The Doctoral Dissertation Process:
The Role of The Director, the Committee Members, and the Candidate

School of Education, Regent University

School of Education Faculty

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The doctoral dissertation is a vibrant and challenging endeavor, which affords the candidate an opportunity to become a doctor during this wonderful process of growth and original research. It also allows the director and committee members to learn from the candidate and to provide guidance based on their expertise and doctoral interests. The dissertation process is often multifaceted yet inspiring; however, the appropriate topic, director, and committee members can drastically improve this process for all concerned, whilst the candidate becomes a doctor and conducts viable and valuable original research.

The ***dissertation*** is an endeavor where the candidate conducts original research under the guidance of the director and the committee members – this original research needs to be identified through gaps in the literature and appropriately conveyed in writing in a dissertation proposal, which will act as the recipe for the research. The following caveats will illustrate the appropriate roles and processes of the doctoral dissertation. This document is organized in the following manner:

1. Dissertation process
2. Dissertation director
3. The role of the candidate
4. Overview of the dissertation proposal process
5. Overview of the proposal defense
6. Overview of the dissertation research process
7. Dissertation defense and final processes
8. Academic decorum during this process

Dissertation Process

The doctoral student becomes a *doctoral **candidate*** upon successful completion of the EFND 906 A, the prospectus course. The prospectus course has taken the place of the comprehensive examinations that were previously a precursor to doctoral candidacy – this battery of examinations has been supplanted by the prospectus course in an endeavor to alleviate stressors associated with doctoral examinations. When the prospectus course has been successfully completed, particulars of the dissertation proposal may include aspects of this prospectus. One premise of the prospectus course is for the director and the candidate to begin working through the thinking process of constructing a viable and valuable dissertation topic and resultant proposal.

The overall process of the dissertation includes several important caveats that must be followed precisely for the candidate to have a successful and fruitful endeavor. The process begins with the completion of EFND 906A as mentioned previously when the student becomes a doctoral candidate.

For students who have successfully defended their dissertation, but still have editing to be accomplished, they must be continuously enrolled until graduation. During the editing process, there is a course called EFND 908 Dissertation Editing. It is fee-based and students who are not yet in ProQuest must be enrolled in ENFD 908 until publication in ProQuest and graduation.

1. The director of the dissertation will likely be the concentration or program director unless otherwise deemed to be a more appropriate fit for this dutyThe director will assume the title of a chair when a committee has been assigned by the director – then the director may be referred to as the committee chair.
2. Once a director has been assigned by program director proxy, the candidate should allow the director or chair to direct this process. The candidate is required to be malleable and accept the guidance of the director so the research endeavor will be successful.
3. The role of the dissertation director is largely formulated by the conscious evaluation of the type and frequency of direction the individual candidate may require and their specific needs. Some particulars regarding the types and frequency of interactions will follow:
   a. A dissertation director may ask for a meeting from the outset of this process while others may already have worked closely with the candidate during the prospectus course. Some directors will begin the process with a telephone call with the candidate regarding their professional process of directing the proposal from the outset. Others may provide written guidance regarding how their direction will provide optimum guidance for the specific candidate.
   b. The dissertation director will take a leadership role in how and when the document is presented for construction, review, and direction. Some directors may require weekly sessions via telephone or some other electronic avenue to provide guidance and direction while others may prefer less formal interactions based on the needs of the candidate.
   c. Some directors will require the candidate to construct the proposal in a systematic format such as beginning with chapter one particulars - others may have a preference to have the candidate construct chapter two (literature review) first so the need for the study is clearly conveyed. Some directors may require the candidate to begin writing two to four pages so they may review the document with the candidate and essentially build the proposal with the candidate. Other directors may take a less prescriptive posture and have the candidate work in a more constructivist manner with only minimal supervision. All of these potential scenarios are based on the individual learner modalities of the candidate and the leadership style of the director.
   d. It is essential for all candidates to talk with their director so they may begin the process with that specific director. Most directors lead their candidates differently but the success and productivity of the candidate is at the forefront of all of the dissertation directors at The School of Education. In essence, we all want you to be productive and successful, but that begins with allowing the director to direct this wonderful process.
   e. Please know that all of the dissertation directors are seasoned scholars who have the success of the candidate as their paramount consideration.
   f. The School of Education has constructed a highly productive team of scholars to help directors and candidates with this process through a viable and easily accessible mentoring program. This program is directed by Dr. Edith Britton (editbri@regent.edu) and it consists of pairing candidates with seasoned scholars who are familiar with the dissertation proposal process and the dissertation in its entirety. Peer mentors and dissertation coaches have volunteered to participate in this program. They represent seasoned students

who have already found strategies for success and can also provide encouragement and guidance.

Mentors are experienced in addressing basic questions about the program, helping learners become acclimated to the learning objectives in the School of Education, and offering prayer support throughout the learning process.

