction" chapter and discuss it with your advisor.
6. Review the related literature and draft your "Literature Review." Get your advisor's feedback and approval.
7. Draft your "Methods" chapter and discuss your proposed procedures with your advisor.
8. Submit your proposal to the Committee on Human Studies (CHS).
9. Once you have gained CHS and advisor approval you may begin data collection. Keep your advisor informed on a regular basis as you make decisions related to the data.
10. Write improved drafts of your Introduction, Literature Review, and Methods chapters.
11. When you have finished collecting data, discuss the results with your advisor and draft your "Results" chapter.
12. Finalize the first four chapters
13. Draft your "Discussion" chapter and discuss it with your advisor.
14. Provide your advisor and readers with a finished paper *at two weeks* before the Plan B

deadline. (The Plan B deadline is noted in the Graduate Catalog as *Last day to submit Master's Plans B and final examination results.*)

15. Prepare for an oral presentation of your paper. Your advisor will help arrange this presentation.

Table 1. Research Proposals

Outline for a Research Proposal

- 1. Tentative title
- 2. Statement of the Problem/Statement of Need
- 3. General statement linking the proposed research to past research (Background).
- 4. Purpose of the proposed research
 - 4a. Specific research questions
- 5. Brief review of relevant research

Methods section

- a. Participants and setting
- b. Instrumentation
- c. Research design
- d. Procedures

Data collection methods and proposed analysis

Timeline for completion

Outline for a Literature Review or Project Proposal

- 1. Tentative title
- 2. Statement of the Problem (why the literature review/project is of importance)
- 3. General statement linking project to current state of the art, or state of practice (Background).
- 4. Purpose of the project/literature review
- 5. Review of relevant research

Plan for project development, description of the processes

Plan for project outcomes, description of products and evaluation methods

Timeline for completion

Components for Thesis or Paper/Project

- Title page (formatted according to UH specifications)
- Signature/Acceptance Page
- Acknowledgments (optional)
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables
- List of Figures
- Chapters
- References
- Appendices

Chapter Organization

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Chapter I introduces the readers to the subject and provides them with a general overview of the project/thesis. The introduction establishes the reader's interest and sets the stage for the

remainder of the paper. Some possible headings would be:

Statement of the Problem/Rationale
Background
Purpose of the Study
Research Questions and/or Hypothesis
Significance of the Problem
Definition of Terms
Delimitations and/or Assumptions

The **Statement of the Problem/Statement of Need** identifies a societal problem, significant event, issue, or program which has drawn the researcher's attention and warrants study. This section provides a context for the reader and states why this particular phenomenon is of interest, why it is important, and why we need to know about it.

The first section should include a narrative hook that convinces the reader that the issue is significant and worthy of study. For example, "Alarming rates of unemployment exist for adults with disabilities" (support this claim with author, date of a cite). Provide a rationale by convincing the reader that the topic is worthy of study, and how the issue/topic fits into the broader scheme of things (i.e., the bigger picture). State: **What** is the problem you propose to study? in approximately 2 - 3 pages.

The **Background** extends the statement of the problem by identifying concrete instances of the problem, relevant popular and statistical trends, and current practices in the area. It summarizes what other researchers have done in the area and what they have found. This sets the stage for telling **how** you are going to study this problem based on what has been done before. This section should be from 2 - 5 pages.

The **Purpose of the Study** describes succinctly what the researcher hopes to accomplish by conducting the study, (i.e., what you wish to find out or bring about by addressing the problem). The purpose statement should identify the (a) target group (individual), (b) setting, (c) variables to be studied, and (d) method by which they will be studied.

Example:

The purpose of this (experimental, single-subject, survey, qualitative) study is to examine the effects of (independent variable) on (dependent variable B measure) for (participants) at (the research site). The independent variable(s) _____ will be defined as _____ (provide general, not specific, definition). The dependent variable(s) will be described generally as _____ (provide general, not specific, definition). A (specific research methods or techniques) will be used to (collect data, record responses) from (identify sample/population) on (specific task). Intervening variable(s) such as (identify the intervening variables, if applicable) will be controlled in the study. The results of the study will contribute to the _____ (field of special education) by _____ (how).

The **Research Questions/Objectives** are those questions/objectives that you wish to answer/accomplish as a result of conducting the study. The research questions emerge from the purpose of the study. They are stated clearly so that the results section of the paper answers these questions/objectives specifically. Research questions guide the research effort.

Hypotheses are educated guesses concerning specific answers to questions that are asked in the study. Hypotheses are derived from logical analysis (i.e., induction or deduction) from your knowledge of the problem and purpose, and from the research literature. They can be very general statements or very specific and should focus the reader on the exact intention of the study.

For example, let's assume that X = the independent variable (IV), Y = the dependent variable (DV), and Z = your sample. Your research questions might then be phrased like:

1. What are the effects of X on Y for Z?

What are the effects of self-monitoring on homework completion for seventh graders with learning disabilities?

