Columbia College M. Ed. in Divergent Learning and the American Publication Manual (APA) Style Sheet

Components and Format of the Thesis

Created by: Dr. Doris Layton, Dr. Randy Lee, and Dr. Chris Burkett Thesis Example from Ann Smoak (with permission) Revised, May 2008

General Thesis Notes

- Double-space the entire document.
- Use 12-point Times New Roman font. Note that Style Sheet is in 10-point font to save space.
- Margins:

Тор	1 ¹ / ₂ inches for title page, 1 inch for all other pages
Left	1 ¹ / ₂ inches
bottom, and right	1 inch

- Write in the past tense. You may use present tense in the Dedication, Acknowledgments, and Recommendations.
- Numbers must be located at the bottom center of each page.

Title Page through Abstract	Lower case Roman numerals (do not put a number on the title page)
Introduction through Appendixes	Arabic numerals

- Do not use personal pronouns and modifiers (I, me, my, we, us, our). Use the third person (the student, this researcher, etc.).
- Do not use bold type anywhere in the document. Do not underline anything in the document. This includes figure and chart titles.
- Within a paragraph or sentence, identify elements in a series by lowercase letters in parentheses (ex: (a) classrooms, (b) work sites, and (d) home offices).
- To separate paragraphs in a series, such as itemized conclusions or steps in a procedure, use an Arabic numeral followed by a period. See example below:
 - 1. Schools surveyed students for...
 - 2. Teachers who responded....
 - 3. Students who responded...
 - 4. Teachers and students who responded...
- Use ¹/₂-inch paragraph indentations except in the Abstract and the References.
 - 1. The Abstract is one paragraph with no indentations.
 - 2. References require a ¹/₂-inch hanging indentation.
- The titles of all major sections must be centered and written in all upper case letters. If subtitles are used within major sections, they must be centered and written in title case letters.
- Space once after commas, colons, semicolons, and after periods that separate parts of a reference citation. Space twice after punctuation marks at the end of sentences.
- Perform a spelling and grammar check on the document before you submit it. Do not rely totally on the software program to check spelling and grammar.
- Tables and figures must be embedded in the body of the paper.

- The title of the study should be written in all upper case letters and should be double spaced. It should be written as a statement and not as a question.
- The title page should look like example below:

TITLE (upper case letters)

By

Name

Master of Education in Divergent Learning Columbia College 2008

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Education in Divergent Learning in the Graduate School

> Name, Degree Primary Research Advisor

Name, Degree Secondary Research Advisor

ABSTRACT

- This section is the executive summary of the thesis. It is similar to a literature review entry.
- The abstract should be one paragraph and should not be indented.



DEDICATION

• This page is optional and may be written in the present tense.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

• This is where you may list those you want to thank. This page is also optional and it may be written in the present tense.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

• Remember to list all headings and subheadings in the Table of Contents. This includes all subheadings found under Review of the Literature.

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LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

- This section is similar to the Table of Contents.
- List the figure or table number, title of the figure or table, and the page number of each figure and table included in the thesis.



INTRODUCTION

- This is the introduction to the topic (no heading for this subsection).
- Identify the problem or area of interest.
- Provide background information.

Purpose Statement

- State the purpose of the study.
- Put the purpose in the form of one or more questions

Importance of the Study

• Tell why this study is important.

Hypotheses

• A hypothesis is not necessary in a qualitative study, but can be used.

Definition of Terms

- List as used in the context of your study.
- List all the important terms.
- Briefly describe each term using one or two complete sentences.

INTRODUCTION

"Ges, I've never been able to balance my checkbook. I've never been able to duce (or draw) well." Such comments would most likely elicit smiles and empathetic nods at my social gathering in our county. But imagine someone saying, "I've never learned how to read or write" (Armstrong 2003, pp. 5 & 6). Dead silence with an uncomfortable awkwadness would ensue. Literacy in American society is accepted as the norm, and the illineare person is considered to be almost less than human by much of society. Small wonder then that a story about a successful person subsequently embality admits his or her illiterare y makes the newspaper, with the person subsequently embality famicially successful, and admitting to illiteracy has become a point of shame.

