

**Sample Dissertation Proposal Outlines (Should Be Confirmed with Advisor)
by Mark Warschauer, 11 January 2010**

These two sample dissertation proposal outlines – one for a standard dissertation and one for a three-article dissertation – are being provided as examples only. There is no standard dissertation proposal outline for the UCI Ph.D. in Education program. Students must consult with their own advisors about what content and format the advisor finds suitable.

Standard Dissertation

I. Introduction

- A. Background (background to the problem)
- B. The Study (briefly introducing the study and research questions)
- C. Significance (briefly explaining who your study will be of value to and why)

II. Conceptual Framework (situates your work within a conceptual framework, explains key constructs, introduces or clarifies any theoretical models involves, and situations your work within prior theory and research on the question; begin with an introductory paragraph introducing the elements of the conceptual framework and conclude with a summation that helps review the need for your study and thus transitions to the methodology)

III. Methodology

- A. Overall Research Approach (with justification and citations of other research using that approach or to theorists of that approach) [usually needed for qualitative, possibly for quantitative]
- B. Research Sites/Population/Sampling/Subjects/Participants
- C. Instruments/Measures/Sources of Data
- D. Procedures [usually needed for quantitative; less often used in qualitative]
- E. Data Analysis
- F. Trustworthiness and Credibility [usually needed for qualitative, not quantitative]

IV. Timeline (for proposal defense, completion of the dissertation, and dissertation defense)

V. Outline of Dissertation Chapters [optional] (usually Introduction, Conceptual Framework, Methodology, Findings, and Conclusion)

VI. Dissemination [optional] (plans for journal articles, conference presentations, or other forms of dissemination)

VII. References

Three-Article Dissertation

I. Introduction

- A. Background (background to the problem)
- B. The Studies (briefly introducing the collection of studies and overall research questions)
- C. Significance (briefly explaining who your dissertation will be of value to and why)

II. Conceptual Framework (situates your work within a conceptual framework, explains key constructs, introduces or clarifies any theoretical models involves, and situations your work within prior theory and research on the question; begin with an introductory paragraph introducing the elements of the conceptual framework and conclude with a summation that helps review the need for your study and thus transitions to the methodology)

III. Methodology

- A. Overall Research Approach (with justification and citations of other research using that approach or to theorists of that approach) [optional]
- B. Overall Research Site or Population (if this is consistent across the three studies) [optional]
- C. Study A
 - i. Research Approach
 - ii. Research Sites/Population/Sampling/Subjects/Participants
 - iii. Instruments/Measures/Sources of Data
 - iv. Procedures [usually needed for quantitative; less often used in qualitative]
 - v. Data Analysis
 - vi. Trustworthiness and Credibility [usually needed for qualitative, not quantitative]
- D. Study B
 - i. Research Approach
 - ii. Research Sites/Population/Sampling/Subjects/Participants
 - iii. Instruments/Measures/Sources of Data
 - iv. Procedures [usually needed for quantitative; less often used in qualitative]
 - v. Data Analysis
 - vi. Trustworthiness and Credibility [usually needed for qualitative, not quantitative]

- E. Study C
 - i. Research Approach
 - ii. Research Sites/Population/Sampling/Subjects/Participants
 - iii. Instruments/Measures/Sources of Data
 - iv. Procedures [usually needed for quantitative; less often used in qualitative]
 - v. Data Analysis
 - vi. Trustworthiness and Credibility [usually needed for qualitative, not quantitative]
- IV. Timeline (for proposal defense, completion of the dissertation, and dissertation defense)
- V. Outline of Dissertation Chapters [optional] (Usually Introduction, Conceptual Framework, Study A, Study B, Study, C, and Conclusion) (Methodology will be integrated into each of the three Study chapters; umbrella information about Methodology can be integrated into the Introduction or the Conceptual Framework or included in an additional chapter inserted after the Conceptual Framework)
- VI. Dissemination [optional] (plans for journal articles, conference presentations, or other forms of dissemination)
- VII. References