2. Are there differences between X1 and X2 on Y. (If X is a "grouping" independent variable?)
Are there differences between students with and without disabilities on measures of homework completion?

Are there differences between males and females on measures of homework completion?

3. Are there differences between X1 and X2 on Y for Z? (If X is a "treatment" independent variable)

Are there differences between the intervention and control groups on homework completion for seventh graders with learning disabilities?

Examples of qualitative research objectives include:

1. Examine the professional identities that special education teachers construct.
2. Describe how special education teachers make sense of their first three years of teaching.

The **Significance of the Problem** elaborates the problem statement by describing why the researcher's study is important to the field. It addresses what will occur as a result of the study.

The **Definition of Terms** stipulates the meaning of terms used by the researcher. These definitions may include technical/professional definitions. Definitions should be specific to the field in which the study is conducted and related substantively or methodologically to the study. The terms should be listed alphabetically (with documented references); if there are a large number of terms to be defined, only the most important are included in this section, others may be listed in an appendix.

The **Delimitations** section sets parameters of the study. This section outlines how "X but

not Y” will be studied. It also identifies methodological shortcomings that will narrow the study’s boundaries. Delimitations describe weaknesses in the study that cannot be corrected. Delimitations may relate to the design (i.e., if you are unable to randomly assign participants; or if your groups are already formed based on their characteristics such as “students who receive special education services at Kokua Elementary”); or sampling (i.e., if you are limited to a select group of individuals). Delimitations may address the parameters of who you study, with what methods, and with what restraints. Delimitations are typically included in Chapter 1 of a proposal, but then addressed again in Chapter 5 (Discussion) of the final thesis/paper.

The discussion of **Assumptions** itemizes the self-evident, untested and/or untestable propositions; basic values; world views or beliefs that influence the study. This section is particularly relevant for qualitative research studies where the researcher is the instrument. In this section, the researcher would describe his or her biases and the lens through which he or she is approaching the study. (In a qualitative study, this will be a substantial part of Chapter 3).

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Chapter II is designed to give the reader background in the research literature regarding your topic. The literature review discusses studies relating to participant characteristics, interventions and measures, and the relationship of the literature to the problem addressed in the study. It is important to demonstrate that you have examined and analyzed the literature relevant to the study. The information in the literature review should be presented in an integrated fashion rather than as a simple description of each study. In addition, the literature review should be organized by categories of related literature headings and subheadings (See APA Style Guide). Do not editorialize in this chapter. You are describing what other researchers have done in this area. The chapter begins with a paragraph or two about the organization of the literature review; it ends by drawing conclusions regarding relationships found in the literature reviewed.

Literature Review sections may include:
Introductory paragraph (not labeled)

First Section--studies about your participant group. This would include studies regarding common characteristics of the population with respect to your topic. For example, your literature review might cover characteristics of students with learning disabilities that may lead to problem behaviors you hope to decrease; or characteristics of general education teachers who are especially effective in teaching students with disabilities.

Second Section--studies about the particular presenting problem, what you are measuring and the method of measurement. For example, you might discuss how social competence has been measured in previous studies or how teacher perceptions have been ascertained.

Third Section--studies about particular interventions relevant to the problem. What are the various interventions used in social skills instruction? Then given the various intervention

methods, which seem most applicable to the problem situation you are studying. For example, you may review studies on whole language and direct phonetic instruction and conclude which method is most appropriate for your study. Or literature may be reviewed regarding types of teacher professional development activities and show which method is most appropriate for use in the present study. [In qualitative studies, this section would focus on contexts instead of interventions. The author would use literature about certain settings, situations, environments, or contexts. What have other researchers found regarding playground activities? What have other researchers reported about middle school environments?]

Summary--tie together research that has been done with the population, measures, and interventions planned for use in the Plan B or Thesis paper.

CHAPTER III METHODS

This chapter presents the participants, settings, measures, research design, and procedures used in the study. It addresses whether the study is a group or single-subject experiment, descriptive or qualitative study, survey research, program evaluation, etc. This section describes what you did in preparing for the study, and a step-by-step description of how you did it. This chapter is important for replication. The reader should be able to replicate exactly what you did from your description of the method. It is important to maintain a good log of the various research activities that are a part of the study to facilitate the development of this chapter. No data are presented in the chapter. Terminology for sections in this chapter varies according to content, but in general, should include:

- Participants
- Settings/Materials
- Measures/Instrumentation
- Procedures
- Data Analysis

The **Participants** section briefly describes the individuals who were involved in the study. The participants are usually a sample of a larger population of interest (i.e., the population is the total group to which possible generalizations of the study are applicable). The sample is chosen in some organized manner to represent the population. A narrative description of the participants is appropriate for single-subject or qualitative research designs; a table summarizing the demographic information about the sample is usually presented for group designs. Demographic information, such as age, gender, disability characteristics, test scores, etc., should be included when describing the sample. From this section, the reader should be able to “see” exactly **who** participated in your study.