Dissertation mentors will support dissertation students as they embark upon their research journey. The mentors will provide prayer support, organizational strategies for research and writing, feedback on the dissertation process, advice for finishing the dissertation process, and social-emotional support in the form of encouragement and accountability.

Both mentors and protégés will evaluate the program periodically through surveys to ensure satisfaction and program effectiveness. All new graduate students in the School of Education are eligible to apply for mentoring and coaching. Current students should submit a <u>Peer Mentoring Program Application</u> through the MyRegent Portal.

4. In some instances, a candidate may choose to have another director assume the responsibilities as their dissertation mentor or director – if this is applicable there is a precise process that must be followed to adopt an alternate director. The Change of Director protocol follows:
   a. Chair and student must participate in a conference in person, over Zoom, or over the phone.
   b. An email documenting the impasse of the issue will be written by the chair and submitted to the Deans.
   c. The chair must submit the steps he or she has taken to rectify the situation. This can be in the form of an email with the Deans copied for the records of all involved.
   d. A committee of peers must review the documentation. The committee will include the Deans and one other faculty member who is not involved in the change of chair.
   e. The committee will deliver the resolution via email to the chair and the student. If a change of chair is approved, the student will complete this form.
   f. The School of Education will keep a digital copy of the signed form in a designated place in the SCHEDU M Drive.
   g. There is a specific change of director form that must be completed to record the change of director.

Role of the Candidate

The role of the candidate is to be subject to the directions of the director based largely upon his/her direction modalities. One universal avenue is for the candidate to follow the directions of the director implicitly throughout this process. The dissertation director has vast experience in the successful negotiation of this wonderful process, which ultimately

enhances the success of the candidate in a kind and productive manner. Some precise instructions for the candidate follow:

1. Begin this process by having a conversation with the director regarding the process, topic, and prospective timeline.
2. Please consider an accurate assessment of the amount of work to be done when considering a viable timeline for the research and the entire process.
3. After the topic has been discussed in detail the director will provide guidance related to the value of the dissertation topic and the potential for a successful research endeavor.
4. As the candidate begins to construct the proposal, the candidate and director should be in contact regarding the particulars of the proposed research.
5. The design of the research and the viability of the study should be considered and discussed at length to ascertain the potential for original and valuable research.
6. The candidate should follow the timeline regarding reviews as directed by the dissertation director.
7. It is incumbent upon the candidate to read the document and continue to refine the writing according to APA standards and ascertain grammatical and agreement accuracy during review periods with the director.
8. The director may require two weeks between reviews of the document unless otherwise agreed upon.
9. The candidate should address the director with academic decorum during the process, with the director acting similarly during this process of fiduciary interactions.
10. The mode of communication will be utilized through Regent University e-mail unless the director agrees to other means such as telephone or text messages.
11. Please be malleable and allow the director to direct this process, so it will be fruitful and create new knowledge during this wonderful process.

Overview of The Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Process

An overview of this process begins with a completed prospectus, and the candidate begins working with the director on the proposal. The director should begin to have conversations with the candidate regarding the appropriate nature of the proposed research in concert with other particulars related to the viability of the research proposal, appropriate methodology, appropriate research population; and potential timeline. The proposal will contain some aspects of the prospectus but it will consist of chapters one, two; and three – chapter one is the overview of the study, chapter two is the review of the literature (which drives the study), and chapter three is the methodology. The proposal template will be provided by the dissertation director.

The dissertation proposal process will include:

1. Process of the construction of the proposal with the candidate following the direction of the director precisely. The director has the experience and the scholarly credentials to advise the candidate regarding the timeline, the viability of the study, statistical treatments, and overall methodology.

2. During the construction of the proposal, the director will advise the candidate through this process. It is imperative for the candidate to follow the direction of the director throughout this process. Renditions of the proposal should be presented to the director via Regent University e-mail in an agreed-upon format, such as a Word document or other decided-upon program. Since directors are working with multiple candidates simultaneously, the turn-around time for proposal reviews should be targeted at roughly two to three weeks. These time frames may differ depending upon the director, but this is a guide for review response.
3. Once the proposal has been constructed through as many iterations as necessary, and the director is satisfied the proposal is ready for defense, the director will begin to assemble an appropriate dissertation committee based upon their availability to perform as a dissertation committee member; and their expertise related to the topic of inquiry.
4. When the dissertation proposal is deemed ready for defense by the director, the dissertation director will contact the committee members and ascertain their interest and correctness of fit for the study. There may be avenues for the candidate to suggest outside readers for their committee, but it is ultimately the decision of the director whether or not to include outside readers.
5. The dissertation committee members will include two readers from The Regent University School of Education and the dissertation Director. The dissertation director now becomes the Dissertation Committee Chair when there is a committee in place.
6. The dissertation chair will send the final version of the dissertation proposal to the committee members for their perusal. Once the committee members agree the document is ready for a defense, the dissertation chair will begin to schedule the proposal defense.
7. The proposal defense may take place in person or, via electronic avenues such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Collaborate, and conference call mechanisms.
8. Once the dissertation proposal defense has been agreed upon and scheduled the candidate will defend the proposal.

