Sample Title Page for Proposals
Margins: 1 “left, top, right, and bottom. Center the text vertically on this page. Use 12 point Times New Roman font. Note title all in caps.

THE TITLE: APPROXIMATELY 15 WORDS
OR LESS, CENTERED
(insert 1 blank line)
by
(insert 1 blank line)
Firstname Middle (or initial) Lastname
(insert 7 blank lines)

(line is 20 spaces long)
(7 blank lines)

A Proposal for Research (CHANGE for final report to Research Report)
(insert 1 blank line)
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
(insert 2 blank lines)

MASTER OF EDUCATION
(2 blank lines)
VALLEY CITY STATE UNIVERSITY
Valley City, North Dakota, USA
(insert 1 blank line)
Insert Month and Year of Final Committee Review
(insert 1 blank line)
Copyright year of Final Committee Review by Firstname Middle (or initial) Lastname
Abstract

An abstract is typically 150-250 words. The abstract is one long paragraph with no indentation. This, the abstract is in block format, double-spaced.

Key Words: five or so words that describe the project
The Table of Contents must reflect the format and arrangement of headings in the paper. Headings in the text and the entries in the Table of Contents must be identical. The main headings should be aligned flush left, with corresponding numbers when appropriate. Major subheadings are indented; alignment must be consistent within the chapter grouping and for all chapters. Minor subdivisions, paragraph headings, and subparagraph headings contained within the disquisition should be listed in the Table of Contents. All chapter groupings must be consistent in the degree of heading levels contained. This example is already formatted to fit this sample paper. You may use this sample as your own changing the heading text and adding your content. Once you have done so, you may right-click on the gray area behind the TOC text and choose “Update Field” to have your TOC update automatically.

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This is Level 3 style for flush left, bold, lowercase subheading .................................................... v

This is Level 4 Style for indented, bold, italicized lowercase subheading ........................................ v

This is Level 5 Style for indented, italicized lowercase subheading .............................................. v

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The indented, double-spaced text starts here.

This is Level 2 Style Heading, Flush Left, Bold, Uppercase and Lowercase

The indented, double-spaced text starts here. The indented, double-spaced text starts here. The indented, double-spaced text starts here.

This is a Level 3 style heading, indented, bold, lower case period. The double-spaced text starts here. The double-spaced text starts here. The double-spaced text starts here.

This is a Level 4 style heading, indented, bold, italicized, lower case, period. The double-spaced text starts here. The double-spaced text starts here. The double-spaced text starts here.

This is a Level 5 style heading, indented, italicized, lower case, period. The double-spaced text starts here. The double-spaced text starts here. The double-spaced text starts here.

Page numbers must be included on all pages except the cover page. Pages before Ch. 1 are in lower case Roman Numerals and centered ½ inch from the top right of the page. Page numbers beginning with Ch. 1 are in the top right corner ½ inch from the top of the page and aligned right on the right 1 inch margin. Page numbers should be the number only (See example page numbers in this document.) Chapter 1 always starts with page number 1.
Chapter One: Area of Focus

Introduction of Study

Text starts here at an indented paragraph…Begin by setting up your paper. Describe in two-three paragraphs the problem or situation you want to change. Consider the who, what, when, where, and how questions as you shape your introductory paragraph or two. This should lead you to the purpose of study statement.

Purpose of Study

Text starts here at an indented paragraph…. Tell us what the purpose of your paper is. Begin with “The purpose of this study is to____.” Expand. What does this mean? You should have a well-written and defined paragraph here.

Literature Review

Action Research Literature Reviews are not as exhaustive as traditional dissertation or thesis reviews. However, it should contain sources as directly relevant to the study as possible and help the researcher reflect upon and refine their problem.

Sub headings. Each subheading in the literature review should begin as such.

Sub sub headings. Each sub-sub heading in the literature review should begin as such.

The Literature Review of a research paper REPORTS on the research others have conducted relating to your topic. It is here that you tell us what others have found, what information contradicts each other, and what information has not been found. The internet does have online technology journals. You need to make sure you are using scholarly journals. How can you tell if what you found comes from a scholarly source? CHECK THE END OF THE PAPER! You should see a bibliography or reference area. If you don’t, then you do not have a scholarly journal article. This is a master-level paper. Therefore, you should find at least 25 possible SCHOLARLY resources to use.
Okay, now that you have found your sources, READ THEM!
Scholarly sources are NOT always easy to read!!! I suggest paying CLOSE attention to
A. The Introduction and Review of Literature
   a. Look for other sources you could use
   b. Look for information that discusses research related to your topic. What have others done?
   c. Look for information that contradicts each other
      (it’s okay of one source says xxxx and another source says yyy. That tells you that more research needs to be conducted to see which it is—xxx or yyy!)
   d. Look for gaps in the information that your research could fill
B. The Methods section:
   a. Look close at the method the author used. You may want to emulate him/her method!
C. The Discussion and Conclusions section if you do not understand the results section.
D. The references, in case there are articles you could use.