A description of the **Setting** where the research took place is often needed. Were naturalistic observations of children’s playground behavior undertaken? If so, describe the

playground, the other people and **materials** in this setting. Were students given tests in their classroom setting? If so, describe the classroom including the general area of the school (demographic information) as well as the classroom furniture, equipment, materials, and arrangement. This section should describe environmental elements or variables that may have influenced the outcomes of the study.

Discussion of the **Instrument** concerns specific measurement tools or assessment devices developed or used in the study (i.e., the development of a survey questionnaire, how it was field-tested; reliability and validity information regarding commercial instruments). Instruments are tools for measuring variables. Therefore, a discussion of your dependent variable is appropriate in this section. Pilot tests, validation steps, or any alterations to an existing measurement tool would be included in this section. [In qualitative studies the researcher IS the instrument. Therefore, a section about assumptions and researcher bias would be included. This section would state the lens through which the researcher was viewing the particular phenomenon.] Also included would be a description of how the researcher decided what questions to ask in interviews, what behavior to focus upon in observations, etc. The reader should know why certain data was collected and how it met the purposes of the study.

The **Procedures** section describes a chronology of exactly what was done. It may start out by describing how participant consent was obtained. Then the specifics of how interventions were implemented and how data were collected should be described. Intervention methods should be described in sufficient detail that someone could replicate the study based on your verbal description. The study's treatment validity is directly related to the thoroughness of this description. Or, how a survey was administered and what instructions were given to participants should be discussed. Any intervening variables should be described in this section. If there were unanticipated interruptions in the intervention schedule, these should be reported. The reader should be able to determine exactly **what** was done with **whom**, and **when** after reviewing this section. In both qualitative and quantitative studies, replicability of the study (trustworthiness and credibility, internal and external validity) is dependent on how well the procedures are described.

The section related to **Analysis of Data** describes what was done with the data once they were collected.

CHAPTER IV RESULTS

This chapter includes a presentation and analysis of all data - demographic as well as other descriptive, graphic, and statistical information. The format is usually designed around research questions and/or hypothesis. All information that is included in tables and figures is integrated into the chapter by introducing the table/figure, presenting it and discussing its important points. In general, the verbal description of the results does not simply repeat what has been presented visually -- instead -- it adds something or integrates information that clarifies its meaning. The chapter should end with a summary of the data. Examples of chapter components include:

Introduction (not a section heading)

Description of Sample -- summary demographic information (e.g., age, sex, ethnicity) of the participants

Research Questions/Objectives -- One . . . Five

Summary

CHAPTER V DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter can have various subheadings, but generally begins with a summary of the procedures and results. You should explain why you think you obtained the results that you did and the importance of your findings (e.g., implications for teaching). It's important to refer back to the literature presented in Chapter 2 of your thesis/paper as you write this section (e.g., comment on whether the results are consistent or not with previous research on the topic). Chapter 5 identifies important issues and makes recommendations. This is really your chapter. As the researcher, you can do a lot more "editorializing" here and you may want to keep notes on ideas as you progress throughout the study. This chapter may, as part of the recommendations, indicate areas of need for further research. The concept of limitations and assumptions -- constraints under which you operated and recognition of the implications of your research -- may be incorporated into this chapter, but not always labeled as such. Sections may include

Summary

Conclusions

Discussion and Implications

Limitations

Recommendations for Further Research

References

References include those sources you actually used in the paper. Requirements for format are addressed by the APA manual (5th edition).

Appendices

The paper should end with an Appendix that may be in several parts (A, B, . . .) and includes material such as

Raw Data

Questionnaire(s)

Participating Schools

Letters of Consent

Each appendix section is preceded by a title page for that section with centered titles

Appendix A
Consent Forms

Appendix B
Instrument
(Survey or Data Collection Sheets)