Overview of The Proposal Defense

1. The proposal defense will take place in the agreed-upon avenues mentioned above depending upon several connectivity and time constraint particulars. The process of the proposal defense will differ depending upon the dissertation chair and the committee members, and it should last between one and two hours or as appropriate. The process will include the following:
   a. Gathering of the director, committee members; and the candidate in the agreed upon setting.
   b. The chair will open the proposal defense prayerfully with introductions and any comments from the candidate and the committee members.
   c. Some dissertation chairs will require the candidate to make a formal presentation such as a PowerPoint Presentation, while others may simply

invite the candidate to present the study particulars in a more unstructured environment.

d. Some dissertation chairs will invite the committee members to ask any questions or make comments during the presentation while others may choose to wait until the presentation has been completed by the candidate. Your dissertation chair will provide the scenario for the candidate and committee members in advance usually.

e. Once the presentation and the questions ensue, the dissertation chair will take notes of any alterations, adjustments, or suggestions made and agreed upon by the committee during the defense. The defense may conclude with the candidate stepping away so the chair and the committee members may discuss the performance, or the chair and the committee may elect to continue with the results without the candidate stepping away momentarily.

f. Once the chair and the committee members have engaged in conversation regarding the proposal; and the defense of the proposal by the candidate, the following avenues will be ascertained: pass of the proposal defense with no revisions, pass of the proposal with minor revisions to be reviewed by the dissertation chair, pass of the proposal with major revisions to be reviewed and approved by the committee member(s); or fail of the proposal.

g. Once the proposal defense has been successfully negotiated and passed accordingly, the dissertation chair will provide the Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Defense Form for the candidate and the committee members to sign. This will be provided along with any notes and instructions from the committee members to be implemented accordingly.

h. Once the forms have been filled out and any adjustments to the proposal have been successfully addressed, the forms will be sent to Ms. Diane Morgan so she may garner approval and signatures from The Dean.

i. When the dissertation proposal defense has been completed the candidate will go through the Human Subjects Review (HSR) process, which may be located in the Doctoral handbook. Once the HSR approval has been garnered, the candidate may begin to conduct research.

j. It is imperative for the candidate to continue to involve the chair and the committee members during any research activities since research often entails aspects that are out of the control of the researcher. Guidance from the committee members may alleviate any stressors or potential problems during the research.

Overview of The Dissertation Research Process

1. Once the proposal has been successfully defended, the dissertation research will commence. The candidate will begin implementing the particulars proposed in chapter three of the proposal according to the proposal defense.

2. As the research ensues, the candidate will begin constructing the two final chapters of the dissertation, which are chapter four (findings) and chapter five (results).

3. Once the dissertation has been completed and the chair is satisfied with the final product, the final defense will be scheduled in a similar fashion as the proposal defense.

Dissertation Defense and Final Processes

1. The final defense of the dissertation will transpire in a similar fashion as the proposal defense. The committee members will most probably be the same as during the proposal defense, but in some instances, they may be altered or substituted by the chair or at the discretion of The Dean.
2. The final defense will ensue in a similar fashion as the proposal defense, with the candidate discussing the method and the findings along with implications for future research.
3. The performance of the candidate will be evaluated according to the same standards, where the defense of the document and the document itself will be discussed.
4. Once the final defense has been successfully negotiated, the candidate will be required to continue the editing process through Rose Bethard, the School of Education editor.
5. The particulars associated with the editing process will be provided by either the chair or by Diane Morgan when the signature page is garnered in similar proceedings as the proposal defense documentation.

Academic Decorum During these Processes

Academic Decorum
Academic decorum in its basic sense is a posture of respect for the academy as well as the students and colleagues within the academy. Attitudes associated with academic decorum include genuine respect for students and other faculty members – as well as a profound respect for the academic endeavor itself. In essence, the academy is a place where wonderful changes occur in the lives of people, and professors have the opportunity to influence these changes with every interaction.

Behaviors Associated with Academic Decorum During the Dissertation Process Maintaining mannerly interactions (orally and in writing) while matriculating in a post-graduate program is expected. Doctoral-level etiquette during communications with professors and colleagues is required. Christ-like behaviors when communicating with others align with the Christian values that Regent University espouses.

Assuming the Responsibility of Becoming a Doctor
1. Learners will assume responsibility for their learning and professional conduct.
2. Manners and academic decorum are learned behaviors, which should be practiced.
3. Becoming a doctor includes how one represents oneself as a scholarly professional during the process.

