School of Behavioral Sciences
Doctor of Education
Community Care & Counseling
Dissertation Handbook

2018 – 2019

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Dissertation Process

The Ed.D. program in the School of Behavioral Sciences (SBS) consists of two primary components: the coursework and the dissertation. This handbook is to help students know what to expect in the dissertation process. The student completes the program's coursework to develop and hone critical thinking skills, writing skills, and discipline-specific academic knowledge while the dissertation is the final academic requirement for the Ed.D. The dissertation evaluates the doctoral candidate's capabilities as a scholar. It culminates the Ed.D. degree program and demonstrates the student's capacity to commit deeply to the exploration of professionally relevant topics.

1.2 Purpose of this Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to clarify the dissertation process. The handbook is a guide for the dissertation, including the writing, the proposal defense, and the final dissertation. In general terms, the roles and responsibilities of the candidate, the chair, and the committee member are outlined.

Because the completed dissertation is a publication of Liberty University (LU) and represents the university, the department, and the author, candidates are expected to maintain high standards concerning the content and appearance of dissertations. Thus, another purpose of this handbook is to provide directives and standards about the content and style of the dissertation manuscript.

2. Academic Policies and Specialized Coursework

There are several academic policies that are utilized specifically for the doctoral programs in the SBS. Some of the policies are dependent on the specific degree completion plan (DCP) the student is working under. More information about these policies is detailed below.

2.1 Limit for Times Registered for EDCO 989

Students are only allowed to register for EDCO 989 three times before successful completion of an approved proposal. In addition, students have a limit of nine times registering for EDCO 989. Exceeding either of the limits will result in removal from the program. If the registration limit is exceeded, students who wish to continue in the program must submit a formal appeal to the Program Chair to request an extension. Each student must include a full justification of the request and if applicable, documentation evidencing his or her dissertation chair's support of the extension. If the appeal for an extension is approved, the Program Chair will determine the new deadline for program completion. Any student who does not complete coursework within the permissible time limit for any reason, including discontinued enrollment, must reapply for admission. If students wish to continue in the program at a later date, they need to reapply and if accepted, will be subject to all requirements for the DCP for the current academic year.

2.3 Continuous Enrollment Policy

During the dissertation phase, the student is expected to remain continually enrolled in the program, registering for EDCO 989 every semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer) until their dissertation defense is scheduled.

2.4 Relevant Research Courses

Several research-related courses are directly related to the dissertation development process. Please be aware that these courses must be taken at Liberty in the SBS Ed.D. Program. Doctoral-level equivalents from other universities will not be accepted.

EDCO 716: Dissertation Topic
EDCO 737: Dissertation Formation
EDCO 810: Dissertation Design and Proposal
EDCO 825 (808 in early DCP's): Dissertation Research (formerly Bibliography in earlier DCP's)
EDCO 989: Dissertation Writing and Research
EDCO 990: Dissertation Defense

The next page contains a flow chart that briefly describes the purpose of each course in the progression:

SBS EdD Dissertation Process

716 D. Topic (1 Credit)

- Orientation to dissertation process & research pools
- Individual-small group optional Live Discussion Forums with Instructor
- Topics exploration, Lit review strategies, potential research designs

737 D. Formation (1 Credit)

- Develops bibliography, literature review draft, preliminary research method
- Individual-small group optional Live Discusssion Forums with instructor
- Working research questions & Chair identified

810 Research Design

- Survey of research methods
- Focuses most on methods specific to student dissertation designs
- Instructor-peers review and critique student tentative research proposals
- Student interacts with instuctor, peers, and the Chair to develop preliminary lit review, questions, method, & statistics

808(825) D. Research (4 credit)

- Individual-small group optional Live Discussion Forums with Chair
- Refines lit review, questions, method, & statistics for each question
- Proposal draft(s)
- Proposal defense if appropriate

989 Proposal & Research

- Proposal defense (if not done in 825)
- IRB application development
- IRB approval
- Study implemented
- Data analyzed and written up
- Dissertation Drafts with Chair feedback & interaction

990 Dissertation Defense

- Student defends dissertation to committee
- Final editing and library submission
- Article draft submission if appropriate

3. Comprehensive Examination Prior to EDCO 825

Students must register for the comprehensive examination (EDCO 865) and successfully pass it prior to registering for EDCO 989. See the EdD program handbook for a description of this exam.

3.1 Core Classes & Comprehensive Examination Completion (Candidacy Approval)

Upon passing the Ed.D.'s core classes and the comprehensive examination, the student will be considered a doctoral candidate. Doctoral candidates remaining tasks include successfully passing any remaining cognate courses and completing their dissertation.

4. Choosing a Dissertation Committee

During EDCO 737, students will be assigned a dissertation Chair and Reader for their committee. Students may provide input in this process. The dissertation committee must include the following:

1. A Chair who has an earned doctoral degree (Ed.D., Psy.D., or Ph.D.) in a counseling/psychology/pastoral care/marriage & family-related field and is employed by LU (residential or online);

2. A Reader who serves as a committee member and has an earned doctoral degree (Ed.D., Psy.D., or Ph.D.) in a counseling/psychology/pastoral care/marriage & family-related field and is employed by LU (faculty or adjunct). With Program Chair approval, a specialized subject expert not employed by Liberty may be considered.

See Appendix A, Dissertation Committee Qualifications and Responsibilities, for more details.

5. Dissertation Guidelines

5.1 Dissertation Style

Broadly speaking, the dissertation is a scholarly document written for professionals in a specific field of study. A dissertation typically ranges from 80 to 200 pages of text and contains a thorough literature review that is typically 30 to 75 pages in length depending on the topic and amount of previous research.

The dissertation needs to follow the most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA). All APA guidelines should be followed; however, the formatting guidelines and the templates for the dissertation outlined in this handbook need to be followed where specified. With the approval of the Dissertation Chair, the personal pronoun I may be used judiciously in the candidate's manuscript and only in accordance with APA guidelines.

It is highly recommended that candidates retain their textbooks from their previous statistics and research methods courses as these can be very useful guides in the development of their project and identification of appropriate statistical analyses to use.

5.2 Dissertation Research Topics

Students should start considering future dissertation topics from the very beginning of their program. When opportunities exist, students should research the topic of interest in the form of related papers for doctoral coursework. A research topic area is not the same as a dissertation research study, although it can lead to one. A topic is general in nature whereas a dissertation research study is very narrow in focus with defined methods to answer a particular question(s). Candidates are encouraged to pursue dissertation topics that are of personal relevance and significance; however, a candidate needs to ensure that the topic is researchable and related to the field. Ideally, the research topic should be within the expertise and research interests of potential Dissertation Chairs. Students will become familiar with the interests of EdD faculty, and adjuncts in EDCO 716. In this course, the instructor will dialog with students about their interest areas, compare those to faculty/adjunct interest areas, and assist the student in developing a workable topic.

It is important to avoid topics that are overly ambitious, challenging, and esoteric, thus ensuring that the dissertation process results in successful completion. Faith integration within the dissertation is welcomed. If a faith perspective is included, it should be well integrated throughout the manuscript (i.e., not included as an afterthought or simply tacked on). Students are also encouraged to participate in research teams, conference presentations, and writing projects with EdD faculty and adjuncts whenever possible to gain valuable experience. This is especially important if the student has a goal of being a full time professor one day.

5.3 Dissertation Research Designs

Dissertations may consist of various research designs; however, students should consider their career goals as a component of developing their design. For example, a student who wants to be a full time professor at a university one day will want to do a dissertation that can be potentially be published to further this career goal. This leads to a high quality quantitative or qualitative research design for the study. Students who see themselves doing part-time teaching or no teaching at all can consider other designs besides these, such as program evaluations, program development projects, quasi-experimental studies and applied research for the dissertation.

5.4 Academic Honesty

Honesty and integrity are highly valued at Liberty University. The same principles and expectations of academic honesty and integrity in coursework and the comprehensive examination are true for the dissertation. The Liberty Way details specific definitions, penalties, and processes of reporting. The presence of plagiarism, including structural plagiarism, within any dissertation manuscript or document may result in dismissal from the program, failing the dissertation course, and/or implementation of an intervention plan. The Dissertation Chair and the SBS administration decide the final consequences of academic dishonesty.

It is recognized that the dissertation needs to be an original work of the candidate, and the re-use of previous research (e.g., master's theses, publications) is not acceptable. All previous work

needs to be cited according to current APA guidelines. Properly crediting another individual's work is also an ethical imperative.

6. Preliminary Proposal Work

In EDCO 716, EDCO 737, and EDCO 810, students will interact with course instructors and complete a sequence of assignments specifically designed to help them develop a working proposal draft. The working proposal draft will contain key elements of the complete proposal draft which will be completed with the Chair in EDCO 810. See the course syllabi for these courses for specific information on the related assignments.

7. Proposal

7.1 Develop the Proposal & Schedule the Proposal Defense

After successful completion of EDCO 810, candidates enroll in EDCO 825 (formerly 808 for earlier years) in the Chair's section. The Chair interacts with the candidate to develop the proposal draft document.

The proposal draft consists, at a minimum, of the following: Title Page, Abstract, Table of Contents, Chapter One: Introduction, Chapter Two: Literature Review, Chapter Three: Methods, References, and Appendices with instruments, participant letters, and Institutional Review Board (IRB) applications. The proposal is approximately 50-70 pages in length, with a minimum length of 30 pages for the literature review (Chapter Two). See Appendix C for the quantitative and Appendix D for the qualitative examples of the full dissertation document itself.

The Chair always reviews the proposal manuscript first and spends the most time with students on the development of the document. A review may take between two to four weeks depending upon the length and quality of the manuscript. The candidate should expect that the proposal manuscript will potentially go through multiple revision cycles with the Chair before the proposal is approved for the proposal defense.

During the lapse of time between the near final review and the Chair's/Reader's feedback, the candidate may begin work on the IRB application **without submitting it** (see 8.1). The candidate can also work on obtaining any research site permissions to conduct the research if these have not already been obtained **without recruiting any actual participants** (i.e., get the organizations' approvals to conduct the study without any beginning solicitation of participants to the study, see 8.1). For example, a candidate wants to use a church congregation in the study. The candidate gets the permission of the pastor to use the congregation without actually starting to recruit any participants.

At the Chair's discretion, a professional edit of the proposal document for writing style and APA format may be requested. When the Chair is satisfied with the proposal, the Chair sends the proposal manuscript to the Reader or asks candidates to provide a copy of the proposal manuscript to the Reader for feedback. The Reader carefully examines the proposal to provide the scientific safeguard of peer review. This gives additional input on whether candidates are

ready for their defense and any potential adjustments needed in the study. When the Chair and Reader agree, the proposal defense is scheduled (see 7.3) and the proposal document is put through SafeAssign (on the setting so the document is not added to the SafeAssign database). This allows both the candidate and committee can be alerted to any areas needing adjustment in the proposal to avoid plagiarism.