I have a sample journal article in this folder. It is not an action research article (and your articles may not be either and that’s okay—good research is good research). I have put in comments regarding the various components of a journal article to help you read the article.

Summarize pertinent information in your journal articles according to themes or ideas.
   For example, in a content analysis I did on comic books, I found articles dealing with animation, violence, gender, effects, stereotypes,…
   I created computer notecards.
   I would open word documents with just one topic per document. So, for example I would have one page on animation and violence. Another page on animation and gender roles. Another on effects of mediated violence, another on animation and stereotypes…Whenever I’d read an article that dealt with a topic, I’d cite it in APA, then * pieces of info from it. Then when all done, I’d print and use info as it fit into may paper.
   --Divide into topics and summarize the literature by discussing how it is relevant to the study of the paper being discussed.
   It should include:
   • An overview of the subject, issue or theory under consideration, along with the objectives of the literature review
   • Division of works under review into categories (e.g. those in support of a particular position, those against, and those offering alternative theses entirely)
   • Explanation of how each work is similar to and how it varies from the others
• Conclusions as to which pieces are best considered in their argument, are most convincing of their opinions, and make the greatest contribution to the understanding and development of their area of research.

Each time you use any information from your sources, you must cite it. This can be done in several ways:

Rice (1993) contends that online communication is the least rich channel of communication. The least rich channel of communication occurs online (Rice, 1993).

or

Rice (1993) states, “On the continuum of richness, online communication is considered the least rich” (p. 7).

BUT—in scholarly academic writing, try to AVOID direct quotes. Direct quotes break up the flow of the information. Paraphrase is better. Think about your journal articles. How many direct quotes in the lit review do you see?

**RULE OF THUMB:** Limit the direct quotes in your Lit review to about 10% or less of your literature review WITH direct quotes. *Ninety percent of the literature review should be paraphrased, with in-text citations.*

You may find you can’t use all of your 25 articles. You may be able to use just 20. Please do NOT go under 15. Remember, you are in a Master-level program writing a Master’s paper. Twelve sources is not a thorough examination of what others have been doing in your area of study.

When I teach a 300-level undergraduate research methods course for the communication discipline, I require the undergrads to have a minimum 12 scholarly sources. Twenty-five sources is not an unreasonable amount for a graduate course. (and yes, you certainly can have more than 25 sources!)

(and yes, you may include non-scholarly sources, such as census bureau statistics, quotes from famous people, etc… But *90% of your literature review should be scholarly*).

(again, look for references at the end of the article)

I have three articles in a folder in Course Documents that I have published in scholarly journals. Go ahead and read them. Pay CLOSE attention to the literature review, as you will also be completing a literature review in the weeks to come. I will put up a template next week for your lit review. Until then, gather your sources, place them in alphabetical order, and then in APA style.

Please note: If a citation has more than one name (i.e., Van Horn, S. B., Pearson, J.C. & Child, J.), do not rearrange the list of names to read Child, Pearson, and VanHorn. The first name should remain the first name. That person is the “primary investigator” — the person who put the most work into the research project and paper. The second person put the second amount of work, third the third amount, etc…
Research Questions

Text starts here at an indented paragraph… Begin with a sentence that leads us into your RQs

RQ 1:

RQ 2:

(Etc…).

Wrap up what you included in this chapter in a concluding sentence or two. Then preview the rest of the paper by telling us what Chapter 2 will include, what Chapter 3 will look at, what Ch. 4 will examine, and what Ch. 5 will contain.
Chapter Two: Data Collection

Begin with an introduction that reminds the reader of the problem (in a sentence or two) and describes the intervention or innovation you are planning to do.

**Data Sources**

*Text starts here at an indented paragraph...* Where will you get your material? Are you creating interview questions from the material you found in your literature review? Does the pre-test/post test that already exists? (then describe it—what is it, when was it developed, what is it usually used to determine, how does it fit your study?) Will teachers supply you with their students’ results?

**Data Gathering**

*Text starts here at an indented paragraph...* This is a recipe of what you plan on doing—step by step. Clearly think of this as a recipe. Good research can be replicated; therefore, others who read your research should be able to follow your data gathering step by step to test their own sample. Be explicit. Think of the 5 Ws and H. Are you interviewing people? Conducting surveys? Looking at pre and post tests? Solid research employs triangulation. In other words, it employs more than one form of research to ensure that it is getting solid, valid, reliable information. Therefore, you should have more than one data gathering technique for your action research project.