4. Kindness is not a weakness.

Dissertation Proposal and The Contents

Please become familiar with the School of Education Doctoral handbook as well as the formatting section present within this handbook. You should also follow APA 7th Edition particulars related to the construction and use of tables & figures. It is also incumbent upon the candidate to ascertain if any alterations to the formatting have occurred during the construction of the document. It is the responsibility of the candidate, not the director, to act as the editor of the proposal and the dissertation. *Please do not send your director a document with grammatical errors, APA errors, or any other written errors.* It is not scholarly, nor is it appropriate, to send untidy documents at the doctoral level.

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Problem Stage

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The first phase of a dissertation is the problem stage in which you articulate an education or organizational development problem that concerns you enough to want to devote a considerable amount of time and energy to explaining or solving. A problem is one of three things: (a) something that is happening that should not be happening, (b) something that is not happening that should be happening, or (c) something this is happening, should be happening, but is not happening at the desired level. To help you, and ultimately your reader, understand the problem, you need to find a theory or multiple theories that explain and/or predict the problem, the results, or the solution. You may have variables from one or more theories that interact together to form or explain the problem. Once you determine the problem and theory it is time to move on to the prewriting stage.

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Prewriting Stage: Getting to the Stage of Sage

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It is essential that you become an expert in the area of your dissertation content, method, and analysis and to do that you have to read. By 'read' I mean everything in the field, but remember that you may only need to include in your dissertation a small portion of what you read, and to determine what you need you will have to know it all. By 'know' I mean to be so intimate with the material surrounding the problem, the theory or theories, the method, and the analysis that you could stop somebody on the street and spend two to three hours talking about the topic – non-stop, with no notes. You should be able to answer every question asked by the 'listener-on-the-street' without referring to any printed document or notes. You should be able to tie concepts together and show variables and concepts relate one to another.

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Writing Stage: Leading the Reader Through the Journey

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Create a Microsoft Word file and set up the format of margins, font, and headers you will need. Insert all the front matter pages for the proposal so that you will begin to think in proposal format. You will find chapter six in the APA manual, 7th edition, helpful in setting up the dissertation word-processing file. In addition to the front matter pages noted in the APA 7th edition, please add a front matter page (section) for definitions.

When you are ready to write, it will be helpful for both you and me if you build an outline for the dissertation, and then write each subsection in sequence and allow me to interact with you at each subsection. The reason for this is simply that this is most likely the first dissertation that you have written, and there is no reason for you to expect that you have a good handle on what to do. Thus, by taking the writing process one step at a time, we can establish a pattern and style of writing that will allow you to finish quickly and with the least amount of frustration.

When citing the work of others, it will make your dissertation clearer and stronger if you begin the sentence with the cited source. Here is an example: "Wolff, Marsnikn Tacey and Nichols (1983) maintain that listening is the "orphan of education" (p. 4) " It is clear that the writer is providing information that came from Wolff, Marsnikn, Tracey, and Nichols rather than from the dissertation writer.

Tables

Please see the example in APA 7th edition and review the information in the APA 7th edition. In the example table below please note the table number and title. Tables are numbered consecutively from 1 to X for the whole dissertation – not by chapter. The table title is placed directly below the table number. Rules occur at the top and bottom of the heading row and then the last rule is placed under the last row. Numbers are typed with decimal alignment.

Table 1

CEM Leadership Ratings Distribution

RATING	TRANSFORMATIONAL	TRANSACTIONAL	LAISSEZ-FAIRE
4.0 - 3.0	42	0	0
2.9 - 2.0	16	28	0
1.9 – 1.0	0	29	15
0.9 – 0.0	0	1	43

Formatting

It will help your writing and thinking if you build the styles in MS Word to fit what you will need in your dissertation and assign shortcut keys to the styles so that you can quickly apply the right style as you type. The styles that you will need include:

1. Normal

2. Title

3. Abstract

4. Level 1 heading

5. Level 3 heading

6. Level 5 heading

7. Tables

8. Long quotes

9. Reference

Front Matter Pages

See APA 7th for the list of needed front matter pages and definition of terms.

Chapter One: Introduction

Build an outline for chapter 1 that includes the following sections:
1. Introduction (no heading) that presents your rationale for the study

2. Background

3. Research problem

4. Research questions and hypotheses

5. Study assumptions

6. Study delimitations and limitations

7. Definition of terms

8. Organization of the study

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter 2 will be written after chapter 1 is finished and approved. Chapter 2 will mirror chapter 1 and will provide more detail, much like an appendix provides more depth for the reader who wants to go on. In chapter 1 you will reference the literature, and in chapter 2 you will present the literature.

In chapter 2, every element presented must have a base in chapter 1 and every subsection (preferably every paragraph) must point the reader back to your proposed study. Use statements like "if this is true this proposed study should find. . . " or "this is why this proposed study will look at . . ."