The proposal defense occurs at the end of EDCO 825 whenever possible or early in EDCO 989 (the next course in the sequence).

7.2 What to do if there are Problems with Your Chair or Committee

If the Chair exceeds four weeks for a manuscript review cycle, contact the Chair to get an update on when the review will be completed. If the Chair becomes unresponsive or the delay seems unreasonable, candidates should contact the Program Chair of the EdD. The same principle applies with the Reader. If there are concerns that cannot be resolved with the committee, contact the EdD Program Chair.

7.3 The Proposal Defense

The formal proposal defense normally takes place via the university's e-conferencing system (WebEx or Skype for Business). The Chair, Reader, and candidate collaborate on setting the date and time. Once a date and time are established, the Chair sends a meeting request in Outlook to document the date and time for the committee and doctoral candidate.

The Chair and candidate are required to have a "test proposal defense" run-through on WebEx/Skype at least two days prior to the dissertation defense in order to ensure that the technology works properly on the computers and phones that will be used on the day of the defense. Only the candidate is required share video through WebEx during the defense.

The formal dissertation proposal defense is normally about 60 minutes in length. After prayer and preliminary remarks by the chair, the candidate presents the proposal. The proposal presentation needs to include the following: a description of the study's purpose and significance, the research question(s) and hypothesis (es) (if quantitative), and the methods (including the plans for the research design and analysis). The presentation is approximately 15 minutes. The proposal defense follows the following outline:

- Introductions and welcome (Chair)
- Opening prayer (Chair)
- 15-minute presentation using PowerPoint or other appropriate software (Candidate)
- Candidate responds to questions and comments from the committee
- Dismissal of the candidate for committee deliberation
- The Chair contacts the candidate shortly with the committee decision and any required revisions

A maximum of two proposals may be defended. Failure to successfully defend within two successive proposals could result in removal from the program or remediation (e.g., enrollment

in additional coursework) before progression in the dissertation process. This decision is made by the Program Chair in consultation with the dissertation committee.

Once the proposal has been approved, significant changes cannot be made without the approval of the Chair.

8. EDCO 989: IRB Aspects

EDCO 989 is not a typical 8-week course with weekly assignments. It is an A term course (full semester) and candidates must enroll in it continuously until their dissertation is completed (i.e., more than one semester of 989 may be taken when necessary). In EDCO 989, candidates do the following:

1. Defend their proposal (if not done in EDCO 825).
2. Complete the IRB application
3. Receive IRB approval for their study
4. Implement their study
5. Analyze the results of their study
6. Develop dissertation document draft(s) based on their Chair's feedback.

8.1 IRB Application

After completion of a successful proposal defense, Institutional Review Board (IRB) review and approval is needed before any participants may be recruited or data may be collected. IRB is a federally mandated body established to ensure ethical treatment of human subjects. Within 10 business days of the approved proposal defense, the candidate must submit his or her IRB application and ancillary material through the LU IRB process. The application can be worked on prior to the defense but not submitted. The proposal defense needs to be completed prior to application's submission for IRB review.

Candidates must develop their IRB application and ancillary material using the application and templates retrieved directly from the LU IRB website. Candidates must not use older applications or templates. Candidates must submit documentation of institutional permission from each research site to the IRB prior to receiving IRB approval. If study procedures will involve schools or school districts, permission should come in the form of a letter or email, but if study procedures involve colleges or universities other than LU, IRB approval from those institutions will need to be obtained as directed by the specific institution's IRB.

If the study will include LU faculty, students, or staff from a *single* department within LU (for example, degree programs in the School of Behavioral Sciences such as the EdD program), the candidate must obtain permission from the appropriate supervisor (e.g., Dean for multiple SBS degrees and Program Chair for the designated degree program if only one). A signed letter or date/time stamped email to LU's IRB to verify approval to use students from that department or group documents approval. The candidate may submit the IRB application without having obtained this permission; however, the IRB will not give final approval of the study until proof of permission has been received.

If the study will include faculty, students, or staff from *multiple* departments (for example, SBS and the School of Education) or groups within LU (i.e., all sophomores in LU's undergraduate online program), the IRB will seek administrative approval on the candidate's behalf. Note that such administrative approval for such broad samples can take substantial time. It is recommended to use single departments whenever possible. Candidates should NOT contact the Provost's office directly.

Permission from the research sites may be sought prior to submitting the LU IRB application. If a candidate is unable to gain permission from the research sites prior to receiving IRB approval from LU, LU's IRB will issue a conditional approval letter, which will assist in obtaining needed permission and in subsequently completing IRB approval. Candidates must not begin recruiting participants until after receiving full IRB approval. The IRB application, ancillary material, and documentation of site permission(s) are submitted as e-mailed attachments to LU's IRB, irb@liberty.edu

Candidates should refer to approval timeframes on the LU IRB website. Modification requests to the application should be expected during the IRB's review process. Candidates should take care to thoroughly review the LU IRB website and incorporate all of the IRB's feedback in a timely manner to avoid delays. Execution of research CANNOT begin prior to receiving IRB full approval (i.e., one cannot begin recruiting participants with conditional approval). **If data are collected or accessed prior to obtaining all necessary and full IRB approvals, the candidate will be removed from the program**.

IRB approval in 990……Once IRB approval is obtained, the Chair must forward the IRB approval letter, which includes the IRB approval number, to the Research Coordinator of the EdD program. The candidate will also include a copy of the IRB approval as an appendix in the final dissertation.

9. EDCO 989: Developing the Dissertation

9.1 Execute the Research

After IRB approval is given and all necessary consents (adults) and/or assents (minors) are obtained from participants, candidates execute their research, including data collection and analysis. Candidates should note that depending on their level of comfort, ability, and competence with the chosen quantitative or qualitative analyses, they may seek an outside statistics or qualitative research consultant. However, candidates are held responsible to comprehend fully and to answer for the procedures, accuracy, statistical/qualitative interpretation, ethics, and integrity of the research design and analysis. In other words, candidates must be able to respond to committee questions about all aspects of their studies.

9.2 Create the Final Dissertation Manuscript

Under the guidance of the Chair, the candidate refines Chapters One through Three and writes Chapters Four and Five. The Chair may advise the candidate to seek guidance from the Reader or another faculty member on specific aspects of the study.

The Quantitative and Qualitative Dissertation Templates are provided as appendices (Appendices D and E). A typical dissertation is around 100-200 pages in length. It includes all the elements of a full dissertation. There should be a minimum of 80 pages of text for the quantitative dissertation and 120 pages of text for the qualitative dissertation.

The Chair always reviews the manuscript first. When the Chair is satisfied with the manuscript and has given approval, the Chair disseminates the manuscript (or chapters) or asks the candidate to provide a copy of the manuscript (or chapters) to the Reader for feedback. The candidate should expect that the manuscript (or chapters) will go through multiple revisions before being approved for a dissertation defense and that a review may take between two to four weeks depending upon the length and quality of the manuscript.

9.3 Submit the Dissertation Manuscript for a Professional Edit

During the final revision process, a professional edit of the manuscript is required. The professional edit can be performed prior to or after the defense at the discretion of the Chair based on the quality of the manuscript. This requirement may include a full edit or may simply be an APA edit. Candidates may use any professional editor and are responsible for the cost of this service.

10. EDCO 990: Defending the Dissertation

The Chair decides when the manuscript is finished and ready for defense. Upon the Chair's approval, the candidate may register for EDUC 990. If candidates originally enrolled in EDCO 989 because it was not certain they would defend, they should complete the CRC and all assignments as usual until the time that they will drop EDCO 989 in order to enroll in EDCO 990. A final defense cannot be scheduled unless the candidate is enrolled in EDUC 990.

The Chair will submit the dissertation document through SafeAssign (on the setting so the document is not added to the SafeAssign database). This allows both the candidate and committee to be alerted to any areas needing adjustment in the dissertation to avoid plagiarism.

Candidates, with input and approval from their Chair, may choose to conduct the final defense through distance means or as a traditional, on-campus defense. If the Chair or Reader are at a distance, they may attend the defense via the university e-conferencing system, WebEx or Skype for Business, even if the candidate is defending on-campus. If a distance defense is chosen, the Chair is responsible for scheduling and facilitating the WebEx meeting. The dissertation support staff provides the chair with information about conducting the defense via the e-conferencing system, if needed.

The Chair, Reader, and candidate collaborate on setting the date and time. Once a date and time are established, the Chair sends a meeting request in Outlook to document the date and time for the committee and doctoral candidate. Candidates are responsible to complete the Dissertation Announcement Template and send the completed form to eddcounadmin@liberty.edu (including the Chair in the cc line). The defense date must be scheduled and the defense successfully completed at least four weeks prior to the last day of the semester. If the option of an on-campus

defense is chosen, candidates must not make travel arrangements prior to receiving the Outlook appointment.

10.1 Preparing for the Dissertation Defense

The candidate is responsible for providing the final copy of the dissertation manuscript to the committee members approximately two weeks prior to the dissertation defense. The candidate prepares a 15-20 minute presentation of the dissertation for the defense; a visual presentation (e.g., PowerPoint or other software) is required. The presentation should be sent to the Chair and Reader at least one week prior to the defense.

If the defense occurs on campus, the candidate should bring the presentation to the defense on a laptop and a USB drive, along with three printed copies of the dissertation manuscript. The copies do not need to be bound and may be double-sided. Candidates may arrive at the defense room 30 minutes ahead of time to set up for the defense.

If the defense is completed at a distance, the candidate should check with the dissertation committee to see they would like to receive a printed copy of the dissertation at least one week prior to the final defense. For distance defenses, candidates are required to use a webcam, have reliable internet and phone connections, be in professional dress, be in a professional location, and have technological support on hand, if needed, to ensure the distance defense runs smoothly. WebEx or Skype for Business must be used for distance defenses, and the Chair is responsible for setting up the WebEx/Skype meeting. The chair and candidate are required to have a “test defense” run-through on WebEx/Skype at least two days prior to the dissertation defense in order to ensure that the technology works properly on the computers and phones that will be used on the day of the defense. Only the candidate is required share video through WebEx during the defense.

10.2 The Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense takes approximately one hour to complete. The only people who should attend a defense are the candidate, the dissertation committee, LU faculty members, and SBS doctoral students. The following procedures are recommended:

- Welcome and introductions of the committee and candidate (Chair)
- Opening prayer (Chair)
- 15-20 minute presentation by candidate
- Questions and comments from the Reader and Chair
- Questions and comments from the SBS Faculty
- Dismissal of candidate for committee deliberation
- Re-connection with candidate for decision and discussion of revisions, as applicable
- Final remarks

After prayer and preliminary remarks by the chair, the candidate gives the defense presentation. The presentation needs to include the following: an overview of the study’s purpose and significance (both practical and empirical), the method, the analysis, the results, limitations, discussion of the findings, and suggestions for future research. The presentation should be used

as an aid. Reading from the presentation or script is not acceptable and may result in an unsuccessful defense.