Appendix C
Raw Data

Odds & Ends

1. Neatness counts . . . an attractive, neat product is a requirement of APA and is a standard of the profession.
2. Non Sexist Language "When you refer to a person or persons, choose words that are accurate, clear, and free from bias. Long established cultural practice can exert a powerful, insidious influence over even the most conscientious author. For example, the use of man as a generic noun can be ambiguous and may convey an implicit message that women are of secondary importance. You can choose nouns, pronouns, and adjectives to eliminate, or at least to minimize, the possibility of ambiguity in sex identity or sex role. The task of changing language may seem awkward at first. Nevertheless, careful attention to meaning and practice in rephrasing will overcome any initial difficulty. If you are going to use one gender pronouns, make a statement in the first chapter of your paper stating that you are doing so as a conscious choice. This usually follows the terminology section. [quote page #? Apa] See Table 1 for more information on non sexist language.
3. Person-first Language. When using labeling terminology or when classifying individuals, avoid using terms such as "handicapped adolescents" or "learning disabled students." Rather, use more lengthy but accurate "people first" terminology (e.g. "adolescents with disabilities." "students who have behavior disorders," or "students receiving special education services under the category of Specific Learning Disability").
4. Verb Tense. In general research papers are written in the past tense. This is particularly true of Chapters I through IV. Chapter V may be in the present and/or future tense. To facilitate the process of putting most of the content in the past tense, keep in mind that you are writing about what you did, what you read, what you discovered -- all after you did it! Additional note: It is appropriate to use the word "I" instead of "the researcher."
5. Tables and Figures. Label tables at the top and figures at the bottom. (See format examples). Build text around both . . . do not place them on separated pages from text of the project.
6. Abstract. See example in "Sample Pages."
7. Margins See APA Manual (2001) for guidelines.
8. Page numbering
Table of Contents: ii, iii, iv, etc.
Figures/Tables: Continue numbering from Table of Contents
First Page of Chapter: No number on the first page of a chapter, but count it in sequence. All other pages in the text are numbered in the upper right corner, even with the right page margins.

**University of Hawaii at Manoa -College of Education
Department of Special Education**

***American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual Summary
(Fifth Edition, 2001)***

Originally compiled by: Mary Anne Prater & Thomas W. Sileo
Updated by: Rhonda S. Black (September, 2001)

The American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual (2001) is the publication guide for the field of special education as well as a number of other professional disciplines. Major periodicals and other publications in special education rely on APA style and format.

The following information provides an introduction to APA style. It is essential that students consult the manual for specific information; all references refer to the manual.

Manuscript Preparation
(Chapter 5, pp. 283-320)

- Use a 12 point serif font because it improves readability and reduces eye fatigue (APA, p. 285). Do not use compressed type.

Serif fonts include Times New Roman, Courier, CG Times, and others
Sans serif fonts include Arial, Universal, Verdana, Tahoma, and others

- Use flush-left justification so that the spacing between all words is the same, and leave the right margin uneven, or ragged (p. 287).
- Leave uniform margins of one inch at the top, bottom, right and left sides of every page.
- Double space the text.
 - Indent each paragraph five to seven spaces (or .5 inch).
- Number all pages except the first and the first of each chapter in the upper right corner, one inch from the edges of the page. Page headers should consist of the first two or three words of the title and be five spaces to the left of the page number.
- Type no more than 27 lines of text on an 8.5 x 11 inch page.
- Start the reference list on a separate page.

Headings

(Sec. 3.30 to 3.33) Pages 111-115

A well organized paper that provides a logical sequence of communication helps the reader. The use of headings and subheadings helps in the preparation of a well organized paper. There are five levels of organizational headings in the APA style; typically levels **1, 3, and 4** are used in students' papers (with Level 5 used for CHAPTER HEADINGS).

CENTERED UPPERCASE HEADING - (Level 5)

Centered with First Letter of all Important Words Capitalized - (Level 1)

Italicized, Centered, with First Letter of all Important Words Capitalized - (Level 2)

Flush Left, Italics, with First Letter of all Important Words Capitalized - (Level 3)

Indented, italicized, lowercase, ending with a period. - (Level 4)

Seriation

(Sec. 3.33) Pages 115-117

To assist the reader in clarifying the sequence or relationship between elements in a series, identify the elements by a letter or a number. (Note: In any series, items should be syntactically and conceptually parallel to other items in the series).

Within a paragraph or a sentence, identify elements in a series by **lowercase letters** in parentheses.

The participant's three choices were (a) working with another participant, (b) working with a team, and (c) working alone.

When writing separate sentences/paragraphs in a series, such as conclusions or steps in a procedure, use a **numeral** followed by a period, but not enclosed in parentheses.

- 1. Students with learning disabilities were more able to . . .*
- 2. Students without learning disabilities were more able to . . .*
- 3. Both students with and without learning disabilities performed better when . . .*

Quotations

(Sec. 3.34 to 3.41) -- Pages 117-122

All material which is quoted directly from another work must be indicated. The citation of

the source of the direct quotation should always include the **page number as well as the reference**. The page citation is given in parentheses following the last quotation mark and before the period if at the end of the sentence. Use direct quotations sparingly; paraphrasing is preferred. When paraphrasing or referring to an idea contained in another work, authors should cite the original source/author of the work. See APA p. 349-350 for a discussion of plagiarism.

Quotations in the Text

If quotations are used, they should appear appropriately identified by author(s), year, and the page number(s) on which the quote appears. If less than 40 words are quoted, the quote should appear as part of the text.

Hogan and Prater (1993) stated "if academic and on-task behavior improvements are the desired outcomes, both peer tutoring and self-management have been demonstrated to be effective" (p. 127).

"If academic and on-task behavior improvements are the desired outcomes, both peer tutoring and self-management have been demonstrated to be effective" (Hogan & Prater, 1993, p. 127).

Block Quotations

If 40 or more words are quoted, the quote should appear in a block.