The hypotheses must emerge as summative statements to subsections in the lit review and then be recapped at the end of chapter 2. An example of a hypothesis as a summative statement is:

> Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) cited in their research, which sampled 2563 employees in various work organizations, that member commitment to organizational identity is significant as to whether or not organizational identity can be operationalized within the organization. Similarly, Sheldon's (1971) empirical research surveyed Ph.D. scientists in a private laboratory and found that organizational identity is operationalized in situations where members invested their talents and energies in the organization. If this is true, then in this proposed study it should be found that the organizational identity attributes of membership, similarity, and loyalty are organizational attributes that change with organizational

service length. The null hypothesis states that the organizational
identity attributes of membership, similarity, and loyalty are
organizational attributes that do not change with organizational
service length. As well, if this is true, then in this proposed study, it
should also be found female and male organizational members
perceive organizational identity equally. The null hypothesis states
that female and male organizational members do not perceive
organizational identity equally.

The paragraph above is also a good example of how the literature review sections and
paragraphs tie back to the proposed study.

To help show how chapter two builds on chapter one, note the following paragraph from
a student's chapter one:

Recently, however, specific theoretical principles of forgiveness
have been applied to workplace conflict and the restoration of
relationships in organizations (Butler, 1997; Droll, 1984; Levin
1992; Enright, Gassin, Longinovic, Loudon, 1994; Nelson, 1992).
According to Bradfield, Aquino, and Stanwyck, (1997), forgiveness
is another response for organizational leaders today. Similarly,
Nelson (2001) believes that when a leader utilizes forgiveness, a
climate of compassion and a place where everyone feels free to try
new things and make mistakes is established for others. Given the
problematic nature of revenge, forgiveness may be a significant
alternative to holding onto one's anger or acting on one's anger in an
organizational environment (Butler, 1997). Forgiveness can be a
way to reconcile individuals who are experiencing the bitterness of
interpersonal hurts and injustices (McCullough & Worthington,
1994a). McCullough and Worthington, 1994a, acknowledge that
forgiveness may be considered a problem-solving strategy used to
reduce negative feelings of anger and resentment and to reduce
negative judgment of the offender. Therefore, forgiveness may be a
way of moderating workplace conflict and providing positive
leadership (Butler, 1997). Little attention has been given to the
individual characteristics of leaders who employ forgiveness as a
problem-solving strategy in response to conflict in the workplace
(Butler, 1997; McCullough & Worthington, 1994a), thus using
forgiveness as a strategic leadership practice.

In chapter two, there would be a section called 'Forgiveness' and each of the studies cited
in this paragraph in chapter one would be presented in more detail and tied back to this
present proposal. Here is an example:

Chapter 1

The topic of organizational commitment is not new to the field of
organizational behavior and its antecedents and outcomes have been
considered from nearly every perspective in over 500 studies since

the mid-1970s (Eby, Freeman, Rush, & Lance, 1999). These studies have ranged from the early work of Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian (1974), who investigated the relationship between commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover to perceived structure, process, and climate (DeCotiis & Summers, 1987) to the more contemporary investigations of commitment and human resource management practices (Meyer & Smith, 2000) as well as leadership (McNeese-Smith, 1996; Arnold, Barling, Kelloway, 2001). Despite the extensive research on this topic, the relationship between commitment and organizational culture has received little attention in the literature. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) conducted a meta-analysis of the antecedents, and consequences of commitment and did not find sufficient research to address culture and its relationship to commitment. More recently, Lok and Crawford (2001) maintain an antecedent of commitment that "has remained relatively free from empirical investigation in organizational culture" (p. 595). This apparent lack of research provides the impetus for this dissertation. Thus, the purpose of this study has been to investigate the relationship between organizational culture and commitment to broaden and contribute to the understanding of these concepts.

Chapter 2

The concept of organizational commitment as an important component in the discipline of organizational behavior has been studied extensively in literally hundreds of studies since the mid 1970s (Eby, Freeman, Rush, & Lance, 1999). These studies have attempted to understand the relationship between organizational commitment and various work–related variables. For example, Eby et al. conducted a meta-analysis of the commitment literature and found evidence of relationships between affective commitment and several work-related variables such as "...absenteeism, turnover, job satisfaction, job involvement, and leaders-subordinate relations" (p. 463). The Eby et al. research focused on identifying the intrinsic motivators of commitment and found the content of a person's job as well as the work context (e.g. satisfaction) could influence attitudes like affective commitment. This study also reinforced the idea that organizational commitment is a complex topic that may influence and be influenced by many aspects of organizational life. The research about commitment has encompassed a broad range of topics including job satisfaction and turnover, structure, and climate, human resource management practices, and leadership to name just a few. Poppens (2000) summarizes the feeling of many by asserting "Higher organizational commitment produces higher performance" (p. 42). Therefore, the question is: are there other variables that should be studied in relation to commitment? Some examples of this research will reveal some of what has been discovered about

commitment to date and begin to demonstrate the need for further research in this area.

Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian (1974) presented what is considered foundational commitment research by investigating the relationship between commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover. According to Porter et al. commitment, in the context of an organization, is concerned with "...the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (p. 604). Further, commitment has three characteristics including "(a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; (c) a definite desire to maintain organizational membership" (p. 604). The authors conducted a longitudinal study over a period of ten and a half months with a range of 29-48 new workers in a west coast psychiatric facility. Further, they empirically tested their model and found organizational commitment more easily isolated than other variables like job satisfaction. This discovery undergirds the belief that commitment can be isolated, its relationships with other variables can also be studied. Porter et al. also found an individual's attitudes about commitment were predictive of turnover. That is employees who ultimately leave the organization had less favorable attitudes about the organization than those who stayed. Commitment then has been studied as an independent variable.

Commitment has also been studied as a dependent variable. DeCotiis and Summers (1987) for example, conducted research with 367 managers of a nationally known restaurant company and concluded, "commitment is central to organizational life" (p. 467). They also found that commitment was related to perceived structure, process, and climate. Interestingly, the perception of structure was negatively correlated to commitment particularly as it related to centralization, role conflict, and role ambiguity. Processes however were positively correlated to commitment most clearly in the area of decision-making and communication. Climate, in the form of cohesiveness and trust in the organization, was found to correlate positively with commitment. In this regard, DeCotiis and Summers observe that a person who has goals consistent with the organization's goals should have high levels of organizational commitment. This study is important in two ways. First, it introduces the idea that a person's perception may influence their level of commitment and second, this study provides the first evidence that commitment and organizational influences such as climate are linked. Although it is argued in this research that climate and culture are similar constructs but not the same, the question is raised as to the influence culture and culture perceptions may have on an individual's level of commitment to an organization.

Meyer and Smith (2000) specifically examined the relationship between commitment and employees' view of human resource management practices such as performance appraisal, benefits, training, and career development. 281 employees from various organizations participated in this study. A relationship was found between affective and normative commitment and human resource management practices however, the relationship was mediated by employee "perceptions of procedural justice and organizational support" (p. 327). This study is important to the present research because it again raises the question about the influence perception may have on other variables including commitment.

Leadership has also been a focus of commitment research. McNeese-Smith (1996) studied the relationship between the leadership practices of 41 department managers and job satisfaction and organizational commitment in two Seattle-based hospitals. Using the Kouzes and Posner (1990) Leadership Practices Inventory, (as cited in McNeese-Smith, 1996), the researcher found low to moderate positive correlations between leader behaviors and "employee's productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment" (p. 169). Arnold, Barling, Kelloway (2001) studied 177 MBA students at a Canadian business school to determine if transformational leadership predicts trust, team efficacy, and organizational commitment. Arnold et al. found a causal relationship between transformational leadership and trust, team efficacy, and commitment. Both of these studies exemplify the breadth to which commitment has been studied in a variety of settings. The Arnold et al. study also posits the existence of variables predictive of organizational commitment. This is an important consideration since this research is focused on investigating a causal relationship between culture and commitment.

These studies help us understand commitment both as an antecedent and as a consequence of other work–related variables. What is fascinating about commitment research is the relative absence of studies that address the relationship between commitment and organizational culture. Both Mathieu and Zajac (1990) and Eby et al. (1999) used meta-analytic methods to study the antecedents, and consequences of commitment and did not find sufficient research to address culture and its relationship to commitment. Lok and Crawford (2001) reinforced this position by maintaining an antecedent of commitment that has not been empirically tested to any noteworthy degree is organizational culture. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between organizational culture and commitment to broaden and contribute to the understanding of these concepts.

The key elements of a literature review include:

- Historical Background – when did the phenomenon come into the literature and how have thought, values, and language about this phenomenon evolved and changed historically? What litigation or educational decisions have impacted these changes?

- Theoretical Foundations – what are the theoretical foundations for your study and how do these foundations help the reader to understand the phenomenon and inform best practice?

- Phenomenon – what aspect of the phenomenon are you researching, what gap or problem does the study address, and why is it important to investigate this topic?

- Justification for the Study – why is the study needed, who will benefit from it, and who may be disturbed by it?

Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter 3 begins with describing the *setting, population, and sample* for your study. It is necessary to show the reader what population you wish to generalize your findings to, then show the reader the frame from which you will draw a sample, and then show the reader how you will get the sample. Let the reader see the likelihood of getting the sample size that you need and what you will do to get the sample. A backup plan in case of a low response rate is worthy of inclusion. You will discuss their demographics and describe how you will recruit them to participate in your study.

The *type of study* should be defined, and the methods for conducting this type of study should be clearly explained. The justification for utilizing this specific methodology should be based on the literature review and theoretical foundations discussed in Chapter 2.