Following the defense presentation, the Reader and chair will ask questions. Then attending faculty will be provided the opportunity to ask questions. Following questions and discussion, all individuals not on the committee, including the candidate, will exit the room to provide the committee the opportunity to discuss the defense. Using the Ed.D. Dissertation Defense Rubric for guidance, the committee will make a decision (per Appendix B defense rubric). The candidate is invited back into the room, and the chair will inform the candidate of the outcome. The committee makes one of the following decisions:

• Approved with no revisions or minor revisions
• Provisionally approved with major revisions
• Not approved with recommendation to revise dissertation or write a new dissertation

If the committee makes one of the first two decisions, the chair delineates the required steps and specifies a timeline for completion (usually 7-15 days). It should be noted that, at the discretion of the chair and dependent upon the number of revisions that need to be made, the chair may require that that candidate have his or her manuscript professionally edited again.

A maximum of two dissertation defenses may be completed. Failure to defend successfully within two defenses will result in removal from the program.

11. Posting the EDCO 990 Grade, Publication, and Graduation

Upon approval from the Chair, the candidate follows the Jerry Falwell Library (JFL) submission guidelines for publication. These guidelines must be strictly followed and can be accessed at the following webpage: Theses and Dissertation Publishing Guidelines. Candidates should note that the final grade for EDUC 990 cannot be posted without the JFL confirmation email evidencing that the dissertation is accepted. This email must be forwarded to the Chair by the last day of the term in order to receive a final grade for EDUC 990. The dissertation should be submitted to the JFL no later than one week before the end of the term as it may take one to two weeks to receive the confirmation email from the JFL.

Additionally, the candidate should also ask the Chair and Reader if they would like a bound copy (Step 10 on the JFL website under the Submit and Publish Process - Step by Step section: the bindery). The candidate must select the following options if so: Front Printing Option “Title, Full Name, Year, School,” Spine Printing Option “Title, Last Name, Year,” Lettering Color “Gold,” Cover Color “588 – Royal Blue,” Cover Material “Buckram,” Printing Style “Single-sided,” Paper Color /Type/Size “60# White,” and should not select the signature page option, as no signature page is included in the dissertation.

As a reminder, the candidate must complete requirements and paperwork necessary for graduation and should plan to attend the hooding ceremony and graduation exercises in May. Graduation information can be found on the Registrar's website. Application for graduation

should be completed no later than the beginning of the term in which the candidate intends to defend the dissertation.

Appendix A

Dissertation Committee Qualifications and Responsibilities

Dissertation Chair

Qualifications

- Full time LU faculty member or adjunct member
- Must hold an earned doctorate degree from a regionally accredited university. This normally means a Ph.D., Psy.D., or Ed.D. in a counseling or ministry-related field depending on the candidate's dissertation topic. If a student wishes to have a Chair who holds a degree other than an Ed.D., Psy.D., or Ph.D. in a counseling or ministry-related field, he or she should contact the Program Chair of the Ed.D. program

Duties

The Dissertation Chair mentors the doctoral candidate through the scientific peer review process involved in dissertations in the social and behavioral sciences. Peer review is an essential component for any doctoral study that could potentially be published in a scholarly journal in these fields. Specifically, the Chair mentors the doctoral candidate in the following ways:

1. Instructs on the development of a proposal document.
    a. Reviews drafts
    b. Provides feedback until an acceptable document for a proposal defense is developed
2. Consults with the Reader regarding the proposal document in order to obtain feedback (peer review).
3. Prepares the candidate for the proposal defense.
4. Directs the dissertation committee questioning process during the proposal defense
5. Provides feedback on any needed adjustments to the candidate's study design or literature review following the proposal defense.
6. Gives feedback on ethical aspects and final approval of the candidate's IRB application.
7. Addresses any student questions or issues that arise during the student's study implementation.
8. Instructs on the development of a dissertation document
    a. Reviews drafts
    b. Provides feedback until an acceptable document for a dissertation defense is developed.
9. Consults with the Reader regarding the dissertation document to obtain feedback (peer review).
10. Prepares the candidate for the dissertation defense
11. Directs the dissertation committee questioning process during the dissertation defense
12. Determines, along with the Reader (peer review), whether the candidate's work is sufficient to pass the dissertation defense.

13. Provides feedback on any needed adjustments to the candidate's interpretation of study findings.
14. Oversees the final manuscript submission process to the library
15. When appropriate, assists the student in developing an article submission to a scholarly journal.

Dissertation Reader

The Dissertation Reader participates in the essential scientific peer review process for any doctoral dissertation in the social and behavioral sciences. First, peer review will be defined and then the qualifications and activities of the Dissertation Reader will be clarified.

Peer Review and its Role in SBS Dissertations

Peer review (also known as refereeing in some academic fields) involves subjecting research to the scrutiny of several experts in the discipline. It is a safeguard that can identify potential flaws in a study that the research team (in this case, the doctoral candidate and the Chair) has missed. The peer review process is regarded as critical in establishing a body of knowledge that is reliable and deemed trustworthy to the social and behavioral sciences (of which the DCCC is a part). It prevents the biases (unintentional or intentional) of the research team (the doctoral candidate and Chair) from framing the findings of a study in an inaccurate fashion. Since it is the foundation of the scientific scholarly process, having the doctoral candidate experience peer review in completing the dissertation will prepare the candidate for the conference presentation and article submission processes, which also involve peer review.

Qualifications

- Full time LU faculty member or adjunct member preferred
- Non-LU Readers require Dissertation Chair and Program Chair approval.
- Must hold an earned doctorate degree from a regionally accredited university. This normally means a Ph.D., Psy.D., or Ed.D. in a counseling or ministry-related field depending on the candidate's dissertation topic. If a student wishes to have a Reader who holds a degree other than an Ed.D., Psy.D., or Ph.D. in a counseling or ministry-related field, he or she should contact the Program Chair of Ed.D.

Dissertation Reader Duties

A Reader assists in the scientific peer review process involved in dissertations in the DCCC in the following ways:

1. Reviews carefully the proposal document to assess whether the doctoral candidate is ready to defend the proposal.
    a. Provides feedback to the student and Chair regarding the proposal
    b. Informs the Chair when there are critical issues that must be resolved before the proposal defense to prevent a potential failure
2. Participates in the proposal defense as a scientific peer reviewer

    a. Asks questions in the proposal defense to assess the student's competency and the merits of moving forward with the study.
    b. Provides the student and Chair feedback on any needed adjustments to the candidate's study design or literature review.
    c. Discusses with the Chair (often privately when the candidate is asked to leave the room) any concerns about passing the doctoral candidate in the proposal defense
    d. Officially votes whether to pass, pass with modifications, or not pass the doctoral candidate.
3. Assists the Chair (when appropriate) in addressing any student questions or issues that arise during the student's study implementation.
4. Reviews carefully the dissertation document to assess whether the doctoral candidate is ready to defend the dissertation.
    a. Provides feedback to the student and Chair regarding the dissertation
    b. Informs the Chair when there are critical issues that must be resolved before the dissertation defense to prevent a potential failure
5. Participates in the dissertation defense as a scientific peer reviewer
    a. Asks questions in the dissertation defense to assess the student's accuracy and competency in analyzing the results and interpreting the findings of the study.
    b. Provides the student and Chair feedback on any needed adjustments to the candidate's analyses or interpretation of the findings.
    c. Discusses with the Chair (often privately when the candidate is asked to leave the room) any concerns about passing the doctoral candidate in the dissertation defense
    d. Officially votes whether to pass, pass with modifications, or not pass the doctoral candidate.
6. When appropriate, assists the student and Chair in developing an article submission to a scholarly journal.

Appendix B: Dissertation Defense Rubric and Decision Form

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
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DOCTORATE OF EDUCATION

Dissertation Defense Rubric and Decision Form

Chair: After the committee's decision on the dissertation defense, complete the form, submitting it to eddcounadmin@liberty.edu

Date	

Title	

Role	Name
Candidate	
Chair	
Committee Member (Reader)	

Committee Decision

- ☐ Approved with minor or no further revisions
- ☐ Provisionally approved with major revisions
- ☐ Not approved with recommendations to revise or rewrite

Explain decision (as applicable):

List revisions needed:

Candidate grade to be assigned for EDUC 990 (please check one and post on Blackboard):

_____A _____B _____C _____D _____F

(Please continue to the rubrics on the following three pages.)

Presentation at Dissertation Defense Rubric (Highlight the appropriate score for each category based on the candidate's presentation during the final defense)

	Advanced (3 pts)	**Proficient** (2 pts)	**Developing** (1 pt)
Literature Review	The presentation includes a complete representation of related research along with a complete written literature review to support and justify the research.	The presentation includes a complete representation of related research along with a complete written literature review to support and justify the research.	The presented literature review may be unclear or non-existent, and the written literature review does not fully justify the research.
Theoretical Framework	The presentation and the written literature review include a complete theoretical framework to fully support the research question(s).	The presentation and the written literature review include a theoretical framework to support the research question(s).	There is a brief or non-existent mention of the theoretical framework during the presentation and/or the literature review.
Methodology	The presentation and methodology chapter is written in correct format and includes clear, understandable and justified questions, objectives and/hypotheses.	The presentation and methodology chapter includes use of proper format, and appropriate questions, objectives and/or hypotheses.	The presentation and methodology chapter does not include proper formatting and/or does not include clear question, objectives, or hypotheses.
Data Collection	The candidate thoroughly and clearly articulates the design and related data collection procedures.	The candidate clearly describes the design or the data collection procedures.	The candidate mentions design and data collection procedures, but does neither clearly.
Data Analysis	The candidate clearly analyzes, evaluates, synthesizes, and interprets the research through presentation of data and findings.	The candidate analyzes, evaluates and interprets the research through presentation of data and findings.	The candidate does not clearly present findings and data analysis.
Communication: Presentation	The candidate is poised during the presentation,	The candidate demonstrates poised	The candidate lacks poise, and does not

Presentation at Dissertation Defense Rubric (Highlight the appropriate score for each category based on the candidate's presentation during the final defense)

	Advanced (3 pts)	**Proficient** (2 pts)	**Developing** (1 pt)
	and clearly and fluently demonstrates effective communication in writing, while speaking, and while listening to others.	and effective communication in writing, and while speaking during the presentation.	present information clearly and effectively.

