

**San Jose State University
College of Education**

**Department of Educational
Leadership**

**ACTION RESEARCH
Guidelines**

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE (this is the first page of the report)

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT

AT

NAME OF INSTITUTION

AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

Presented

To

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership

College of Education

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

Focus: Administration and Supervision

Student Name

Date

ABSTRACT (this is the second page of the report)

The abstract is the last writing piece of the report, but it is placed at the very beginning of it. The abstract captures the meaning of the entire study, and its purpose is to interest your readers on the study. It must be written in no more than 150 words and should include the problem, and hints of key findings and main conclusions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS (this is the third page of the report)

List headings, subheadings, and page numbers of each and all the sections of the report.

Section One INTRODUCTION

Headings: Introduction

This introductory section is your "story/spin". Its purpose is to convince the reader that the problem is one worth studying. This section tells the story behind the research intent. It provides the social, economic, and political context to the study; the evidence as to the significance of a problem; the "so what?" It follows a logical organization, leading the reader through the problem, and the study's purpose. It goes from the general to the specific, as a funnel.

Background

- Introduce your problem in global terms.
- Present the larger related issues at the regional, national or state level.
- Define how this affects teaching and learning in general, and in particular how the problem affects equity of access and outcomes.
- Relate the larger issues so far mentioned to the more specific problem at hand.
- Relate the significance of the Action Research Project to the college/university, school or district.
- Keep in mind to always provide the evidence supporting any claim made in this section.

Setting:

- This section contextualizes the problem as to place and people.
- Contains a brief description where the institution is located and its location as to larger organizational units.
- Contains the demographic profile of the institution.

- Provides relevant equity and excellence data so far not cited
- Offers current social, cultural, economic, political context of the institution.

Statement of the Problem

- Summarizes in one or two sentences the problem described above.

Statement of the Purpose

- Describes the intervention.
- Links the problem and the intervention.

Research Question

- Abstracts the problem and purpose of the study in one general question.

Operational Questions

- Define the research question into its variables.
- Determine in concrete, measurable items pertaining to each of the identified variables.

Section Two
DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

Headings: Intervention

This section describes in detail the remedy/solutions created by the researcher, or an existing one, under study. .

Section Three

Review of the Literature

Headings: Review of the Literature

Note that the style used throughout the action research report is the American Psychological Association (APA) latest edition (5th as of the date of writing this guidelines, January 2007)..

Reviewing the literature, whether it is theoretical or/and empirical, helps the researcher to:

1. Build authority on the subject under study
2. Find a new angle, a refreshing perspective to old problems that the literature has covered insufficiently.

The review of the literature is divided into two parts.:

Part One. Annotated Bibliography.

This section is NOT part of the body of the report, but an optional Appendix. The annotated bibliography serves as the foundation of the literature review and is organized empirical and theoretical studies.

Bibliographical empirical studies contain:

1. Problem researched.
2. Purpose of the study
3. Population and sample
4. Key findings.
5. Relation of the study to one's study.

Bibliographical theoretical studies contain:

1. Summary of the central theoretical argument.
2. Problem under discussion.
3. Contribution of such theoretical argument to one's study.

Part Two. Literature Review.

This is a section of the body of the action research report. The review of literature is a meta-analysis based on the annotated bibliography and provides a clear synthesis of the background of the problem as it has been analyzed by researchers and analysts. This review of the literature also discusses the limitations of such literature.

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Section Four METHODOLOGY

Heading: Methodology

This section consists of the following subheadings:

- Population and Sample. This subsection profiles the population and population sample, and describes the selection criteria used to define the population under study, as well as the selection criteria used to define the sample population.
- Data Sources/Instrumentation. This subsection describes the places where the data for the study originate. For instance: (1) Interviews (face-to-face, phone, focus group; structured or semi-structured), (2) Questionnaires, surveys, (3) Tests, (4) Observation (field notes) (5) Archival data, (6) Unobtrusive Measures (exhibits)
- Procedures. This subsection describes how the intervention under study was implemented, how data were collected. Who was involved in the process, institutional support and challenges.
- Data Analysis. This subsection describes the categories used to organize the data, and how they emerged.
- Subjectpositioning: this subsection describes the ethical issues the researcher dealt with as a researcher, participant, and individual. Explains how the researcher negotiated the different positions with the study's participants as to race, gender, class, and power issues.

Section Five

FINDINGS

Heading: Findings

This section reports the findings of the study. Findings are generally organized by research question. Each answer must be coherent with the methodology. .

Section Six

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, KEY LEARNING

Headings: Conclusions, Recommendations

This section consists of three parts.

- Conclusions are exclusively based on each of the study's findings. This subsection consists of the interpretation of the findings without repeating them. It is a way to read into the facts, to dig under them. The researcher tells the reader what the findings mean.
- Recommendations derive directly from the conclusions. The recommendations consist of the actions -e.g. policy, programmatic, organizational, curricular - the institution needs to consider to address the most pressing issues that emerged from the study.
- Key Learnings. This subsection is a reflection on the entire project's experience. It discusses what was learned about researching, how the activity helped the researcher assess programs, interventions, and decision making. This reflection is NOT part of your report but a separate document for your portfolio.

Section Seven

REFERENCES

Heading: References

Using the latest APA style, list each and all your references cited throughout the report.

Section Eight APPENDIXES

Heading: Appendix

Create as many appendixes as you need. Typically you will have:

1. Annotated bibliography (optional)
2. Tables
3. Figures
4. Sample instruments