

Structure of the Research Paper for the PGP Masters Project

MIT Winter 2014

ABSTRACT (group authorship):

- Although the abstract will come first in your paper, it is written *last*. You need to write the entire paper in order to know what to say in your abstract.
- For information about the content and structure of an abstract, see guidelines for “Informational abstract” at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/656/1/>.
- For further examples of content of abstract, examine examples of abstracts in the research you read.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS & RATIONALE (group authorship)

- Statement of the central research question this paper will address.
- Rationale—Why is this research question important to the educational community? Any particular issues, current events, or differences of opinion that make this investigation particularly timely?
- Intro to each of the sections (i.e. each person’s focus) and how the sections relate to the larger issue/concept of the paper. *Note: Important definitions explained here or along the way as appropriate.*

SECTION 2: REVIEWS OF THE RESEARCH (Individual authorship)

Each paper will have sub-sections focused on a particular aspect of the larger research question written by each individual within the group (i.e. if there are three people in the group, there would be 3 sub-sections). Each sub-section would include the following parts.

A. Intro to investigation of this aspect of the research question:

- Re-statement of your particular research question and its relationship to your group’s research question.
- Personal rationale – learning objective.
- Method of searching for and identifying articles for the literature review (search engine, key words, etc – see pages 102-3 in Mertens for example).
- Introduction to theme of the studies in this section. Preview types of findings relevant to your question (e.g. types of interventions, strategies). Patterns in types/design/sample of studies.

Review of 5-10 studies (at least 5 need to personally critiqued vs. with the PLC group). For each review, you will do the following:

- Identify (i) the purpose of the study; (ii) the finding(s) of the study; (iii) type of study (research design); and (iv) why the study was relevant to the investigation of your specific question.
- Describe the part of the study that helps to inform your question (e.g. the materials used, intervention, etc).
- Spider map to illustrate the conclusion you can legitimately draw (or not draw) about your research question from the study given 3-4 features of the study. For example: (i) the type of study; (ii) how it was done; (iii) what was/wasn’t measured or controlled for, etc.
- Explain the conclusion.
- Explain why/how those 3-4 features of the study influence the conclusions you can draw.
- Explain how this conclusion informs your thinking about your research question.

B. Summary of the findings as they relate to your research question.

C. Two to three implications for next steps in your practice informed by the literature and research you read.

This section has several purposes: (i) If your assessment of the research allows, you will name and describe a pedagogical practice you will try next quarter. (ii) You should also name what else you need to investigate

further to be more certain of the type of strategy you'd use and who/what it benefits; and (iii) how you plan to investigate it.

SECTION 3: Summary of Insights *(group authorship)*

- For this FINAL conclusion of the WHOLE paper, once again, summarize the purpose of the paper, of each of the sections and the main findings from each of the subsections
- Then list the key insights your group gained from the investigation. To write this final section of the paper you will need to discuss and deliberate as a group about the most important findings and the insights you gained from these findings about your group's research area.

“From this review of the literature, we have collectively come to realize that _____”

“As three new teachers heading into our first year of teaching, we now plan to _____ because ____

“(make sure plans have explicit connection to synthesis of research).”

- Remember, in a conclusion, you CANNOT introduce new ideas that have not been addressed previously--so don't go off on a wild hair here. Stick to what you have mentioned in the previous pages and leave us with a hopeful note.

SECTION 4: APPENDIX

Chart of the studies you reviewed that summarizes key features of the study. For example:

Research Question of studies you and your group investigated	Findings (i) Summary (ii) Significant?	Design (i) qual/quant; (ii) type of study	Sample	Definitions & strategies for measuring important outcome variables	Steps of study/ intervention etc.	<i>[we will provide you a template of the complete chart with the rest of the categories]</i>	APA citation
<i>study 1</i>							
<i>study 2</i>							
<i>study 3</i>							
.							
.							
.							
<i>Study #</i>							

The purpose of this chart for you, both as a research group and as writers, is to help you identify and make sense of important parts of the study. The chart should help you to see and describe patterns in the designs, findings and conclusions among the studies you reviewed. These kinds of charts also help the reader understand your written analysis by providing a quick overview of the research.

Professional Development workshops

~Friday March 14th 9am -4pm~

Each PLC Group presents on 1-3 practices worth experimenting with. They should decide on the most effective format for the presentation to address the prompts and to engage the participants. Every group member needs to have a substantive role in the presentation. Each group will have 25 minutes for the presentation plus 10 minutes Q& A.

Each presentation should address the following questions:

- What is the practice?
- What about the research suggests it's a worthwhile practice?
- What else would you need to investigate further to be convinced that the practice is equitable and would make a difference for student learning.
- 1-2 examples that illustrate how they as a teacher can make use of the practice in their classrooms next quarter. Possible formats:
 - Presenters choose one practice and show ways that it can be applied in the different contexts of their next student teaching (e.g. ELA, Science, Visual Arts).
 - Presenters each choose a practice.