According to the latest statistics available from the South Carolina Department of Education's Report on Student Dropout and Completions Rates 2001-2002 (2003), 3.3% of the total nutleast encollment dropped out during the 2002 school year. This same report indicates that when comparing the number of S[®] grade encollees with the number of high school diplomai issued four years later, the percentage of completions drops to 66.8% or a 33.2% drop out rate. Offering these students mother chance to be successful is the major concern of this research project.

Adult education programs across the country, no matter what the delivery system, exist to help those members of society who have previously been unsuccessful in school. Often one measure of success is the obtaining of a high school credential. The GED program exists nationally to offer an alternative avenue for high school completion.

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Purpose Statemen

This action research project was concerned with the pre-GED student, one whose reading score is determined to fall between the 4.0 – 7.0 grade lavels in reading and/or whose much score is determined to fall between 4.0 – 7.0 grade lavels. Two research questions were addressed in file research project. First, would incomporting the current essearch on leaning styles and multiple intelligences into the methodology and curriculum makes any positive difference in these students' advancement? Secondly, would teaching the toulent to consciously use their individual learning styles and multiple intelligences cause them to become more engaged in their learning process? Given that they have been unsuccessful in the traditional classroom setting, it was possed that many of these students will be classified as divergent learners.

Importance of the Study

Being literate is obviously important to functioning well in modern society. The National Adult Literacy Survey (South Carolina Adult Education, 2006) ranked literacy levels into five categories from being able to fill out simple forms and do basic addition (Level Oce to making high level inferences in detailed document (Level Five). The survey notes that nearly half of adult functioning at Level One live in poverty. Coversely, only four to eight percent of adults functioning at the highest two levels of literacy live in poverty.

It would be unrealistic to think that many students reading or computing on the 4th to 7th grade level would be ready to take the GED test after only a semester or less of instruction. However, it is not unrealistic to expect some gains in achievement during this period of time. Perhaps more important, however, is giving these students the hope and self-confidences to that, by using their individual strengths and styles, they too can be successful in the classroom. If by teaching greater self-awareness of learning styles and unique intelligences and by offering strategies which utilize students' learning styles and individual strengths, this classroom can motivate these students to remain committed to their goals, this research project will be a success.

Definition of Terms

 Learning Styles - The manner in which environment, emotionality, sociological needs, physical characteristics, and psychological inclination affect an individual's learning process.

 Multiple intelligences – The separate intelligences that enable a person to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in society.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

- You must have a minimum of 30 empirical references in the ROL and at least 12-15 pages.
- What have other researchers found about your topic? Describe empirical research related to your topic. When describing research studies, try to use one or two sentences to describe each of the following: (a) the question or purpose of the study, (b) the number and type of participants, (c) the treatment or conditions involved, (d) the type of measures, and (e) the results and conclusions.
- Show all sides of the topic and proceed from general to specific.
- "All we want are the facts, ma'am." (Report only the results of the research. No personal opinions here.)
- Use headings and subheadings to break up the text. If subheadings are used within major sections, they must be centered and written in title case letters.
- Begin the Review of the Literature with a brief introduction of the topic (optional) and end the chapter with a brief Conclusion of the major points covered (mandatory). The Introduction and Conclusion are generally about one paragraph in length.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In preparation for this research project, it was incumbent on the researcher to explore topics that might directly illuminate both the sociological and academic backgrounds of the targeted returning dropouts as well as the findings and applicability of teaching theories to successfully reach these students. Particular attention was given to the increase of student efficacy and achievement by the incorporation of learning styles and multiple intelligence theory into classroom practice.

Characteristics of Dropouts

It is sobering to consider the life of the uneducated person in today's society. Gone are most of the factory jobs that paid a decent wage for unskilled labor. With the cuts in government social services such as welfare and Medicaid, the safety nets that kept many poor people alloat are now wearing thin. Women who a few years ago depended on their husbands to provide for them now find that they must enter the work force. The cost of living steadily increases while minimum wage has not changed for neady ten years. In terms of real buying power, the minimum wage has less now than it has had during most of the last fifty years (Economic Policy Institute, 2006, Economic Snapshots section, para. 3). Why then, do so many of our young people drop out of school? What has happened in their educational experience that has totally disengaged them from gaining the knowledge to compete successfully in today's marketplace?

The reasons that students drop out of school are many and varied. Lan and Lamthier (2003) found that even though "environmental factors" (p. 311) of family and neighborhood do, in fact, influence a person's choice to dropout, it is personal attributes

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are intuitive and person oriented rather than analytic and object oriented as is customary in traditional school settings.