**Reliability.** Text starts here—how will you know that the test you are doing will consistently measure what it measures? If you are using a test that has already been used (i.e. Myer’s Briggs, WiscR, PRSA, etc…), state it—what it is commonly used for, that it is commonly used, etc… IF you are using material you have created, then you need to
assure us of the consistency of your measurement. How will you make sure that the results are reliable?

**Validity.** Text starts here—how do you know that the data you are collecting is an accurate measurement. Many types of validity exist. Mills discusses Guba’s criteria, Maxwell’s, Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen’s criteria, and Wolcott’s strategies. Pick one. How will you address this in your method?

**Limitations.** Text starts here … This is your time to tell us what isn’t happening in your research—what your research isn’t doing or can’t do. For example, is time going to be a limitation for you? Number of participants? Access to participants? It’s okay to have these limitations! No piece of research can address *everything*. The key is to own up to what you aren’t able to do with this study.

**Triangulation of Multiple Data**

In action research, it is not recommended to rely on a single data source. Triangulation is used to gather multiple data sources using different methods of collection. Students should discuss the methods of data collection and provide a triangulation matrix table (see below) in their writing.

The following table is one that you must include as evidence of triangulation within your research. This reflects the relationship between the research questions and the research data gathered. Be sure to refer to this table in the text of your paper.
Table 1

Data Sources Providing Triangulation Data for Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Pre-Assessment</th>
<th>Observation Post-Assessment</th>
<th>Research paper</th>
<th>Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A FEW NOTES FROM ME!!!

1. **BEFORE** you conduct and analyze your research, the method section will be written in **Future tense**. “Seventy-five adjunct instructors will be surveyed regarding their experience with an online orientation session.” You will use future tense in your proposal (what you will send to your advisor and committee members for approval before you conduct your research—more to come on that next week—and yes, what you are writing now is a part of that proposal)

2. **AFTER** you conduct your research and analyzed your results, Ch. 2 should be written in **past tense**. “Seventy-five adjunct instructors were surveyed regarding their experience with an online orientation session.”

3. **Be consistent in tone.** Remember, you are writing a scholarly paper.
3. Again, never ever use second-person pronouns. You may want to check with your advisor and committee members on their feelings of even using first person pronouns in your writing. I know that some people are rigidly against first person. If so, then don’t use them. (Why not? Well, when you use “I,” “me,” etc... it puts you in the research. Research is supposed to be objective—you are not supposed to be a part of the research (although it is more difficult in qualitative research—which is what you are doing) than quantitative.)
Chapter Three: Analysis and Interpretation of Data

**Results**

Since most action research is qualitative in nature, much of the data interpretations may be in narrative format, not numerical format. If using Tables or Figures, see formatting below. List your results—just your results. This may be difficult. You may want to give us an interpretation of your results, or your opinion. This section isn’t the place. Just give us raw numbers and percentages of numbers your found, or qualitative lists (i.e. themes, comparisons..). Again, do not give your opinion on what happened, what you think may have happened, etc… Just the fact, please!!!

**Discussion**

Text starts here at an indented paragraph…. Remember how I said up above to NOT give us your opinion? Well, here is where you can discuss your findings and put in your opinions. What did you find interesting? Surprising? Peculiar? Opposite of what you expected?

In this area, you MUST answer your RQs!!! You may want to make each RQ a sub-sub heading. You don’t have to, but it may help you ensure that you answered your RQs.

In addition, You need to make connections to your literature review. How do these results support, not support, or extend the findings of your literature review?? Be sure to specifically mention the studies and to include in-text citations.
Implications

Text starts here at an indented paragraph…. Every piece of research must include a “So What” factor. Okay, you did this research, and you found out this information. Whoopee!! So what???? You have to let us, your audience, know WHY this information is important and to WHOM is this information important!!! For example, my dissertation was on teacher satisfaction and the online course. I discovered that teachers must experience immediacy, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, positive computer self-efficacy, and social presence to be satisfied in with their online courses.

Yippee! So what??? Why should anyone care??? Well, this information is important to instructors as they decide whether to teach online or f2f. If they are unsure of their computer skills, then they shouldn’t be teaching online. If they need face-to-face feedback, they shouldn’t be teaching online. My findings showed administrators what types of motivation work for those they want to teach online. My findings provided information on what was needed for successful experiences in teaching the online course… (Please note that I had several pages devoted to this, not several lines 😃).

Your job here is to tell us why people should care about your material. WHY IS YOUR INFORMATION IMPORTANT???  SO WHAT????