The *operational definitions* are provided to ensure the reader and participants have a clear understanding of any potentially ambiguous language or technical terminology utilized in your instrumentation or participant instructions. These definitions should be supported with the literature.

Next you will discuss the *instrumentation* that you will utilize to conduct your research. This could include but is not limited to a survey, a questionnaire, or interview questions. The instrumentation that you choose to utilize for your study should be justified through the literature and similar studies.

The *procedures* will reveal the exact details of how you will conduct your research. This section needs to be written so clearly that someone unfamiliar with your study would be able to follow the directions you provide and replicate your study exactly as you did. It is helpful to utilize the Smart Art function in MS Word to create a flow chart that represents the step-by-step methods utilized to conduct your research.

Then the *timeline* will communicate to your reader how long you believe it will take you to conduct your research, specifically how long you will be interacting with your participants to conduct your research.

The *data analysis* procedures are discussed with clarity and precision to ensure that someone could replicate the data analysis processes that you utilized for this study. The data analysis procedures would benefit from a flow chart from the Smart Art function in MS Word to help your reader follow each step. Things to consider when writing this section include justifying which methods you are using and why they are the best methods for your study.

Finally, the *threats to validity* section describes how the study assumptions, limitations, and delimitations from chapter one were addressed to strengthen the validity and reliability of your findings. The methods you use to address the threats to validity must be supported by the literature.

Chapter Four: Report of Findings

Chapter 4 opens with a brief overview of the sample population and the data collection methods used in the study.

The report of the findings is organized by research question/hypothesis and/or tenability of statistical procedure. The findings are reported with examples from the data to support the findings. The report of the findings section only includes the findings, not a discussion about them or what they mean. ****Use an exemplary dissertation as a road map for reporting your findings.*

For quantitative studies, the report of the findings must include an accurate interpretation of the statistical analyses utilized for the study. Students will be wise to follow the examples of reporting the findings in the Rovai, Baker, & Ponton text from EFND 722.

For qualitative studies, the report of the findings will include the analysis of the transcripts and/or data collected, identification of codes and emergent themes, and any connections between the findings and the literature review (including the theoretical foundations) are identified.

After reporting the findings, the *assumptions* from the study are discussed and the methods for addressing the threats to validity are identified.

Finally, a *summary* of the findings and emergent themes are completed to transition to the discussion of the findings in chapter five.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Chapter five begins with an *overview of the findings and/or emergent themes* identified in chapter four. This section should only be a paragraph or two.

The *interpretation of each result* should be provided. This discussion explains what the findings mean, how they compare to the literature review and theoretical foundations, and what impact this has on deepening the understanding of the phenomenon.

Next, the *implications for practice* describe how the study findings inform best practices moving forward in the field. How do these best practices compare to the theoretical foundations that informed best practices in your literature review? If there are discrepancies between your findings and your theoretical foundations, why? What could this mean for future research or for informing best practice moving forward?

The *recommendations for future research* should be informed by the research findings, specifically addressing any gaps or interesting findings from the study that warrant further exploration. Recommendations for future research could include replicating your study on a larger scale to see if it could be generalizable to a larger population, or it could include taking a conceptual framework or model that you developed and testing it for reliability and validity.

A brief discussion on the *threats to validity* and how they were addressed in the research comes next, and the section closes with a summary of what you would have done differently to strengthen the validity and reliability of your findings.

In the *summary,* a reflection of the findings and how they informed best practices are explored. The recommendations for future research and how they could grow the field and improve understanding of the phenomenon are described. Close your dissertation by describing how you hope your research will impact the field.

For the final review, put your work together with the front matter -- use the insert index and table function to build the table of contents, write an abstract that summarizes the whole document, confirm that all the tenses were changed from the future tense of the proposal to past tense of the final dissertation, confirm that all your citations are in the references and that no extra references are in the text, and send to the director for forwarding out to the committee.

In Conclusion

The doctoral dissertation process is a vibrant avenue for growth and the making of colleagues as the candidate becomes a doctor. This process is guided by a dissertation director and committee members who are genuinely vested in the success of the candidate. Please note that all dissertation directors operate to varying degrees, so it should be noted that following the directives of the director is a paramount consideration. This is a wonderful process – please enjoy becoming a doctor.
(Dissertation Template included below).

TITLE OF STUDY

Your Name Here

Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Regent University

May 2020

TITLE OF STUDY
Your Name Here

This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in Education by:

First M.Last, Jr., Ph.D., Committee Member
Associate Professor, School of Education

First M.Last, Jr., Ph.D., Committee Member
Associate Professor, School of Education

First M. Last, Ed.D., Committee Member
Associate Professor, School of Education

Kurt Kreassig, Ed.D.
Dean, School of Education

May 2020

Abstract

Insert abstract in one long paragraph with no indent ==not to exceed 350 words==. It provides a short and comprehensive summary of the study. Use ==1.5 left margin== throughout the document and ==1.0 on the top, right, and bottom margins==. ==Page number starts at the Abstract with iii centered at the bottom of the page==. For the dissertation, follow the guidelines in the Regent University School of Education Post-Master's Handbook and School of Education Dissertation Processing Information sheet.