Written Dissertation Manuscript Rubric (Highlight the appropriate score for each category based on the quality of the final dissertation manuscript)

	Advanced (3 pts)	**Proficient** (2 pts)	**Developing** (1 pt)
Introduction	Candidate clearly articulates the nature of a research topic, including the relevant literature, the gap in research to be filled, the purpose, and the research design.	Candidate articulates the nature of a research topic, including the relevant literature, the purpose, and the research design.	Candidate is unable to articulate the nature of a research topic in an understandable fashion.
Review of Literature	The candidate includes a complete representation of related research along with a complete written literature review to support and justify the research.	The candidate includes a representation of related research along with a written literature review to justify the research.	The literature review may be unclear or non-existent, and the written literature review does not fully justify the research.
Methods/ Approach	The methodology chapter is written in correct format and includes clear, understandable and justified questions, objectives and/hypotheses.	The methodology chapter includes use of proper format, and appropriate questions, objectives and/or hypotheses.	The methodology chapter does not include proper formatting and/or does not include clear question, objectives, or hypotheses.

Written Dissertation Manuscript Rubric (Highlight the appropriate score for each category based on the quality of the final dissertation manuscript)

	Advanced (3 pts)	**Proficient** (2 pts)	**Developing** (1 pt)
Results/ Outcomes	The candidate clearly analyzes, evaluates, synthesizes, and interprets the research through presentation of data and findings.	The candidate analyzes, evaluates, and interprets the research through presentation of data and findings.	The candidate does not clearly present findings and data analysis.
Discussion and Summary	The candidate demonstrates complete ability to conduct and interpret a study that contributes to the literature.	The candidate demonstrates ability to conduct and interpret a study that may contribute to the literature.	The candidate fails to demonstrate the ability to conduct and interpret a study. and discuss the results.
Writing Quality	The candidate utilizes skills in writing and other forms of communication that are consistent with professional expectations at the doctoral level, including proper use of formatting.	The candidate utilizes skills in writing and other forms of communication that are appropriate, including proper use of formatting.	The candidate does not demonstrate skills in writing and use of proper formatting for completion of a dissertation.
Professional Publication	The candidate submits clear documentation (including a draft of an article) of plans and procedures for publication of the dissertation findings in a professional journal.	The candidate submits documentation and tentative plans for publication of the dissertation findings in a professional journal.	The candidate is unable to articulate plans for publication in a professional journal.

Disposition Rubric					
In your work with the doctoral candidate, has he or she displayed the following dispositions?	**Strongly Agree (4 pts)**	**Agree (3 pts)**	**Neither Agree or Disagree (2 pts)**	**Disagree (1 pt)**	**Strongly Disagree (0 pt)**
Integrity / Christian Ethic					
Social Responsibility					
Commitment / Work Ethic					
Reflection					
Integrity					
Professionalism					

Appendix D: Quantitative Dissertation Template

The purpose of Appendix D is to ensure that the dissertation manuscript is a quality document. This appendix provides information about formatting and the content contained in each section of the dissertation.

Formatting

The margins for all chapters of the dissertation are as follows: 1 inch at the top and bottom, 1 inch on the right side, and 1 inch on the left side. All text should be Times New Roman, 12-point font. Text within the body of the manuscript should be left justified. Double-spacing should be employed throughout the manuscript. Page numbers should all be Arabic numerals and placed in the upper right hand corner (with the page number on the first page suppressed). All manuscripts should follow the latest version of the APA style manual, with the exception that tables and figures can be embedded in the manuscript at the appropriate places.

Below is the ***Quantitative Dissertation Template*** with a description of each section.

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE TITLE PAGE: THE TITLE SHOULD GO HERE (ALL CAPS)

by

Student's Full Legal Name

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

School of Behavioral Sciences

Liberty University

Year

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE SIGNATURE PAGE: THE TITLE SHOULD GO HERE (ALL CAPS)

by Student's Full Legal Name

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Scholl of Behavioral Sciences

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

Year

APPROVED BY:

Name and degree, Committee Chair

Name and degree, Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The abstract summarizes the contents of the manuscript, including the importance of the study, purpose of the study, the methodology, results, conclusions, and recommendations for further research. Descriptions of the methodology should include the design, the sample, setting, data collection method, measures used (if appropriate), and key results and findings. Approximately 250 words or less is recommended; however, some dissertation abstracts are a little longer. No more than one page is allowable, and the abstract should be written as one, double-spaced paragraph. The abstract should not include statistics or citations. The word "ABSTRACT" should be in all caps, bold, and centered. Keywords should be located at the end of the Abstract. Indent and italicize the work *Keyword* followed by a colon, then a list of the words in lower case separated by a comma.

Keywords: This is a list of 4-7 words (separated by commas) that are central to your study.

Copyright Page (Optional)

Dedication (Optional)

The dedication page is a page in which the candidate dedicates the manuscript. This page is optional.

Acknowledgments (Optional)

The acknowledgments page provides the opportunity for the candidate to acknowledge individuals who influenced the writing and completion of the dissertation. This page is optional.

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents lists the various chapters and subsections of the manuscript along with their page numbers. The Table of Contents should include the Abstract, Copyright Page (optional), Dedication (optional), Acknowledgements (optional), List of Tables, List of Figures, CHAPTER TITLES (all caps), Level 1 headings, Level 2 headings, REFERENCES (all caps), and APPENDIX or APPENDICES (all caps). These should be left justified. The subsections included should only be APA Level 1 and Level 2 headings within the manuscript. Level 1 headings should be indented one half inch and Level 2 headings should be indented one inch. Chapter titles are not considered Level 1 headings. Entries should be double-spaced.

List of Tables

The List of Tables cites the tables and the corresponding pages of each table. This enables the reader to easily locate the tables in the manuscript. The title of this page should be a Level 1 heading, centered, 1 inch from the top of the page. Entries should be double spaced.

List of Figures

The List of Figures cites the figures and the corresponding pages of each figure. This enables the reader to easily locate the figures in the manuscript. The title of this page should be a Level 1 heading, centered, 1 inch from the top of the page. Entries should be double-spaced.

List of Abbreviations

The title of this page should be a Level 1 heading, centered, 1 inch from the top of the page. Entries should be double-spaced. Examples are provided below.

Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Start Chapter One with a brief, introductory statement (one short paragraph). This should orient the reader to the contents of the chapter.

Background

The Background section educates the reader regarding the topic. Start this section by catching the reader's attention. Use recent evidence from at least three to four scholarly journal articles published within the last ten years. The Background section then moves into an overview of the most relevant literature regarding the issue and provides a historical, social, and theoretical context regarding the issue. Remember that this is just an overview. You will go into more depth in Chapter Two.

The historical overview examines how the issue has evolved over time from the past to present-day. The background's historical overview should be well supported by at least five to seven scholarly journal articles or books. Some sources may be older than ten years old for this section.

A conceptual and/or theoretical background overview relates the issue to similar studies and discusses the theories that drive them. The background's theory discussion should be supported by at least three to five scholarly journal articles and/or books. Some sources may be older than ten years old for this section. Conclude the Background section by summarizing the information and preparing the reader for the problem. The Background section is approximately three to five pages long.

Problem Statement

The problem statement discusses how the literature may not have completely addressed the issue. For example, there may be controversy regarding mixed results from other studies, unexamined populations, lack of new testing instruments, etc. In other words, convince the reader that there is not enough research available to bring the issue to closure. The problem statement finds its "roots" in other studies and expands on their recommendations for further research. In general terms, the problem is always a lack of research on a particular issue. The problem statement should be well-supported by at least one to three scholarly journal articles published within the last ten years. The problem statement ends with a declarative statement: "The problem is …" which is clearly supported by current literature. The Problem Statement section is approximately one page long.

Purpose Statement

The purpose statement usually begins with, "The purpose of this study is…" The purpose statement gives the reader a quick overview on how you plan to help "solve the problem." Once again, since the problem is a lack of research on a particular issue, your purpose is simply to propose another research study. However, you need to be specific on what your population is and what you plan to do. The purpose statement foreshadows the research question(s) in a later section of this chapter. The purpose statement includes the variables (i.e., Independent/Dependent and/or Predictor/Criterion) involved in the study.

Significance of the Study

At this point, the reader should be convinced that the issue is important, that there is a lack of research on the issue, and you have a proposed study to help solve the problem. The significance of the study convinces the reader that the study will add to the existing body of knowledge by building off similar studies that investigate the same issue. It includes a

description of the contributions that your study will make to the knowledge base or discipline, both theoretically and empirically. This section also includes a brief description of how the study is important to other locations, organizations, general populations, or the sample being studied. References are very important here, as they lend additional credence and support for your study. Key assertions in this section need to be well-supported by the literature. At least three scholarly journal articles published within the last ten years should be used as support for this section. The Significance of the Study section is approximately one half to one page long.

Research Question(s)

The proposed research questions need to be derived from the problem and purpose statements. A well-formulated research question (a) asks about the relationship/differences between two or more variables, (b) is stated clearly and in the form of a question, (c) is testable (i.e., possible to collect quantitative data to answer the question), (d) does not pose an ethical or moral problem for implementation, (e) is specific and restricted in scope (i.e., the aim is not to solve the world's problems), and (f) identifies exactly what is to be solved. A good research question also clearly identifies the sample population. In addition, it should be noted that the research question implies the research design and statistical analysis. A typical dissertation contains one to three research questions. Research questions should be listed, each on a separate line. Example:

RQ1: Can Christian meditation reduce stress, anxiety, and depression in a normal population sample (church-goers)?

RQ2: Does God attachment mediate the effectiveness of Christian meditation in a church-going sample?

Definitions

Terms pertinent to the study should be listed and defined as the final section of chapter one. Dictionary definitions are not acceptable; rather, use definitions related to the instruments you are using in your study to measure your variables. If an important construct does not have an instrument in your study, use how key sources in the literature define it. All definitions in this section also need to be supported by the literature. If you will use abbreviations in your document for a term, include that information in the definition as well. At least one citation is needed for each definition. Here are some examples:

1. *Attitude* - Attitude is a psychological tendency that involves evaluating a particular object with some degree of favor or disfavor (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).
2. *Interest* - The combination of emotion and personal valuation of a task resulting in a desire for various levels of enjoyment (Ainley & Ainley, 2011).
3. *Etc*…

Summary

Provide a chapter summary here. The Summary includes a succinct restatement of the problem and purpose of the study and provides a strong conclusion to the chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Chapter Two is often the longest chapter of the dissertation. The minimum length should be 30 pages, but most are longer. Its purpose is to provide a context for the research and to demonstrate its importance based on the problem demonstrated via the literature as well as the gap in the literature. Chapter Two is comprised of at least four sections: (a) an overview, (b) a theoretical or conceptual framework section, (c) the related literature section, and (d) a summary.

The introduction should provide a general explanation and overview of the chapter with links to the purpose of the study. This should be done in a short paragraph.