If improved academic and on-task behavior is the desired outcomes, both peer tutoring and self-management have been demonstrated to be effective. For tutees who could benefit from additional social interaction, peer tutoring may be the desirable intervention; whereas, for those who need to learn self-control and to take personal responsibility for their own behavior, self-management may be the better solution. (Hogan & Prater, 1993, p. 127)

Numbers

(Sec. 3.42 to 3.49) Pages 122-130

The general rule regarding numbers is as follows:

1. Use figures/numerals for numbers 10 and above (e.g. 25 years old, 10th grade students).
2. Use the word for numbers that begin a sentence (e.g., Five teachers), zero, one, and numbers below 10 (e.g. seven students).

Footnotes

(Sec. 3.87) Page 202

Content footnotes are seldom used in APA style; citations are in the text. Footnotes are used only to: (a) acknowledge support and assistance, (b) give the author's affiliation, and (c) elaborate on textual material.

Reference Citations Within Text

(Sec. 3.94 to 3.103) Pages 207 - 214

Citations of an author's work documents your work, briefly identifies the source for readers, and enables readers to locate the source in the alphabetical list at the end of the document.

Within the text, references should be cited. If the authors' names are provided as part of the text, list the last names with the year of the publication in parentheses. If the names are not used as part of the text, they should appear at the end of the sentence with the year in parentheses. When using the authors' names within the text, spell out the word "and." If citing the names within parentheses, use the ampersand "&."

Prater, Serna, Sileo, and Katz (1995) discussed the impact of the HIV disease on special educators.

The impact of HIV disease is felt by special educators (Prater, Serna, Sileo, & Katz, 1995).

When there are three or more authors cited, list all of the names the **first** time they are presented. After that use "et al."

Prater et al. (1995) also discussed the need for students with disabilities to be educated regarding the HIV disease.

Students with disabilities also need to be educated regarding the HIV disease (Prater et al., 1995).

When citing two or more works in the same parentheses, the references should appear in alphabetical order.

Several studies have been conducted using this methodology (Black & White, 2001; Jenkins & Edelen-Smith, 1999; Smith & Wesson, 1979).

Personal Communications Cited in Text

Personal communications may be letters, memos, electronic communication (e.g., e-mail), telephone conversations, and so forth. They are not included in the reference list. Cite personal communications only in the text.

According to C. Braden, approximately 4,000 cases of child abuse are reported annually in Hawaii (personal communication, July 3, 1995).

Approximately 4,000 cases of child abuse are reported annually in Hawaii (C. Braden,

personal communication, July 3, 1995).

Reference List

(Chapter 4 - APA fifth edition, pp. 215-281)

The reference list provides information regarding citations used in the text. A reference differs from a bibliography in that the latter cites works regarding a specific topic which may not have been cited in the text. **Every reference cited in the text must appear in the reference list** which follows the body of the document. References are presented in alphabetical order by author. Note that all types of reference materials (if cited) appear in a single list. With the exception of personal communications which are cited only in the text (See Sec. 3.102).

The reference list should start with a separate page at the end of the paper. It should be titled "References." All references listed should be in alphabetical order regardless of the type of reference it is. Perhaps the biggest change from APA 4th edition to APA 5th edition is the **hanging indent** for the reference list. [The subheadings below are listed only for the sake of presenting the style for each and are not to appear on the reference list.]

Journal Article Style

Author's last name, first and middle initial (Year). Title of article with only the first word and the first word after a colon capitalized. *Title of the Journal in Italics. Volume number of journal in italics*, (issue number, if appropriate, in parentheses), and page numbers.

Hogan, S., & Prater, M. A. (1993). The effects of peer tutoring and self-management training on on-task, academic, and disruptive behaviors. *Behavioral Disorders*, 18, 118-128.

Prater, M. A., Serna, L. A., Sileo, T. W., & Katz, A. R. (1995). HIV disease: Implications for special educators. *Remedial and Special Education*, 16, 68-78.

Books, Unedited

Author's last name, first and middle initials (Year). *Title of book italicized with only the first word and the first word after a colon capitalized.* Publisher's City, State: Publisher's Name.

McWhirter, J.J., McWhirter, B T., McWhirter, A. M., & McWhirter, E. H. (1993). *At-risk youth: A comprehensive response.* Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Polloway, E. A., & Patton. J. R. (1989). *Strategies for teaching learners with special needs* (5th ed.). New York: Macmillan.

Books, Edited

Editor's last name, first and middle initials (Ed.).(Year). *Title of book italicized with only the first word and the first word after a colon capitalized.* Publisher's City, State: Publisher's Name.

Peterson. R. L., & Ishii-Jordan, S. (Eds.). (1994). *Multicultural issues in the education of students with behavioral disorders.* Cambridge, MA: Brookline.