Silver, Strong, and Perini (1997) feel that learning style theory and multiple intelligence theory are complementary in that each "responds to the weaknesses of the other" (p. 59). "Without multiple intelligence theory, style is rather abstract ... Without learning styles, multiple intelligence theory proves unable to describe different processes of thought and feeling" (p. 59). By incorporating both theories into classroom practice, the classroom experience can become a place that "respects and celebrates diversity and provides ... the tools to meet high standards" of achievement (p. 61). This sentiment is echoed by Wilson (1998) who, in reviewing the literature on learning styles, concluded that "Awareness of learning styles and skill in utilization of imtructional methods ... will give teachers a wide array of techniques to use in promoting student learning" (p. 14).

Conclusion

Hippocrates famously said, "First, do no harm." One can argue that traditional classroom methods have harmed many students by ignoring their individuality and attempting to fit everyone into the standard academic mold. This has too often caused students to feel disangaged from the school setting and resulted in poor performance. If by incorporating learning style and multiple intelligence theories into classroom practice, this research project can once again engage students in learning, then the battle is, at least, begun. Once students are motivated, care about their academic advancement, and feel that school is a valuable resource for their lives, they may realize that their goals are attainable and decide to give education a second chance.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

- Describe the people involved in your study. The reader should know ages, number, gender, ethnic makeup, socioeconomic status, and anything else you consider necessary to describe the subjects in your study.
- Describe the environment in which the study occurred: classroom, school, and/or community.

Materials

- Describe any materials used in your research. If you are using a particular curriculum, product, or procedure, describe it fully. Include relevant examples in an appendix. Remember that the reader knows nothing about your topic.
- Describe all types of measuring devices. If surveys, checklists, rubrics, or rating charts were used, describe them briefly, then include a sample in the appendix.

Procedures

- Describe the length of the study.
- Describe how you collected the data, how much, and how often.
- Use past tense in describing all aspects of your methodology and findings. Research always exists in the past, in a specific time and place.
- If you use a special curriculum, technique, or procedure, let the reader know exactly what it is. This section should be described in such a way that one could pick up this chapter and replicate your procedures.

Analysis

• Describe how you organized and analyzed your data.

METHODOLOGY Participants

This action research project targeted the 17 – 20 year old, pre-OED student, whose reading or math scores fill between the 4.0 – 7.0 grade levels. During the 65.06 school year, 135 students entered the Fuchdard Oae Adult Education program at this level. Of that number 52 tested out of that level at the end of the course (Advantage Pro Cutants South Carolina Database, 2000). This respect isalo bottlewide that 79 indexes apparented before completion of the course with the remaining 4 students containing in the program. It was this representative 79 students (53% of the total number of students lastyset newsp00%), were Advant-American ads lightly more than 60% were Famile. During the distroid ensembly studies (16 during more than 60% were Famile.

During the also have for each period, to instants mettered that port-case classroom. However, 10 of the standard strapped attending deport arrays, frame of the sensester, lowing only 6 tudents who completed point theigh opticarrays, frames of multimum, all makes formed the participants for the conclusions of this sensesth project. Since the number of participants was limited and since shaft clustering always attempts to address and remediate individual rathent deficiencies, a detailed nummary of each individual's listicity and fishing is solven. All assume of their true of here are effective.

Student Number one, Robert, wa a 17 year old Mack male who had atmeded high school for three years and accumulated 13.5 of the 24 orefits required for a South Carolina high school diploma. His TABE Level D present showed him rading at the 7.8 grade level and his TABE Level D present school here.

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As the pre-GED program can on a semistic schedule, students was not allowed to participate in this action research project unless they acteed class with a minimum of four weaks of instruction time left.

Before being scheduled into GED classes at Richland Ose Adult Education, tructure must this standardized texts to determine their supportants achievement level in reading and much. Prior to these estual texts, a TABE Locator ii admittated to determine the appropriate texting materials. TABE texts are designed at four academic levels: E to designed, M to for those motival texts, and the schedure results show them working at the 4.0 – 5.9 goals level, and A is for those motions these locator results show them working at the 4.0 – 5.9 goals level, and A is for those motions whose locator results show them working at 9.0 – 1.25 goals level, CEB McGrave-Hill, 2006, Showey 9.8. 10 Section.) Students were pre-text using Form 7 at the appropriate level of the Tau of ABB Batis Education (TABE) and parts text using Form 8 of the appropriate level. These simulations in texts.