Conceptual or Theoretical Framework

The conceptual or theoretical background section should provide the reader with a direct connection to the framework that will effectively guide the study and allow the findings to be situated within a greater context. According to Maxwell (2005),

> the point is not to *summarize* what has already been done in the field. Instead, it is to ground your proposed study in the relevant previous work, and to give the reader a clear sense of your theoretical approach to the phenomena that you propose to study. (p. 123)

Start by describing the theory(ies), including origination and major theorist(s). Next discuss how the theory(ies) has advanced or informed the literature on your topic. Conclude by articulating how your specific research focus relates to the theory and how it may potentially advance or extend the theory(ies). Examples of theoretical frameworks include Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of Needs, Knowles (1980) Adult Learning Theory, etc. Situating the study and research questions within an established theoretical framework helps establish the significance of the study.

Related Literature

The purpose of the Related Literature section is to provide a tight synthesis (not simply a study-by-study summary) of the existing general knowledge on your topic and link this existing knowledge to the proposed study. Remember that the literature review is the argument for the significance of the study. It communicates what has been examined on the topic(s), what has not been examined or how understanding on the topic is still developing, and how the study can fill the gap or further understanding in the field.

The chapter should end with a focused summary of what is currently known, what is not known, and how the study can specifically address a gap in the existing literature. Subheadings at Level 2 and Level 3 are often necessary. Often 100 to 200 articles are integrated in the construction of this chapter. The majority of the literature cited in the chapter needs to be current (i.e., ten years or less since publication) unless research is very limited in the particular topic area. Students will discuss this issue with their Chair if they believe that their topic area fits this description.

Summary

Provide a chapter summary. The Summary provides a strong conclusion to the chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

Start Chapter Three with a brief, introductory statement (one short paragraph). This should orient the reader to the contents of the chapter.

Design

Begin this section by identifying the research design. The research design needs to be specific. For example, it is not sufficient to state that "a quasi-experimental study was used." It would be more appropriate to state that "a quasi-experimental static-group comparison design was used." In addition to identifying the design, a rationale for why the design is most appropriate for the study is needed. This rationale needs to be supported by research as well as topic-specific, peer-reviewed literature. In other words, what is the purpose of the design? When is it used? Why is it the most appropriate choice for the present study? Refer to your research texts for the proper design description and use them to support your rationales. The chosen research design(s) should be consistent with the research question and hypothesis proposed as well as the procedures described in your study. Sometimes more than one research design is appropriate.

Research Question(s)

The proposed research questions need to be derived from the problem and purpose statements. A well-formulated research question (a) asks about the relationship/differences between two or more variables, (b) is stated clearly and in the form of a question, (c) is testable (i.e., possible to collect quantitative data to answer the question), (d) does not pose an ethical or moral problem for implementation, (e) is specific and restricted in scope (i.e., the aim is not to solve the world's problems), and (f) identifies exactly what is to be solved. A good research

question also clearly identifies the sample population. In addition, it should be noted that the research question implies the research design and statistical analysis. A typical dissertation contains one to three research questions. Research questions should be listed, each on a separate line. Example:

RQ1: Can Christian meditation reduce stress, anxiety, and depression in a normal population sample (church-goers) participating in the study?

RQ2: Does God attachment mediate the effectiveness of Christian meditation in this church-going sample?

Hypothesis(es)

Every research question will normally have at least one corresponding alternate hypothesis; however, sometimes more than one is needed. The number of hypotheses needed should be based upon the number of variables under study and the planned analysis method. Well-formulated hypotheses are based on the following criteria: (a) the hypothesis states the expected relationship/differences between variables, (b) the hypothesis is testable, (c) the hypothesis is stated as simply and concisely as possible, and (d) the hypothesis is founded in the problem statement and supported by research. Like the research questions, the hypotheses directly influence the statistical procedures used. Example:

The alternate hypotheses for this study are:

H_a1: There will be a statistically significant difference between pretest and posttest scores on the Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scales-21 (DASS-21-S) after Christian meditation in the experimental group. The experimental group will report lower scores in depression, anxiety, and stress measured by the DASS-21-S than the waiting-list control group.

H_a2: God attachment as measured by the God Attachment Inventory (GAI) will mediate the relationship between Christian meditation and DASS-21 scores.

Participants and Setting

Begin this section with an overview of your population. For example, "The participants for the study were drawn from a convenience sample of middle school students located in southeastern Virginia during the spring semester of the 2013-2014 school year. The school district was a middle-to-upper income suburb outside of …" Describe the population from which your sample was drawn. Make sure to specify your sampling procedure. Real names for people, churches, schools, etc. should never be used. Use pseudonyms for people and general descriptors for churches, treatment centers, schools, etc..

After you have described the population, next describe the sample. You might begin by reporting the sample size. For example, "…for this study, the number of participants sampled was 00 which exceeded the required minimum for a medium effect size. According to Gall et al. (2007), 66 participants is the required minimum for a medium effect size with statistical power of .7 at the .05 alpha level." Quantitative literature citations, including references to research texts, must be provided to demonstrate the adequate sample size in quantitative studies. Program development/evaluation studies do not need to demonstrate adequate sample size for a medium effect size due to the more limited nature of the study (i.e., it is not trying to produce generalizable knowledge but is limited to the program). Then, describe where the sample came from. For example, "… the sample came from three different middle schools in the district. Within each school, students were selected from six introductory math classes. The introductory math classes taught basic additions, subtraction and multiplication skills to…" Also include sample demographic information regarding the age, ethnicity, gender, grade level, etc. of your

sample. You may need to consider tables to represent this data. Note: If you are still developing your plan, prospectus, or proposal, please plug in "place holders." For example "… the sample consisted of 00 males and 00 females from a first grade physical education class." This section will be updated after you have collected your real data and then real numbers will be inserted. The sample must be described with enough detail so that other researchers could possibly replicate your study with similar subjects if your results need to be verified.

Depending on your study, after you have described the sample, you may need to identify and describe each group (e.g., treatment, control, etc.). Describe each group's make-up in enough detail so that the study can be replicated. Include similar information as described in the sample section, but at the group level. At this point, write this section in future tense. It will be changed to past tense in the final version.

Instrumentation

In this section, the instruments that are used to measure each variable need to be identified. The instruments may be tests, surveys, questionnaires, or other measurements. A description of each instrument, its content, its origin, and its appropriateness needs to be included. State other peer-reviewed studies where an instrument was used. This will help with its credibility. For example, "the instrument was used in numerous studies (e.g., Jackson, 2014; Jones, 2013; Smith, 2009)." The scales of measurement need to be discussed and include the number of questions. For example "… the instrument consisted of 30 questions and used a five-point Likert scale that ranged from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Responses were as follows: Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1." Include scoring information regarding the instrument. For example, "… the combined possible score on the *ATSF* range from 20 to 200 points. A score of 20 points is the lowest possible score,

meaning that…and a score of 200 points is the highest, meaning that…etc." The composite and each subscale need to be included as well as validity information and reliability psychometric information. The validity and reliability information should be cited. State that permission was granted to use the instrument(s). All documents related to the instrument should be included as appendices. The instrument itself should only be included if written permission was granted to do so.

Procedures

The procedure section is similar to a "cookbook." It should contain enough detail that another researcher can read your procedures and conduct your study and produce the same results. This includes, but is not limited to, information about securing IRB approval, eliciting participants for the study, conducting a pilot study (if done), training individuals to implement treatment, administration of the procedures, gathering the data, and recording procedures. The procedures should be described in a chronological, step-by-step format. Remember to describe the procedures clearly and with enough detail so that the study can be replicated. All procedural material (e.g., IRB permission, church/school permission, consent forms, assent forms, protocol, training manual, and any other pertinent information) should be included in the appendices.

Data Analysis

In this section, there needs to be identified statistical procedures for each hypothesis. Thus, it is useful to organize this section according to the research hypotheses. The type of data analysis is identified and a concise rationale for the type of analysis is provided. The chosen statistical procedures should be consistent with the research questions, hypotheses, and the type of data collected. In other words, why is the chosen analysis the most appropriate choice to test the hypotheses? The rationale needs to be supported by your research/statistics textbooks. For

each identified analysis, be sure to discuss all assumption tests and how they were tested, the statistic used to report the effect size and the convention used to interpret it, and the alpha used.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

A short introductory paragraph is appropriate for this chapter. It should orient the reader to the contents of the chapter.

Descriptive Statistics

Use descriptive statistics to describe your data. The purpose of descriptive statistics is simply to give your reader an overview of your findings. Statistics such as mean, median, mode, frequency, standard deviation, etc., should be used. Only report the descriptive statistics that are relevant to your study; do not overwhelm the reader with unnecessary data. It may be useful to organize and manage this section by using tables and charts. Unlike inferential statistics which are directly related to your hypotheses, descriptive statistics only describe and cannot be used to draw conclusions.

Results

Hypothesis(es)

It is useful to organize the Results section according to each of the hypotheses. That is, state the alternate hypothesis, and then descrobe the corresponding statistical test results for the hypothesis. Include assumption tests, analysis, alpha level, effect size, and whether your alternate hypothesis was supported, partially supported, or not supported. Once you have finished analysis of the first hypothesis, state the second hypothesis and adhere to the same stringent level of analysis and reporting. Repeat this process until all the hypotheses have been addressed.

For each statistical analysis technique, data screening will need to be addressed. All assumption tests must be conducted and reported. Tables and figures should be used when appropriate and in accordance with APA guidelines. Note: If only one statistical test is being

used, then you may report all assumption tests at the beginning of the section. In this case, consider using a heading labeled Assumption Tests.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

Start Chapter Five with a brief, introductory statement (one short paragraph). This should orient the reader to the contents of the chapter.

Discussion

Begin this section with the purpose of the study and a brief overview. The purpose of the study should be presented as a one sentence declarative statement. It is then useful to organize the Discussion section according to each research question. Each question should be restated and discussed in light of the results, literature, other studies, and theory. The Discussion should examine whether the results support or contradict other studies and theories. The Discussion section relies heavily on your review of literature. Keep in mind that the main purpose of this important section is to compare and contrast the results of the present study with findings from earlier studies. This should be the longest section in chapter five.

Implications

The implications of the study for counseling/ministry/marriage & family practice help convince the reader that the study added to the existing body of knowledge and theory and have meaning for community care and counseling. It gives you an opportunity to say what you think about how the study and its results impact the appropriate field (counseling, marriage & family, or pastoral care/ministry). Studies will vary on how much Christian worldview aspects relate to the topic. If Christian worldview considerations are not woven into the chapter five discussion due to the secular nature of the topic, include a separate subsection in the Implications section exploring how the Christian worldview informs an interpretation of the findings of your study.

Limitations

Limitations should be discussed in terms of threats to both internal and external validity. Identify the type of threat and describe it in terms of the present study. Discuss how the limitation could potentially impact the study, and discuss if any steps will be taken to limit the threat. Every study has limitations, so do not discount the importance of this section.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for further research need to addressed and discussed. Consider different populations, testing instrumentation, theoretical constructs, and limitations. Recommendations for future research should be thought of as ways to further increase knowledge in the field of study.