Tables/figures should be placed within the text after their first mention. You should avoid splitting tables/figures that will fit on one page. Tables/figures which are not pertinent to the text may be placed in an appendix.

The word "Table" and the correct number are typed flush left above the table. The title follows on the next line. If longer than one line, the title is single spaced; additional lines are typed flush left. (If super or subscripts are used, the title may be double spaced.) The title should fit within the table’s borders and should not be bold. Capitalization and punctuation must be consistent for all table titles. Two styles are recommended: (1) the
initial letter of all principal words may be capitalized, including prepositions of 4 or more letters; or (2) only the initial letter of the first word and initial letter of all proper nouns are capitalized.

A line separating the title and body of the table should extend the width of the table within Graduate School margin specifications. Another line separates the column headings and the body. A third line separating the table and notes should also extend the width of the table. These lines should not be bold.

When a table is too long to fit on one page, continuing pages may be used. The table number and "(continued)" should appear at the top on the second and subsequent pages in place of the full title. A closing line should only be used on the final page.

All abbreviations and symbols within the table must be identified through footnotes or notes used at the end of the table. In circumstances where this procedure makes the disquisition prohibitively long, a List of Abbreviations may be included in the prefatory pages. When appropriate, notes at the end of the table will also identify table sources.

Two tables placed on the same page must be separated by at least one half inch of space. There must be at least one half inch of space between a table and text on the same page. Avoid breaking a paragraph on a page with a table.

Table 2

*Technology Skills Lesson Rubric Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of proficiency</th>
<th>Class A</th>
<th>Class B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Proficient</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An example of a figure is shown below. Figures are usually charts, diagrams, or other graphically represented data.
Figure 1. Projections of education statistics to 2014 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005).
Chapter Four: Action Research

Begin with a paragraph that describes your topic and research.

Findings of the Research

Text starts here at an indented paragraph….Summarize. What are the main findings? What did you learn from your research? Remind us of your research questions (perhaps a sub heading) and then state what you found for each question.

Recommended Action

Text starts here at an indented paragraph….What did you learn from your research? What recommendations do you have given your results? Be explicit, so that if someone else reads this section, they can carry out with your recommendations. This will take you SEVERAL paragraphs.

Responsibilities

Text starts here at an indented paragraph….who are responsible for these actions? Be EXPLICIT.

Sharing Finding with Colleagues

Text starts here at an indented paragraph….Good research is meant to be shared. To whom will you share this with? When? How?

Ongoing Monitoring

Text starts here at an indented paragraph….Good research and findings are continuous. How are you going to continue on with this topic—beyond the confines of
what you are doing for this project? How will you ensure that your recommendations are being and still are being carried on?

Timeline for Action

Text starts here at an indented paragraph…. When will these actions be carried out? What timeline do you recommend?

Resources

Include a “Steps to Action Chart” containing all relevant information in table form. Create a chart that outlines each step, with who is responsible and when. Be sure to refer to this chart in the body of your paper.
Chapter Five: Reflection

Begin with a paragraph or two that summarizes your first four Chapters. Remind us of your topic, RQs, results, and action plan. Then include a transition sentence that will lead to the rest of the paper.

Effects on Teaching

This Section reflects on the implication of the project findings and the effects it has on the classroom and/or teaching experiences. This is your opportunity to provide us with your “So what” statement. You found out some interesting information, but so what? What will this mean on your teaching or training experiences? How will this make you a stronger teacher or trainer? Of what importance is this knowledge to others who also teach or train in your field? Why? You may want to include information from your action research text or other texts or journal articles that are pertinent to your study. If you do, be sure to add these sources to the Reference page.

Implication of the Process

This section reflects on the process of conducting action research, lessons learned from the process, and implications of future use of the process. The researcher will reflect not only on what he or she learned, but also on how she or he may use this process in future endeavors.

Be explicit, but also be professional in what you learned about this process. What was the most interesting component? The most challenging? What were your strengths in action research? Weaknesses? Will you do it again? If so, why? If not, why not? Did this experience affect your feeling of professionalism? Why or why not? What did you learn about yourself in the process of completing this project? Be explicit.
Finally, add a concluding paragraph. You may want to summarize your paper. Or you may want to tie your conclusion back to your introduction. I have seen students use quotes to begin each chapter and end their paper with a quote. It’s up to you, but you do need a solid concluding paragraph. Then, on a NEW page, you will put your references.
References

References must be in APA format. Use the 6th edition for details.
Appendix

Appendices are numbered with capital letters (Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.) and should be in order as mentioned in the text of the paper. Include items such as your surveys, instruments, permission letters from school administrators, interviews, transcriptions, etc…