



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

MASTERS IN EDUCATION

THESIS CHAPTER WRITING RUBRICS

Chapter 1: Definition of Problem

Objective: to define the research question/problem & project focus. Written in present tense.

Chapter 1 Components	Novice	Proficient	Advance
Introduction	Identify problem	& Contextualize problem in education/society	& Grab readers attention
Purpose of Project	Articulate research question	& Explain it in lay- man terms	& Explain how this study will add to the current research, either as an example or an exception - for example 1) The research shows X, Y, and Z, but it doesn't show ____. or 2) This research will help build upon the research of X, Y, and Z by _____.
Definitions	Define all terms in research question	& Define all terms in the literature review & methodology	& Use proper APA format citations for all definitions.
Preview Literature	Identify key areas of literature for study. Cite research that represents the field and is supportive of the research question	& Explain how these key areas inform this study	& Use proper APA format citation for all references.
Preview Methodology	Identify methodology used in study	& Explain methodology in general terms and explain why it matches this research question	& Use proper APA format citation for referencing methodology.
Significance of Project	State how this study can improve education	& Explain how it is different than other studies	& Imply how this can inform teachers' pedagogy
Limitations of Project	Identify 1 limitation	Identify 1-3 limitations and explains in detail	& Hint how the limitations will be addressed or made sense of
Summary	Summarize research question and significance of study	& Review key literature and methodology of study	& Provide a transition to Chapter 2

THESIS CHAPTER WRITING RUBRICS

Chapter 2 Literature Review Rubric

Objective: to review what is known and not know about topic of study. Written in present tense.

Components	Novice	Proficient	Advance
Introduction	Identify problem & restate the research question (Do not repeat your whole chapter 1)	& Preview the contents of the chapter Explain what your methods: qualitative or quantitative, label method, participants, tools, design ...	& Use all of the titles of subsection in the introduction as sign posts for the reader to know what is coming.
Overview of the Context of Literature	Contextualize this study in the field of educational literature by identifying the key areas of literature. Identify the theoretical framework that this research comes out of or is influenced by.	& Explain how each area connects to the research study Cite research using APA format	& Establish writer's reasons for reviewing the literature & the criteria in analyzing and comparing literature, the organization of the review as well as why certain research is excluded.
Literature Review Areas (For each area use this as a guide)	Use layman terms to introduce the research area – use “umbrella” sentences at the beginning of paragraphs, “signposts” throughout and brief “so what” summary sentences at intermediate points in the review to aid in understanding Group research studies according to common denominators, such as qualitative versus quantitative approaches, conclusions of authors, specific population studied... Point out overall trends in what has been published	& Summarize individual studies or articles with as much or as little detail as each merits (space denotes significance) Build research citations on each other Use proper APA citation format. (Make sure literature includes citations from last decade as well as professional peer reviewed journals.)	& Illustrate multiple author views with distinction, including conflicts in the theory, methodology, evidence and conclusions; or gaps in research or scholarship Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the research
Connections to the Literature	Summarize major contributions of significant studies and articles to the body of knowledge under review, maintaining the focus established in the introduction. Articulate how each of the literature areas combined makes a strong foundation for this research study.	& Evaluate the current "state of the art" for the body of knowledge reviewed, pointing out major methodological flaws or gaps in research, inconsistencies in theory and findings, and areas or issues pertinent to future study. Conclude by providing some insight into the relationship between the central topic of the literature review and a larger area of study such as a discipline, a scientific endeavor, or profession.	& Does not use all the same language from previous descriptions, but makes it fresh Makes the literature come alive for the reader – so they are eager to read the next section.
Summary	Summarize key concepts in Ch 2	& Re-articulates research question	& Provides a transition to Chapter 3

THESIS CHAPTER WRITING RUBRICS

Chapter 3 Project Methodology Rubric

Objective: To describe the methodology of your project, data collection and analysis. Written in past tense.

Components	Novice	Proficient	Advance
Introduction	Identify problem & restate the research question (Do not repeat your whole chapter 1)	& Preview the contents of the chapter Explain what your methods: qualitative or quantitative, label method, participants, tools, design ...	& Use all of the titles of subsection in the introduction as sign posts for the reader to know what is coming.
Design	Name the design of methodology	& Explain how this methodology is good match to answer research question	& Cite research that supports this design choice
Participants	Identify how many, criteria for in/exclusion and characteristic (demographics)	& Identifies sampling, selection, recruitment, and consent/safeguard process (mortality rate)	& Use proper citations for each process – how this is based on another model
Setting	Identify where study is taking place	& Specify geography, location, (pseudonyms), demographics of class, school, faculty..., cultural-political climate, time elapse of study...	& Explain how the setting is conducive for study and what impact it may have on findings.
Instrument	Describe materials being used especially the instrument (survey, questions, test...)	Describe in detail and even show examples of the instrument, highlight key features, and explain how this tool is a good match for study	& Use proper citation for referencing instrument design and modeling
Procedures	List the steps to conduct study so specifically that someone could replicate. Articulate who did what and when	& Explain why you chose these steps Uses proper citation for Methodology Written in past tense.	& Articulate how author is an insider/outsider with this sample/site data collection.
Analysis	Identify the process you used to analyze data	& Specify if your analysis is grounded and/or with what particular lens and name the lens and why you chose it. Describe how you can validate your findings	& Use proper citation for analysis
Summary	Summarize key concepts in Ch 3	& Re-articulate research question	& Provide a transition to Chapter 4

THESIS CHAPTER WRITING RUBRICS

Chapter 4 Data Analysis Rubric

Objective: To describe/present the project.