REFERENCES

All the references cited within the text should be listed in accordance with the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of APA*. The reference title should be all capitalized, bold, and centered.

APPENDIX or APPENDICES

The Appendices may include a variety of artifacts. An appendix of the completed dissertation should include the IRB approval letter. Other appendices may include informed consent/assent forms, surveys/questionnaires/instruments (with written permission only), protocols (interviews or observations), sample transcripts of interviews, theoretical memos, and other documents used to establish an audit trail. Any identifying or personal information (names, schools, districts, phone numbers, email addresses) should be eliminated. If numerous types of artifacts are included as appendices, each type should have a section labeled as Appendix A, Appendix B, etc. The appendix title should be capitalized, bold, and centered.

Appendix E: Qualitative Dissertation Template

The purpose of Appendix E is to ensure that the qualitative dissertation manuscript is a quality document. This appendix provides information about formatting and the content contained in each section of the dissertation.

Formatting

The margins for all chapters of the dissertation are as follows: 1 inch at the top and bottom, 1 inch on the right side, and 1 inch on the left side. All text should be Times New Roman, 12-point font. Text within the body of the manuscript should be left justified. Double-spacing should be employed throughout the manuscript. There should be two spaces after the punctuation at the end of sentences. Page numbers should all be Arabic numerals and placed in the upper right hand corner (with the page number on the first page suppressed). All manuscripts should follow the latest version of the APA style manual.

Below is the ***Qualitative Dissertation Template*** with a description of each section.

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE TITLE PAGE: THE TITLE SHOULD GO HERE (ALL CAPS)

by

Student's Full Legal Name

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

School of Behavioral Sciences

Liberty University

Year

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE SIGNATURE PAGE: THE TITLE SHOULD GO HERE

(ALL CAPS)

by Student's Full Legal Name

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

School of Behavioral Sciences

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

Year

APPROVED BY:

Name and degree, Committee Chair

Name and degree, Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The abstract summarizes the contents of the manuscript, starting with the purpose (see template below) or rationale of the study, the research questions (or at least the central research question), the methodology, and the results. The first sentence is not indented. Descriptions of the methodology should include the design, the sample, setting, and data collection and analysis methods. Approximately 250 words or less is recommended; however, some dissertation abstracts are a little longer. It is written in the future tense in the proposal document and past tense when the study is completed. No more than one page is allowable, and the abstract should be written as one, double-spaced paragraph. The abstract should include results of the study, but should not include statistics. The word "ABSTRACT" should be in all caps and a Level 1 heading, centered, but not bold. As an outline for your purpose statement, we recommend the template provided by Creswell (1994, 2003):

The purpose of this _____ (phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic, case) study is (was? will be?) to _____ (understand? describe? develop? discover?) the _____ (central phenomenon of the study) for _____ (the participants) at _____ (the site). The theory guiding this study is (identify theory and cite theorist) as it (explain the relationship between the theory and your focus of inquiry)…. Briefly introduce proposed data collection and data analysis strategies.

Keywords: This is a list of 4-7 words (separated by commas) central to your study.

Copyright Page (Optional)

Dedication (Optional)

The dedication page is a page in which the candidate dedicates the manuscript. This page is optional.

Acknowledgments (Optional)

The acknowledgments page provides the opportunity for the candidate to acknowledge individuals who influenced the writing and completion of the dissertation. This page is optional.

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents lists the various chapters and subsections of the manuscript along with their page numbers. The Table of Contents should include the Abstract, Copyright Page (optional), Dedication (optional), Acknowledgements (optional), List of Tables, List of Figures, CHAPTER TITLES (all caps), Level 1 headings, Level 2 headings, REFERENCES (all caps), and APPENDIX or APPENDICES (all caps). These should be left justified. The subsections included should only be APA Level 1 and Level 2 headings within the manuscript. Level 1 headings should be indented one half inch and Level 2 headings should be indented one inch. Chapter titles are not considered Level 1 headings. Entries should be double-spaced.

List of Tables

The List of Tables cites the tables and the corresponding pages of each table. This enables the reader to easily locate the tables in the manuscript. The title of this page should be a Level 1 heading, centered, 1 inch from the top of the page. Entries should be double spaced.

List of Figures

The List of Figures cites the figures and the corresponding pages of each figure. This enables the reader to easily locate the figures in the manuscript. The title of this page should be a Level 1 heading, centered, 1 inch from the top of the page. Entries should be double-spaced.

List of Abbreviations

The title of this page should be a Level 1 heading, centered, 1 inch from the top of the page. Entries should be double-spaced. Examples are provided below.

American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC)

Attachment to God Inventory (AGI)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The purpose of Chapter One is to provide a framework for the research. The chapter should create reader interest, provide a foundation for the problem that necessitates the research, overview the context of literature in which the research is founded, identify the importance of the research for a specific audience, and briefly introduce the research via the research question(s). The Overview must clearly and concisely describe the contents and organization of the chapter. Remember that this is just an overview. Chapter One may vary in length from 10-15 pages for the final dissertation. You will go into more depth in Chapter Two.

Background

The Background section contains a summary of the most relevant literature and provides the historical (i.e., how the problem has evolved over time), social (i.e., contexts), and theoretical (e.g., important variables, the theoretical concepts, and the principles underpinning the research) contexts for the research problem. Each of the three contexts must be specifically examined using APA Level 2 headings for each. You should be sure to link and relate the background of the study to the proposed research. Questions that may be asked or addressed in this section may include, but are not limited to: What is the problem and why is it an interest? Who else is affected by the problem? What research has been done to investigate or address the problem? How will the proposed research extend or refine the existing knowledge in the area under study? Who will benefit or use the proposed research? What new information does the current research add to the body of existing literature regarding the topic? The majority of literature cited in this section should be no more than ten years old.

Situation to Self

This section provides an opportunity for you to articulate your motivation for conducting the study and identify the philosophical assumptions (ontological, epistemological, rhetorical, axiological) you bring to the research and the paradigm (positivism/post-positivism, constructivism, participatory, and pragmatism) that will guide the study. Keep in mind that qualitative research is written in the first person rather than third person voice.

Problem Statement

"A problem might be defined as the issue that exists in the literature, theory, or practice that leads to a need for the study" (Creswell, 1994, p. 50). A problem statement summarizes "the context for the study" and the main problem the researcher seeks to address (Wiersma, 1995, p. 404). It identifies the general problem, the specific problem, the focus of the research, and the population sample. The problem statement draws from the background section; it includes current (i.e., ten years or less since publication unless otherwise approved by your Chair) literature (three to five citations) to show that the proposed research is significant and relevant to the field. It should be stated clearly and unambiguously in one to two paragraphs. You should state: "The problem is…." In one to two focused paragraphs, convince the reader why the particular issue or problem your study is investigating needs to be done.

- Introduce the general topic needing more research, including relevant/recent statistics on the issue.
- Summarize the recent research on the topic.
- Explain how/why the current research is deficient or falls short.
- Conclude with a focused statement identifying the problem in relation to your research design.

Purpose Statement

The purpose statement should follow the problem statement and clearly and succinctly state the focus and intentions of the proposed research. “The purpose statement should provide a specific and accurate synopsis of the overall purpose of the study” (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987, p. 5) and begin with the following statement: “The purpose of this study is . . .” It foreshadows the research question(s), and the statement must be used consistently throughout the dissertation. You are encouraged to use the following template adapted from Creswell (2013):

The purpose of this _____ (phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic, case, historical) study is to _____ (understand? describe? develop? discover?) the _____ (central phenomenon of the study) for _____ (the participants) at _____ (the site). At this stage in the research, _____ (central phenomenon) will be generally defined as _____ (a general definition of the central concept). The theory guiding this study is (identify theory and cite theorist) as it (explain the relationship between the theory and your focus of inquiry).

Although brief in nature, the problem and purpose statements are two very important aspects of the manuscript. These statements support the importance of the study and identify the goal of the research. All preceding writing within the manuscript should funnel into the problem and purpose statements, and all proceeding aspects of the manuscript should align with, support, and further expand upon the problem and purpose statements.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study section contains a description of the contributions that the study makes to the knowledge base or discipline, both theoretically and empirically (i.e., How does it relate to other studies that are similar or that investigate the same issue?)

This section also includes a brief description of the practical significance of the study; why it is important to the location, organization, general population, or sample being studied (e.g., Why and how does it affect them? How will it improve the conditions, lives, work environment, etc.? How can this study be used on a wider scale to affect change to help a wider group of people or the organization as a whole?). References are very important here to lend additional credence and support the study. All assertions in this section need to be well supported by the literature. Citations are needed.

Research Questions

The proposed research question(s) should be derived from the problem and purpose statements. A well-written research question is feasible, clear, significant, and ethical. In qualitative studies, research questions are often philosophical or pragmatic in nature and ask about meaning, process, perceptions, or behavior. Qualitative research questions are usually broader and become more specific as you move into the actual data collection/analysis process. Identify at least three research questions. If one central research question is used, the subsequent questions are called sub-questions. Include a brief description and discussion of each one before moving to the next question, using the literature (including citations) to support the focus of the question. Remember that each research question will need to be addressed in the data collection, data analysis, and discussion sections of later chapters. Be sure these questions do not elicit

simple yes/no responses. Note that traditional research hypotheses are not necessary or appropriate for most qualitative studies.

Definitions

Terms pertinent to the study should be listed and defined as the final section of Chapter One. All definitions in this section also need to be supported by the literature. Include terms that use abbreviations. Citations are needed. Dictionary definitions are not acceptable. Example:

1. *Attitude* - Attitude is a psychological tendency that involves evaluating a particular object with some degree of favor or disfavor (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).
2. *Interest* - The combination of emotion and personal valuation of a task resulting in a desire for various levels of enjoyment (Ainley & Ainley, 2011).
3. *Etc*…

Summary

Provide a chapter summary here. The Summary includes a succinct restatement of the problem and purpose of the study and provides a strong conclusion to the chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Chapter Two is often the longest chapter of the dissertation. The minimum length must be 30 pages, but most are longer. Its purpose is to provide a context for the present research and to demonstrate its importance based on the problem demonstrated via the literature as well as the need or gap in the literature. Chapter Two is comprised of at least four sections: (a) the Overview, (b) a Theoretical (or Conceptual) Framework section, (c) a Related Literature section, and (d) a Summary. Subheadings at Level 2 and Level 3 are often necessary. Often at least 100–200 articles are integrated in the construction of this chapter. The majority of the literature cited in the chapter should be current (i.e., ten years or less since publication), though it is understood that some seminal studies published more than ten years ago are appropriate in certain sections and discussions. Seek Chair approval if you are uncertain about a source. The Overview must clearly and concisely describe the contents and organization of the chapter.