Chapter Within an Edited Book

Chapter author's last name, first and middle initials.(Year). Title of chapter not underlined with only the first word and the first word after a colon capitalized. ?In? editor's first and middle initials and last name (Ed.), *Name of book in italics* (pp. with page numbers listed. Publisher's City, State: Publisher's Name.

Allison, K., & Leone. P. E. (1994). The dual potentials model: Understanding alcohol and other drug use among ethnically and racially diverse adolescents. In R. L. Peterson & S. Ishii-Jordan (Eds.), *Multicultural issues in the education of students with behavioral disorders* (pp. 63-77). Cambridge, MA: Brookline.

Brochures

Author (usually a company or organization). (Year). *Title of brochure in italics with only the first word and the first word after a colon capitalized* [Brochure]. Author's City, State: Author.

Child Protective Services, State of Hawaii (n.d.). *A guide for mandated reporting* [Brochure]. Honolulu, HI: Author.

Electronic Media

(Sec. 416) Pages 268-281

Reference of an Internet source should provide a document title or description, a date (either the date of publication or the date of the retrieval), and an address (in Internet terms, a URL). Whenever possible, identify the authors of a document as well. The URL is the most critical element – “if it doesn’t work, readers won’t be able to find the cited material” (p. 269). Test the URLs in your references regularly

The standard electronic reference formats are available on-line from World Wide Web: <http://www.apastyle.org/eleceref.html>

The recommended elements for references of on-line information are as follows:
Author, I. (date). *Title of article.* Retrieved (date) from <http://www.hawaii.edu>

Black, R., & Ornelles, C. (2000). Title of chapter. In (authors). *Title of full work*, page(s). Retrieved (date) from <http://www.hawaii.edu/sped>

Do not end a path statement with a period (.) because stray punctuation in a path may hinder retrieval.

Appendices

(Sec. 3.90 to 3.93) -- Pages 205-207

Materials not appropriate for integration in the text of the paper may be included as an appendix which follows the list of references. Examples of materials, letters, questionnaires, protocols, and detailed tabular data are materials that may be included in an appendix.

Reduce Bias in Language

APA policy requires that authors avoid “perpetuating demeaning attitudes and biased assumptions about people in their writing. Constructions that might imply bias against persons on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic group, disability, or age should be avoided” (p. 61). Three guidelines are suggested to reduce bias in language.

First, **describe at an appropriate level of specificity**. When you refer to a person or persons, choose words that are accurate, clear, and free from bias (APA, 2001, p. 62). Use phrases like men and women rather than man when referring to humans. When describing racial and ethnic groups, it is better to use more precise terms such as identification by nation or region (i.e., Cuban or Central American is more specific than Hispanic). “Racial and ethnic groups are designated by proper nouns and are capitalized. Therefore, use Black and White instead of black and white (colors to refer to other human groups currently are considered pejorative and should not be used). For modifiers, do not use hyphens in multiword names” (APA, 2001, p. 68). For example, use *Asian American* rather than *Asian-American*. *Asian* or *Asian American* is preferred to *Oriental*. It is generally useful to specify the name of the Asian subgroup; Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and so on. Above all, authors are encouraged to ask participants about preferred designations. For example, some people of African ancestry prefer *Black* and others prefer *African American*. Depending on where a person is from, individuals may prefer to be called Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, or some other designation. Ask which is preferred. The word gender refers to men and women as social groups; the word sex can be confused with sexual behavior. Therefore, using the term gender when referring to participants helps keep the meaning unambiguous.

Second, be **sensitive to labels**. “Respect people’s preferences; call people what they prefer to be called” (APA, 2001, p. 63). Use person-first language -- the individual is a person first, before the disability. For example, *person with a learning disability* should be used instead of *the LD student*. “Use *disability* to refer to an attribute of a person and *handicap* to refer to the source of limitations” (p. 69). Use person with _____, *person living with* _____, and

person who has _____.

Third, **acknowledge participation**. Replace impersonal terms such as *subjects* with more descriptive terms *participants, respondents, students, or children* (p.65). Use of active voice is preferable. For example, *students completed the survey* is preferable to *students were given the survey*. *We collected data from the participants* is preferable to *participants were run through the data collection process*. When using the passive voice, participants are viewed as *acted on* instead of being the actors.