Components	Novice	Proficient	Advance
Introduction	Identify problem & restate the research question (Do not repeat your whole chapter 1)	& Preview the contents of the chapter Explain what your organization of the data and analysis, using themes provided from design, instrument or analysis and aligns with the research question	& Use all of the titles of subsection in the introduction as sign posts for the reader to know what is coming.
Data Presentation	Describe the findings within context of the setting, questions and field of education	& Visual Representations (form of tables, figures, quotes or photos) are properly identified, self descriptive, informative, directly related to and referred to within the narrative of text, and immediately adjacent comments are provided.	& The findings are detailed and flow easily
Data Analysis	Appropriately analyze and explain your analysis	& Iterative- use a systematic review, make sure nothing is left out of analysis.	& Sufficient evidence is provided Sophisticated explanation and integration of research in the field.
Interpretation	Interpret how you made sense of the findings Outcomes are logically and systematically summarized and interpreted in relation to their importance to the research questions.	& Intelligently interpret, using layman approach to explaining contextualized data – so that anyone can understand findings and their value to the field. Include inconsistent findings and discuss possible alternative interpretations	& Articulate how author's insider/outsider Impacted the findings and interpretations. Articulate insights gained from study Glimpse into the limitations of study in reference to data and analysis
Summary	Summarize key concepts in Ch 4	& Re-articulate research question	& Provide a transition to Chapter 5

The components on this rubric were designed to help your cover all areas of analysis, but they do not equate a separate section in the chapter because they are overlapping and integrated in many ways. Feel free to use headings for your chapter that reflect your themes.

THESIS CHAPTER WRITING RUBRICS

Chapter 5: Recommendations/What I Learned Rubric

Objective: To review findings and make recommendations for readers. Written in present tense.

	Below Basic (1)	Basic (2)	Proficient (3)	Advanced (4)
Introduction	Refer basically to research focus	Identify problem & restate the research question (Do not repeat the same introduction for other chapters – make it fresh.)	Preview the contents of the chapter Briefly explain what your methods: qualitative or quantitative, label method, participants, tools, design ...	Use all of the titles of subsections in the chapter as signposts for the reader to know what is coming.
Summarize Your Findings	Results are provided, but NOT described and/or organized. No reference to original research question/problem/project.	Results are described but are confusing and somewhat vague. Original research question referred to but correlation (connection) perplexing to reader.	Results are present and connected to original research question (hypothesis) but organization is awkward.	Results are described clearly and are organized. Results illustrate whether or not original hypothesis is supported and relate to the research question. Adventitious findings are disclosed.
Interpret Your Findings	Relationships between independent and dependent variables are not identified. Findings are not fully discussed.	Relationships between independent and dependent variables are identified but not explicitly clear. Findings are discussed but with little or no detail. No mention of alternative findings.	Relationships between independent and dependent variables are identified and clear but not thoroughly explained. Alternative findings are referred to but not completely analyzed and interpreted.	Relationships between independent and dependent variables are identified and it is made clear whether these relationships apply to several or only a select few. Variables are explained as being either predicted or unpredicted. Any confounds or mediators that account for the findings are discussed. Any alternative findings are interpreted. An explanation for disagreement in measures is well reasoned.
Place Your Findings in Context	No references to information in Literature Review.	References made to past literature but no consideration is given to how the results converge with or contradict the past findings.	References made to past literature and consideration to results is given. However, the discussion is vague and perhaps lacking in reference to the correlation between variables.	Results are compared with those found in the <i>Literature Review</i> . Consideration is given to whether the results converge with, clarify, or contradict past findings and a rationale is included. A thorough correlation between demographic variables and other variables is identified.
Consider Implications	No explanations provided.	An explanation is given regarding past and future research but little or no reflection is given to how study attributes to existing literature.	An explanation is provided although not thoroughly. Reflection is present but seemingly vague—lacks specificity.	An organized and thoughtful explanation is given for what the project adds to previous research and guides further investigation. A reflection on how this research may contribute to existing literature is included.
Humility – Limitation Subsection	Chapter makes no reference to the study's shortcomings.	Chapter refers to the study's shortcomings but to a limited extent – only certain aspects (such as design or reliability) are addressed.	Chapter addresses most (but not all) the study's shortcomings. Variables have been considered as alternative explanations but have not been completely identified and/or analyzed. No mention of limitations to instrumental measures.	Chapter reflects on the limitations and shortcomings of the design, external validity, reliability, and selection of statistical analysis. Internal and external variables have been considered as alternative explanations and any problems associated with data have been thoroughly identified and explained. Limitations to measures have been identified and explained.
Comments on Future Direction	No mention of future research.	The need for future research is included yet the discussion is vague and does not address other fields of research.	Recommendations are made and consideration is given to how this research might be continued. However, there is little to no discussion of the potential use of the study.	Recommendations for using this research in other fields of study are considered and examples of potential uses are given. Consideration is given to how this research might be continued in the future.
Conclusion	Have a basic conclusion to the chapter and thesis	& Re-articulates research question	& Summarize key concepts in chapter	& Provides a profound ending, make it engaging and meaningful to the reader.