Theoretical Framework

This section should provide the reader with a direct connection to the conceptual or theoretical framework that will effectively guide the study and allow the findings to be situated within a greater context. According to Maxwell (2005),

> The point is not to *summarize* what has already been done in the field. Instead, it is to ground your proposed study in the relevant previous work, and to give the reader a clear sense of your theoretical approach to the phenomena that you propose to study. (p. 123)

Start by describing the theory(ies), including origination and major theorist(s). Next discuss how the theory(ies) has advanced or informed the literature on your topic. Conclude by articulating how your specific research focus relates to the theory and how it may potentially advance or

extend the theory(ies). Examples of theoretical frameworks include Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of Needs, Knowles (1980) Adult Learning Theory, etc. Situating your study and focus of inquiry within an established theoretical framework helps establish the significance of the study.

Related Literature

The purpose of this section is to provide a tight synthesis (not simply a study-by-study summary like an annotated bibliography) of the existing knowledge on this topic and link this existing knowledge to the proposed study. Remember that this section is the argument for the significance of the study. It communicates what has been examined on the topic(s), what has not been examined or how understanding on the topic is still developing, and how the study can fill the gap or further understanding in the field.

Summary

This section should provide a focused summary of what is currently known, what is not known, and how your proposed study can specifically address gaps in the existing literature.

General notes:

It is important to remember that Chapter Two is not a library, that is, a summary of facts or summaries of relevant research, but rather a critical argument. Derived from Rudestam and Newtons' (2007) *Surviving Your Dissertation*, here are some keys to a successful construction of a literature review:

1. **Be a convincing writer**. Remember that your literature review provides the context for your dissertation and demonstrates why your topic is important and relevant. Your

literature review demonstrates the relationship between previous research and your study, and it demonstrates how your study is distinctive and different from previous research.

2. **Be a critic not a reporter**. Adopt a critical perspective in reading and identifying relationships among research articles. Avoid composing a literature review that is a library of facts. That is, make sure your literature review is a coherent argument that leads to the problem statement or description of the study you are proposing. Your literature review should begin with a clear statement of your goal and be followed by a structured argument.
3. **Be a selective writer**. Avoid the temptation to report all the literature you review. Be selective and discuss only the articles that are most relevant. Keep in mind that you may review 2,000 articles and only include, for example, 150 (one hundred fifty).
4. **Be a skillful researcher**. For most topics, use primarily seminal articles and articles that are no more than ten years old in your literature review. Always strive to cite primary sources and reputable and scholarly sources. Seek Chair approval for using substantial literature sources over ten years old.
5. **Be a reasonable problem solver**. At the conclusion of your literature review, write a statement that summarizes or highlights the most relevant literature and conclusions that lead to your proposed study. Be sure that you clearly identify that your problem has both theoretical (i.e., fills a gap in the literature) and practical value (i.e., solution to a problem or concern in the professional field, improves professional practice.).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The Overview may begin with a brief restatement of the nature and purpose of the study. It must clearly and concisely describe the contents and organization of the chapter. The purpose of Chapter Three is to present the procedures, research design, and analysis for the present research study. That is, it provides the reader with the details of what will occur during the execution of research. Descriptions in this chapter should be comprehensive and in sufficient detail as to permit the replication of the study. Chapter Three contains several subsections; they are listed below.

Design

In the Design section, the planned type of study (e.g., qualitative) and research design (e.g., phenomenology, case study, ethnography, grounded theory, or historical research) should be identified. Identify (a) why the study is qualitative, (b) why the general design is appropriate, and (c) why the specific type of design was selected. Additionally, the research design type should be fully defined (with a brief history of the research design type) with citations. Further, a concise rationale for the research design and a concise description of the implementation of the design should be included. The purpose and the research design should be consistent with the research questions proposed as well as the procedures described. Be sure to also identify and describe the specific approach within the approach. For example, if selecting a phenomenological study, be sure to identify what type (e.g., hermeneutic, transcendental, consensual, etc.). If conducting a case study, identify whether it is a single instrumental, collective, or intrinsic case study. Be sure to provide a clear rationale, linking the design to your purpose. Throughout this section, refer to primary qualitative research texts for the proper design

description and use them to support your rationales.

Research Questions

Restate just the research questions from Chapter One – no literature.

Setting

Depending on your design, you may choose to title this section "Site" or "Setting." In this section, the setting (or the site) of the study should be described (e.g., geographic location, school system, the course, etc.). Just as you should be purposefully selecting your participants for a qualitative study, it is also important to provide a rationale for your site selection. Convenience alone is not sufficient. Only important features which have bearing on the present study should be included. The following questions should be addressed: Why was this setting (site) chosen for this project? What does the organization look like with regards to leadership, organizational structure, etc.? Describe it with details. Pseudonyms for both individuals and institutions should be provided in this section as well.

Participants

In the Participants section, the sample pool, the sample size, type of sample (e.g., theoretical, purposive), and sampling procedures (e.g., convenience, snowball sample, maximum variation, etc.) should be clearly explained and each decision should be supported by research citations. Demographic information (age, ethnicity, gender, etc.) should be described in narrative or tabular form. If using a published survey or questionnaire to identify or describe participants, be sure to gain permission to use and explain here how the survey was developed and how validity and reliability were established. If generating your own, you need to address face and content validity and describe any piloting procedures used. This is not considered a data collection method.

Given the nature of qualitative research, pseudonyms should be provided. Support all practices from research literature with citations. The number of participants will most often range from 6-15 or higher.

Procedures

In the Procedures section, the steps necessary to conduct the study are outlined. This includes, but is not limited to, information about securing Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, eliciting participants for the study, gathering the data, and recording procedures.

The Researcher's Role

In this section you must clearly and thoroughly explain your role as the "human instrument" in the study. You must be straightforward about your relationship to the participants, your role in the setting or research site, and any bias or assumptions you bring to the study that may influence how you view the data or conduct your analysis. Your role must also be articulated in light of the chosen design and the implications of this role on the data collection and data analysis procedures must be addressed.

Data Collection

A critical aspect of qualitative inquiry is rigorous data collection techniques. For most qualitative designs, the only required data collection method is interviews. Others are also often used and may include, but are not limited to, observations (participant and/or direct), document analysis (e.g., archival records, journals, letters, etc.), artifact analysis (e.g., photographs), and researcher field notes/theoretical memos. Discuss the data collection strategies <u>in the order in which they will be conducted</u> (and order the sub-sections for each individual strategy below in the same sequence) and explain why you have chosen this particular sequence. These data collection procedures should follow the recommendations of established qualitative researchers

in the field (e.g., Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1980, 1990, etc.).

Interviews

At the outset of each of the sub-sections for the individual data collection strategies, you should identify the data collection strategy, fully define it in the context of qualitative inquiry (with citation), explain the data collection strategy in layman's terms (if appropriate), and justify its appropriateness for your research. Discuss any logistics (when/where/how/with whom will data be collected, recording, etc.) and explicate which of your research questions will be answered by this data collection strategy. It is important to demonstrate that interview (and focus group) semi-structured questions are generated from and grounded in the literature on your topic. Your questions should be included in a numbered list with an item-by-item discussion of each question and its basis in the literature. Here is an example as it must appear in your paper:

Standardized Open-Ended Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to me, as if we just met one another.
2. Please walk me through your worldview development timeline.
3. Of the formative experiences you identified on your timeline, which would you say were the most significant?
4. What made them significant?
5. Is there something else you would like to add to your timeline that you haven't already written down?
6. Experts suggest that a person is often not aware of his or her worldview and its influence on his or her life and choices. On a scale from one to five, with one being very unaware and five being completely aware, how aware are you of your worldview?

7. Describe your worldview.
8. Ideally, part of becoming an adult involves the process of examining and evaluating one's worldview. Where are you in that process?
9. How does your parents' worldview compare to yours?
10. Think about a friend who also has a Biblical worldview. What formative experiences do you think they would want to tell me about?
11. Tell me about the struggles you've experienced-- since graduating high school-- as you have worked out your worldview.
12. What questions, if any, came up for you as you developed a Biblical worldview?
13. If you were a parent of a 19-year-old, how would you help her as she develops a Biblical worldview?
14. Imagine you're being interviewed at a youth conference, in front of thousands of Christian young people. What would you want to tell them to expect to experience as they develop their worldview over the next few years?
15. I'd like to ask you a question that will prompt you to put everything together, so to speak. Reflecting on your lifetime of experience developing a Biblical worldview, what advice would you give to Christians your age as they develop their worldview?
16. This next question is unique in that it will invite you to look ahead. How do you expect your worldview to change or develop over the next several years?
17. We've covered a lot of ground in our conversation, and I so appreciate the time you've given to this. One final question… What else do you think would be important for me to know about the development of your worldview that I haven't asked you about?

Questions one through five are knowledge questions (Patton, 2015), and are designed as follow-up questions to the worldview development timelines that will have been previously created and submitted by the participants. These questions are intended to be relatively straightforward and non-threatening, and will ideally serve to help develop rapport between the participant and me (Patton, 2015). The questions will be adjusted as necessary for each participant, based on the data included on each individual timeline.

Fowler (1981) suggested that for adolescents, the formation of complex systems of values and beliefs is primarily a subconscious task. Only after one progresses out of synthetic-conventional faith does a person begin to develop a deep awareness of one's faith. With this new awareness comes the capacity to consciously reflect on one's faith and to make intentional choices about what to include in a workable system of meaning. Furthermore, Sire (2015) concluded that components of a person's worldview may be consciously or unconsciously held. Therefore, it is important to ask questions that will help participants reflect on their level of awareness of their own worldview and on the progress they have made in examining and evaluating their worldview. Questions six through eight are designed for these purposes.

Question nine invites the participant to reflect on his or her worldview as compared to his or her parents' worldview. Several studies suggest that there is a strong correlation between an individual's worldview and that of his or her parents (Brickhill, 2010; Kimball, Boyatzis, Cook, Leonard, & Flanagan, 2013; Perkins, 2007). Probing about parent worldviews will help to discover a more complete picture of influences on worldview development. Since research suggests that family is such a significant factor in worldview development, it is likely that participants will mention their parents in some way in the context of their timeline. If participants have already discussed parental influence, this question may not need to be asked.

The tenth question invites the participant to take another person's perspective, which is often helpful in gaining new insights (Patton, 2015). It is also a non-threatening question, allowing the participants to talk more in-depth about the phenomenon of worldview development, without requiring them to be highly vulnerable. However, it is hoped that the question will lead to keeping the interview moving along in an engaging fashion and yielding valuable data. This is particularly important given the nature of the question that follows.

Question 11 is the first question that will likely require a relatively high degree of vulnerability, and for this reason, I chose to not ask it until the interview is well underway. Ideally by this time in the interview, a good rapport will have been established (Patton, 2015), and therefore the participant will be willing to share more intimate details about his or her struggles in developing a Biblical worldview. For several researchers, personal struggle is an important component of worldview development (Bryant, 2011; Fowler, 1981; Mayhew, 2012; Mayhew, Seifert, & Pascarella, 2012).