TABLE 2 -- Reducing Bias in Language

Examples of common usage	More acceptable alternatives
The client is usually the best judge of his counseling.	<p>The client is usually the best judge of the value of counseling. [His deleted]</p> <p>The client is usually the best judge of the value of his or her counseling. [His or her added]</p> <p>Clients are usually the best judges of the value of the counseling they receive. [Changed to plural]</p> <p>The best judge of the value of counseling is usually the client. [Rephrased]</p>
Man's search for knowledge has led him into ways of learning that bear examination.	<p>The search for knowledge has led us into ways of learning that bear examination. [Rephrased in first person]</p> <p>People have continually sought knowledge. The search has led them into ways of learning that bear examination. [Changed to plural and rewritten in two sentences]</p>
<p>man, mankind</p> <p>man's achievements</p> <p>the average man</p> <p>man a project</p> <p>manpower</p>	<p>people, humanity, human beings, humankind, human species</p> <p>human achievements, achievements of the human species</p> <p>the average person, people in general</p> <p>staff a project, hire personnel, employ staff</p> <p>work force, personnel, workers, human resources</p>
This interference phenomenon, called learned helplessness, has been demonstrated in rats, cats, fish, dogs, monkeys, and men.	This interference phenomenon, called learned helplessness, has been demonstrated in rats, cats, fish, dogs, monkeys and humans. [Noun substituted]
woman doctor, lady lawyer, male nurse	doctor, physician, lawyer, nurse [Specify gender only if it is a variable or if gender designation is necessary to the discussion ("13 female doctors and 22 male doctors"). Woman and lady are nouns; female is the adjective counterpart to male.]
Mothering	parenting, nurturing (or specify exact behavior)
woman driver	Driver [If specifying gender is necessary, avoid biased cliches. Write, "The driver was a woman."]
The girls in the office greeted all clients.	receptionists, secretaries, office assistants
sexual preference	sexual orientation [does not imply choice]

homosexuals, gays	gay men, lesbians, bisexual men or women [homosexual and gay are unclear terms, often interpreted to mean men only]
-------------------	--

University of Hawaii at Manoa, College of Education
Department of Special Education

**Rules for Writing
(courtesy of Tom Sileo)**

1. Verbs HAS to agree with their subjects.
 2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
 3. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.
 4. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
 5. Avoid cliches like the plague. (They're old hat)
 6. Also, always avoid annoying alliteration.
 7. Be more or less specific.
 8. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary.
 9. Also too, never, ever use repetitive redundancies.
 10. No sentence fragments.
 11. Contractions aren't necessary and shouldn't be used.
 12. Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.
 13. Do not be redundant; do not use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.
 14. One should NEVER generalize.
 15. Comparisons are as bad as cliches.
 16. Don't use no double negatives.
 17. Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
 18. One-word sentences? Eliminate.
 19. Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
 20. The passive voice is to be ignored.
 21. Eliminate commas, that are, not necessary. Parenthetical words however should be enclosed in commas.
 22. Never use a big word when a diminutive one would suffice.
 23. Kill all exclamation points!!!
 24. Use words correctly, irregardless of how others use them.
 25. Understatement is always the absolute best way to put forth earth shaking ideas.
 26. Use the apostrophe in it's proper place and omit it when its not needed.
 27. Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "I hate quotations. Tell me what you know."
 28. If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times: Resist hyperbole; not one writer in a million can use it correctly.
 29. Puns are for children, not groan readers.
 30. Go around the barn at high noon to avoid colloquialisms.
 31. Even IF a mixed metaphor sings, it should be derailed.
 32. Who needs rhetorical questions?
 33. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.
- And finally...

34. Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.

Other Writing Dos and Don'ts

Studies do not state or claim or determine or prove anything -- people do.

Studies do not speak, researchers do.

Researchers conclude, researchers state, researchers assert....

Results of studies can indicate, show. Numbers can indicate, but they do not state, claim, assert, declare.

These scores indicate that students are doing better than in past years.

Commas and periods go inside quotation marks.

Question marks and semi-colons go outside.

Use quotes only when you are quoting something. Use *italics* to add emphasis.

Avoid one sentence paragraphs.

Spell out "and" in the narrative of your paper.

Black and White (1997) stated that results do not claim, people do.

Use the ampersand (&) in parentheses and in the reference list.

Results do not claim, people do (Black & White, 1997).

Black, R. S. & White, T. B. (1997). Results lie. *Journal of Hypothetical Research*, 7(2), 1-5.

If you paraphrase, cite the authors. If you quote directly, you must include a page number.

Check on subject verb agreements

Check on consistency with present and past tense.

Theses, Plan B papers are in the past tense.

The word "data" is plural -- "data ARE," not "data IS." Not--*THIS data*, but rather *THESE data*.

You could say, "Data from this study." It will help to think of data as datas; whereas "Datum" is singular.

Use person-first language. Individuals are people first and foremost, and shouldn't be defined by their disability.

It is not an "LD student," but a "student with a learning disability," a "child with a cognitive disability," not a "mentally retarded student."

Use the same language throughout to refer to the same thing. If you are using the term "student," you should not use "children" at a later point. Don't change the language, i.e.: student, child, reader, youngster. It can confuse the reader.

Use descriptive language, don't start the sentence with "They" ... instead, say exactly who. Clark and Baker stated... "The four male participants."

