**Rutgers University**

**Graduate School of Education**

**Education Doctorate**

**Suggested Parts of a Dissertation Proposal**

Cover Page: The GSE has a particular format for the cover page. A template will be provided

1. Introduction: To provide the context and rationale for your inquiry and your specific research question(s).

--a problem statement which explains the significance of your study within your local context and/or within the broader educational arena

--a purpose state (the purpose of this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ study is to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ . This is an important area of study because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

--explicit statement of research questions, and possibly sub questions

--may include a figure which shows where your study fits in to a larger local issue or broad educational issue or explains the logic of the study in some way

--may include definitional information for terms key to your study

*Suggested headings for this section:*

(Note that APA does not use an initial heading for an introduction)

Statement of the Problem

Purpose of the study

Research Questions

2. A review of the literature and/or theoretical framework: To indicate what is already known about your area of inquiry and how this informs your study.

--should have an opening paragraph which outlines and creates a rationale for the structure of the literature review (what you will do and how)

--should synthesize 3-5 broad areas of research by. These can be grouped topically/thematically, methodologically, chronologically, ideologically, or in any other way that makes sense. This discussion should not just report on the research but critically assess it.

--should have a closing that points the reader to the relationship between the literature you reviewed and your research focus

--may include definitional information

*Suggested headings:*

Use headings that clearly delineate the structure you have selected to discuss the literature. You should have 3-5 subheadings in your lit review that match in order and substance what you said you would cover in your lit review. Should end with a conclusion.

3. Research design

--Opening paragraph which states what general research approach you will use (e.g., mixed methods, qualitative case study, etc.) and why this is well suited to your research questions, and an overview of your design

--If you are designing a learning environment or instructional intervention, description of intervention design, including embodied conjecture (i.e., the features of your design, what are the intermediate effects and kinds of engagement that would then lead to the kinds of outcomes you anticipate) or logic model.

--description of site where inquiry will be conducted (if you don’t have one)

--description of sample, criteria for selecting, criteria for type of sample, methods of recruitment, how many, of what types, etc.

--data collection strategies and procedures, be as specific as possible

--data analysis plan

*Suggested headings following overview paragraph:*

Research site/context

Instructional design (if relevant)

Research Participants (or sample)

 Selection Criteria/Sampling Procedure

 Recruitment Plan

Data collection Procedures

 Use a separate subheading for each data collection procedure

Data analysis plan

(Validity/Trustworthiness

Researcher role

Limitations)

4. Other (may be included in one of a couple of places, usually under research design)

--researcher role (how who you are might have an impact on the data you can collect and what you might do (if anything) to compensate

--limitations (what might the weaknesses in your design be, why? How might this matter?)

--trustworthiness or validity (what are you going to do to maximize the trustworthiness/validity of your findings through your sample, data collection plan, and/or data analysis strategies)

5. References

Include complete bibliographic information only for texts which you actually cited in your paper. Use correct APA format.

6. Appendices

--consent form

--interview questions

--observational protocols

--other data collection or research design resources

**Keep in mind that subheadings are extremely useful in keeping yourself and the reader on track.**

Scale: Your whole proposal should be 30-40 pages. If it is much less than that, you probably haven’t got enough detail in your design or enough depth in your other sections. If it is much more than that, you’re probably including too much for a proposal and may not be really focused enough.

5-8 pages for introductory conceptual framing

12-18 pages for literature review

8-10 pages for research design

3-5 pages for miscellaneous

If relevant, include a conceptual/theoretical framework or embodied conjuecture figure.

It should be double spaced

Use page numbers in a header

Use correct APA format for in-text citations, references, and headings.