Questioning truth seems to be a key element of the passage from an adolescent faith to an adult faith (Fowler, 1981; King, Clardy, & Ramos, 2014). Question 12 is designed to elicit some of the questions participants may have asked as part of the process of developing their worldview. I will be particularly attentive to the concept of cognitive dissonance that such questions can cause (Bryant, 2011; Ciarrochi & Heaven, 2012; Fowler, 1981). I will also be prepared to probe further with the participants in order to gain additional data about how they felt about and how they responded to questions that were suggested by becoming exposed to alternate worldviews held by others (Mayhew, 2012; Mayhew, Seifert, & Pascarella, 2012).

Questions 13 and 14 are designed to put participants into role-playing contexts, which can help the participants to think more deeply about their own worldview development by

inviting them to step outside of themselves and become an observer, or co-researcher (Patton, 2015; Creswell, 2013). Questions 15 and 16 put the participant in the role of expert on worldview development, which is yet another way to elicit different and valuable data. To encourage maximum value from these questions, I have crafted them to include prefatory statements, which will help to transition the participants into the role of expert (Patton, 2015). Question number 17 is a one-shot question (Patton, 2015), designed to give the participant one further opportunity to offer valuable insight. This one-shot question also serves as the closing question (Patton, 2015), giving the participant freedom to add to what has already been said, keeping him or her in the role of expert on his or her own life and story. From my experience in asking thousands of such questions as a life coach, I have found that these one-shot, parting questions often yield a tremendous amount of valuable information, when the interview or discussion could very easily have been otherwise shut down.

--- End example---

By explaining in detail the purpose of each question, you not only establish the validity of your questions, but also establish the basis for your discussion of findings in relation to the literature in Chapter Five. After developing the questions, discuss in your Procedures that you will get experts in the field to review, and then pilot the interview with a small sample outside of your study sample to ensure clarity of questions and wording. The anchoring in the literature and the expert review should be conducted prior to your proposal defense; the piloting needs to be done after you receive IRB approval to collect data.

Surveys/Questionnaires

All surveys and questionnaires must elicit qualitative, not quantitative data. If using a published survey or questionnaire, be sure to gain permission to use it and explain here how the

survey was developed and how validity and reliability were established. If generating your own, you need to address face and content validity and describe piloting procedures.

Document Analysis

Document analysis may be applied to a variety of sources including, but not limited to legal documents, records, meeting minutes, letters, diaries, etc. Every effort should be made to incorporate primary, as opposed to secondary sources. Identify and describe the specific documents collected. Provide a specific rationale for why each type of document was selected.

Focus Groups

Focus groups provide an opportunity for the researcher to interact with multiple participants at the same time. Focus groups are especially useful for exploring complex, multi-layered concepts from the perspectives of the participants. Focus group questions must be developed and reported using the same format as interview questions (see Interview section above).

Observations

If conducting observations, develop and include in the appendices your observation protocol (examples are provided in most qualitative research texts), and be sure to address both descriptive and reflective field notes. Be sure to discuss whether observations will be scheduled or unscheduled, and whether you will be a participant or non-participant observer. Identify frequency and duration of observations.

Data Analysis

In this section the data analysis procedures should be identified and a concise rationale for each type of analysis should be provided. Be sure that your analysis procedures are aligned

with your research design. For example, open, axial, and selective coding are appropriate for grounded theory studies, but not necessarily for other designs. As another example, if conducting a transcendental phenomenological study, be sure to order the primary sources for this design (e.g., Moustakas, 1994) and describe these design-specific procedures in depth. Be sure to use the primary resources on your topic to guide your development of this section. While secondary sources (e.g., course textbooks) provide good overviews of different research designs and analysis procedures, they typically lack the detailed procedural information needed to write Chapter Three. You need to provide enough detail that someone can replicate your study by following procedures outlined in this chapter. Further, as your study may involve multiple forms of data collection in order to achieve triangulation, you need to discuss how you will analyze each set of data and then synthesize findings across all three (or more) sets of data. Some form of coding, along with bracketing and memoing, are tools commonly used to organize data and identify recurring themes for many qualitative data analysis strategies. If you are employing these tools while you analyze data, be sure to discuss them here (fully defined and cited). Additionally, if you will use a Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) such as ATLAS, NVivo, Ethnograph, or MaxQDA, discuss that in this section as well. Surveys and quantitative instruments cannot be analyzed in accordance with analysis procedures for textual (qualitative) data. If utilizing quantitative instruments, be sure to clearly address how you will analyze and then integrate or triangulate the quantitative findings with the qualitative.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness addresses credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Each topic must be covered in detail under its own APA Level 2 subheading. In each subheading, fully define the aspect of trustworthiness (credibility, dependability, transferability,

or confirmability) addressed and discuss its importance (with citations). Then, identify the methods whereby you propose to achieve each aspect of trustworthiness (triangulation, direct quotes, enumeration, member checks, prolonged engagement, etc.), fully defining each method (with citations). Methods for increasing trustworthiness include, but are not limited to, triangulation, member checks, prolonged engagement, negative case analysis, peer/expert review, external audit, etc.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the extent to which the findings accurately describe reality. Credibility depends on the richness of the information gathered and on the analytical abilities of the researcher.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability and confirmability are similar to reliability in quantitative studies and deal with consistency, which is addressed through the provision of rich detail about the context and setting of the study.

Transferability

Transferability is another aspect of qualitative research that should be considered; it refers to the possibility that what was found in one context is applicable to another context.

Ethical Considerations

Any ethical considerations or implications of the research should be discussed. These might include data storage (e.g., locked filing cabinets and password protection for electronic files) and usage, influence, confidentiality (e.g., use of site and participant pseudonyms), and any other potential issues that might arise and how they will be addressed.

Summary

Provide a chapter summary. The Summary provides a strong conclusion to the chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter is not part of the plan, prospectus, or proposal. It is done after data collection and analysis. The purpose of Chapter Four is to present the results of the data analysis. This chapter is reserved for findings specifically. Methodological information should be discussed in Chapter Three. An interpretation and discussion of results should be reserved for Chapter Five. Chapter Four begins with a brief overview of the chapter content. The Overview should also include a brief restatement of the study purpose. The data, in the form of themes (narrative), charts, graphs, tables, or models, should then be presented. Data should be presented in the order in which the research questions were stated or according to themes generated, though the research questions should still be answered before concluding the chapter. The Overview must clearly and concisely describe the contents and organization of the chapter.

Participants

While the *overall* sample should be described or presented in tabular form in Chapter Three (e.g., sample size, age, ethnicities represented, gender, etc.), it is typical in qualitative dissertations to provide a rich description or portrait of each individual who participated in the study (using pseudonyms). Pseudonyms should be realistic, and reflective of the culture of your participants, but not in such a way that their anonymity could be compromised. You can organize these participant descriptions using Level 2 APA headings.

George

Sally

Etc.

Results

This section must be organized thematically and according to research questions, using two APA Level 2 sub-headings. **Theme Development** (or some such name) under its own heading, must reflect the steps for data analysis described by the candidate in Chapter Three. Theme development must be supported using appropriate narrative and data from each data collection method, especially through the use of participant quotes. Do not simply list a series of participant quotes detached from any narrative. Unexpected codes and/or themes that do not correlate to specific research questions are also presented. Data from each collection method are clearly and meaningfully integrated into theme development. Codes, if developed, are presented in meaningful tables or appendices demonstrating how they were organized to inform themes. **Research Question Responses** (or some such name), under its own heading, must supply narrative answers to each of the research questions using data collected, but primarily the themes developed in the previous section. Select participant quotes are appropriate to support the responses to the research questions.

Summary

Provide a chapter summary. The Summary includes a succinct conclusion to the chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

This chapter is not part of the plan, prospectus, or proposal. Begin the Overview section with a brief restatement of the purpose of the study. The Overview must clearly and concisely describe the contents and organization of the chapter. Chapter Five is unique in that you are expected to use your own interpretations and ideas. Chapter Five consists of six sections: (a) an overview of the chapter, (b) a summary of the findings, (c) a discussion of the findings and the implications in light of the relevant literature and theory, (d) an implications section (methodological and practical), (e) an outline of the study delimitations and limitations, and (f) recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

Provide a concise summary of the study findings, briefly answering each research question. Do not merely cut and paste from the Chapter Four Results section.

Discussion

The purpose of this section is to discuss the study findings in relationship to the empirical and theoretical literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The empirical and theoretical literature discussions must be written under their own APA Level 2 headings. How does your study confirm or corroborate previous research? How does your study diverge from or extend on previous research? What novel contribution does your study add to the field? How does your study extend or shed new light on theory informing the topic?

Implications

The purpose of this section is to address the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications of the study. The theoretical, empirical, and practical implications must be written

under their own APA Level 2 headings. Depending on the topic, it may be appropriate to include specific recommendations for various stakeholders, such as counselors, ministers, policy makers, administrators, teachers, parents, etc. Studies will vary on how much Christian worldview aspects relate to the topic. If Christian worldview considerations are not woven into the chapter five discussion due to the secular nature of the topic, include a separate subsection in the Implications section exploring how the Christian worldview informs an interpretation of the findings of your study.

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations are purposeful decisions the researcher makes to limit or define the boundaries of the study (e.g., only including participants over the age of 18, selecting an ethnographic over a phenomenological study, etc.). Describe the rationale behind decisions made to limit or define the scope and focus of the study.

Limitations are potential weaknesses of the study that cannot be controlled. They may be related to the design, the analysis, or the sample (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity, geographical location, etc.).

Recommendations for Future Research

In consideration of the study findings, limitations, and the delimitations placed on the study, provide multiple recommendations and directions for future research. Include an argument for what topics and populations should be studied, along with specific types of designs that should be employed.

Summary

Provide a summary of the study. From your Implications section, reiterate what you consider to be the one or two most important “take-aways” from the results of your research (you may consider including an anecdotal illustration).

REFERENCES

All the references cited within the text should be listed in accordance with the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of APA*. The reference title should be capitalized, bold, and centered.

APPENDIX or APPENDICES

The Appendices may include a variety of artifacts. An appendix of the completed dissertation should include the IRB approval letter. Other appendices may include informed consent/assent forms, surveys/questionnaires/instruments (with written permission only), protocols (interviews or observations), sample transcripts of interviews, theoretical memos, and other documents used to establish an audit trail. Any identifying or personal information (names, treatment centers, schools, cities, phone numbers, email addresses) should be eliminated. If numerous types of artifacts are included as appendices, each type should have a section labeled as Appendix A, Appendix B, etc. The appendix title should be capitalized, bold, and centered.