Spell out numbers under ten; use a numeral (i.e., 11, 25) for numbers over ten

Use Active vs. Passive Voice

Use Passive Voice if the focus of the sentence is the object

Use Active Voice -- if the focus is the subject or verb. Try to use active as much as possible

PARTS OF THE MANUSCRIPT

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Background

Purpose

Definitions

[Parameters/Delimitations]--Ch. 1 in the proposal; Limitations -- Ch. 5 in the final thesis/paper

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Characteristics of the Sample

Types of Measures Used

Types of Interventions Used

Measure, Interventions Used with This Sample

CHAPTER III METHODS

Participants

Settings and Materials

Instrumentation

Procedures

Phase one.

Phase two.

Data Analysis

CHAPTER IV RESULTS

Description of the Sample

Results by Research Objectives

Summary

CHAPTER V DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Conclusions

Limitations

Discussion and Implications

Recommendations for Further Research

Sample Cover/Title Page

Title in Upper and Lower Case Letters and Centered

Classroom Teachers' Perceptions
of Students' Reading Levels

A Project

Presented to the Faculty of the

University of Hawaii at Manoa

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in

Special Education

Student's name

Honolulu, Hawaii

Date

Sample Signature Page

We certify that we have read this paper and that in our opinion it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a paper/project that meets the requirements for the Master of Education Degree in Special Education at the University of Hawaii.

Committee

(Faculty Member's Name, Chair)

(Faculty Member's Name)

Sample Acknowledgement Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The inspiration and guidance of _____ of the University of Hawaii at Manoa, who gave generous amounts of time and encouragement to assist in the completion of this project, is appreciated. The support of University of Hawaii faculty members for their assistance is gratefully acknowledged. Special thanks go to my family for their constant support and encouragement.

ABSTRACT

When writing a formal paper in APA style, the first page is considered to be a brief summary of the entire study or thesis, paper/project. Often the summary or abstract is written as one paragraph and is rarely more than one page in length. The abstract should include the following information, if applicable): (a) the kind of study that was conducted (e.g. comparison of students' reading scores, a social skills training program); (b) type of participants (e.g. a group of third grade students, 10 adolescents in a class for students with severe behavior disorders); (c) the research procedures; (d) type of experimental design to evaluate procedures; (e) summary of the results; and (f) a sentence or two concerning the implications of the results. The abstract should provide sufficient information so the readers can discern the type of study they will read. The abstract page does not have a page number and is double spaced. For example,

This study compared the scores that a sample of third grade students made on three reading comprehension subtests from the Peabody Individual Achievement Test - Revised (PIAT-R) and the Word Comprehension and Passage Comprehension Subtests from the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests - Revised (WRMT -R). A sample of 60 third grade students was administered the three subtests. Results indicated that students scored significantly higher on the PIAT-R Reading Comprehension Subtest than on the WRMT-R Word Comprehension Subtest and significantly higher on the WRMT-R Passage Comprehension Subtest than on the WRMT -R Word Comprehension Subtest. In a comparison of grade equivalent scores with those of the classroom teacher, the WRMT -R Word Comprehension Subtest correlated more closely with the teacher's perception.

Sample

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Levels of Headings

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The passage of Public Law 94-142, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act, ushered in a new era in the field of education. It called for the education of each student, regardless of handicap, in the least restrictive environment. Students who had previously been served in isolated, specialized programs were integrated into regular classrooms to an increasing degree. With this came the training of teachers to accommodate the educational needs of these children. The responsibility of the special education teacher was to diagnose, plan and implement a program that specifically addressed the needs of each child.

In the role of diagnostician, the special education teacher was required to select a test that would adequately and correctly measure an individual's strengths and weaknesses in a specific area. With the variety of tests available, the job of selecting an appropriate measure was awesome. The degree to which a test accurately addressed the needs of the student determined whether or not the student was eligible for services in a particular area. . .

Statement of the Problem

In order to understand the variation among the available reading tests, each instrument was briefly examined. The focus of this examination was on the reading comprehension components of the various tests. This was done to determine which skills related to reading comprehension were evaluated and what methods were used to evaluate these skills. Another important aspect that was examined was whether the test had been normed on a specific population. Two tests designed for very young children were the Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development and The Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA). Both tests evaluated readiness and prereading skills. The TERA was a very formal test which was administered individually. Each response was noted as being correct or incorrect and a . . .

Background

Lesiak and Bradley-Johnson (1983) criticized both the reliability and validity of the PIAT-R. They pointed out problems with the Reading Comprehension Subtest which falsely inflated scores due to the possibility and encouragement of guessing. This subtest was also affected by an added dimension of the examinee's interpretation of the pictures. Although the authors of the PIAT-R suggested that it be used as a screening device, Lesiak and Bradley-Johnson did not even recommend its use in this capacity. .

. .

Passage comprehension subtest. Swanson and Watson (1982) were critical of the PIAT-R's content validity and of the reliability of the Passage Comprehension Subtest. They shared the author's

premise that the PIAT-R was a screening device not to be used for diagnostic purposes. . . .

Spelling subtest. French (1972) reviewed the PIAT-R and agreed with its use as a screening device but noted that the spelling subtest had low reliability and validity. . . .

EXAMPLE APA Style Reference Page

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