Dedication

This page is not mandatory. It allows you to dedicate your document to someone in your life.

Acknowledgements

This page is not mandatory. It allows you to acknowledge or express appreciation

for individuals or organizations in your life.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

CHAPTER 1 –INTRODUCTION

Introduce the study. Sample headings and subheadings from the school handbook follow; however, they may differ based on your study. ==Page numbering begins with 1 at the top right-hand corner==.

Background

Describe background of the study.Akdskjnvlkasdlkagsklfnadkls f jadsklfjadsklfjkdlasfjkldsfjdklsjfdklsjfsdkljfdsajf. If you have quotes for 40 words or more, create a blocked quote as follows:

> In general, aasklfj ds,
>
> jfkalsdjgfkladsjgflkdsjfldksafjadklsfjladksfjdlsakfjdklsfjdlskfujklsadfjaklsdjfkldsafjdklsaj
>
> fadklsfjklsadfjasdklfjklsadfjkladsjfldksafjladksjfldksafjldksafjlsadkfja;gjusdfgjadsklfjasd
>
> kljfdasklfgjladrfskjeorwipfgjdslkfjmasdlkaldksruewifjeaswjfsdklfjlsadfkjgalsdfkgjalsfdkg
>
> jadlskjgadfslkg. (Name, 1980, p. 26)

Research Problem

Theories provide asdfjaksefjadskljfgkladsfjkladsjfadklsfjdklsafgjesw qi eujadfjaseieajsileiaesrjaeijrsgnvtu w4g agjswdrsAGrsad.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Following are the research questions posed for the current study:

RQ1:   Is there a . . . ?

RQ2:   Is there a . . . ?

Following are the null hypotheses posed for the current study:

H_1:   There is no statistically significant difference in aggregate mean scores on the
SEQ-C between students based on classroom management type.

H_2:   There is no statistically significant difference in aggregate mean scores on the
SEQ-C between students based on gender.

Study Assumptions

Study Delimitations and Limitations

Definition of Terms

Insert definitions to provide a common understanding of words and concepts examined in the current study. Place terms in order alphabetically or by importance to the study. Italicize the terms, following by a period.

*A word.*This is . . . (Author, 2011).

*Another word.*The shared belief in the ability of a group to achieve shared goals (Author, 2011, p. 246).

*Last work.*This is " . . ." (Author, 2019, p. 2).

Organization of the Study

CHAPTER 2 –REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides a literature review of the topic you are researching. Include appropriate headings and subheadings.

Historical Background

The Beginning

The 1960s

 New concepts introduced.

Asdkfjasklfjfjalsdkfjklsdfjlsadkfjdsalkfjdlsakfjdklsajfklsdfjklsadjfklsadfjlsadkfjsadklfjdsaklfjdsaklfjsdaklfjadslkfjsdklajflsadkjfsadfjadslkfjasdf.

 Controversy.

Askldfgjalskfdjkladsfsadklfjsdkalfjdsaklfjsadklfjeowi;uiorwgjsdalKfgjwatueiowjflidjsfs.

 Resolution. Asfijawefiouewiorjwaefjajwfwaejrfiowejfoiwefiwfgjwjavajruwfgowaeruj o9iwaj oagjwoiwaju gjwa4rt.

Current

Theoretical Foundations

Phenomenon

Insert figure.

*Figure 1.*The figure has a caption. ==The former part is italicized. The latter part is not. If it goes over one line, single space it. End it with a period== (Author, 1977, p. 23).

Justification for the Study

Summary

CHAPTER 3 –METHODOLOGY

Describe the methodology for your study. Sample headings are included.

Setting

Population and Sample

Participants were selected from . . . Table 1 provides participant demographics for the current study. To create the table, use the Insert tab and then the Table tab.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Highest education
Mary	Female	40	High school
Bob	Male	38	Associate's degree
Jenny	Female	47	Bachelor's degree
Ed	Male	32	Master's degree

Type of Study

Operational Definitions

Instrumentation

Procedures

Timeline

Data Analysis

Threats to Validity

CHAPTER 4 –RESULTS

This chapter includes the overall descriptive results of the study.

Overall Descriptive Results

Results by Research Question/Hypothesis, Tenability of Statistical Procedure Assumptions

Summary

CHAPTER 5 –DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Each Result

Study Limitations

Suggestions for Future Research

Implications for Future Research (if applicable)

Implications for Practice (if applicable)

References

Appendix A –Insert Title

Table A1

Title

Variable	*n*	%	*p*

Variable	n	%	p

Table A2

Title

Variable	n	%	p

Appendix B – Insert Title