To gather data for this research project, a modified vanious of the Dann and Dam Learning Style Investory (Appendix C) and a multiple instilligence survey accepted from the works of Thomas Armitrong (1994) (Appendix D) wave administrated to give both the turbather hand the tancher insight into optimum learning surveyments: Additionally, student' global analytic preferences wave determined by administration of the Basic Assessment of Cognitive Organization (Belder, 1985). A part survey (Appendix D) alabed turbates if there had been my impact on their learning due to me wavesense of their

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individual learning styles and multiple intelligences. This post survey also asked students to gauge whether or not they considered this classroom experience beneficial and to identify which instructional techniques had, in their opinion, been most useful

It was stressed to the students that the Learning Styles Investory, the multipliintelligence investory and the Static Assessment of Cognitive Organization were all informational surveys only. Student was also informed that the results would be given to them and that both they and the stacker could use this information to optimize that isoarching. The teacher discussed the results of these surveys with the individual student and provided them with a list of possible study andexist that the survey result indicated would be more branching to the individually. Additionally, the tasker porcelled each student are mancer of these teachers and the study.

Students had at their disposal a computerized pre-GED instructional program and various high interest books on tape, as well as an assortment of language arts and mathematics materials written at the appropriate grade level but designed with the adult learner in mind.

Procedures

The semester study was qualitative in nature and was based on surveys, teacher observations, and student input. Quantitative data was referenced, but no statistical analysis on the data was performed.

In addition to collecting the items mentioned above, the teacher kept observational notes on individual Indents, noting their ensymmets to varying classroom activities and instructional methods. Particular attention and guidance wave given to students' use of their identified learning styles. Reflections on their reading processes

FINDINGS

- Restate your research question(s).
- Describe the data that answer the question(s).
- Describe the themes, categories, and patterns.
- Use illustrative examples for each category.
- Use tables, graphs, figures, and artwork as necessary.
- Use headings and subheadings to make the structure readily apparent.

FINDINGS

South Carolina, as well as other states, has experienced a growing number of dropouts from its traditional educational system, and adult education services have expanded to meet this need. At present, Richland One Adult Education offers a variety of GED classes designed to match both student ages and ability levels. Therefore, separate classes exist for the younger (17-21) students and for the more mature adult (>21 $\,$ year of age). Although all students aged 17 or above are classified as adult learners according to the federal government, past experience has shown that mixing older adults with younger adults proved counterproductive to both groups in that the older adults were often exasperated by the behavior of the younger students while the younger students often felt out of place with the older students. Additionally, it has been found that, particularly among the younger population, grouping by achievement level is more effective because instruction can be better targeted. Thus, Richland One offers various levels of GED instruction. If a mature adult with a reading level below fourth grade enters adult education, he or she is placed in a literacy class with other mature adults. To avoid wide disparities in age grouping and the stigma often associated with "literacy," a vounger student is placed in a class referred to as Skills Enhancement. Many of the students in this classroom also receive special education services. If a student's reading level falls between 4.0 and 7.0 grade level, he or she is placed in an age appropriate class designated as pre-GED. For those students scoring between 7.0 and 9.0 grade level in reading, separate, age appropriate GED classes exist. Finally, for those students either entering with or obtaining a reading level of 9.0 and above, a separate FastTrack GED class has been designed. This class, running in three-week sessions, has been designed to

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theory. Unfortunately, this hope was not realized. In fact, nearly two-thirds of the students who encolled stopped attending before the end of the semester. Although all students who did remain for the course work experienced academic gains (Table One), it remains, at best, unclear if incorporating this information had any noticeable effect on student attitude or achievement. No student reported in the exit survey that this knowledge had affected their behavior or academic success. Except for expressions of mild interest when their individual learning styles were presented to them after administration of the various inventories, students seemed to quickly dismiss the information or comment that there was nothing new or pertinent to their current situation.

Student	Reading Pre- Test Form/Level	Reading Post-Test Form/ Level	Math Pre- Test Form/level	Math Post- Test Form/Level	Comment
Sam	M/4.8	D/7.8	M/3.9	M/6.4	Extra time given on reading
Thomas	D/6.2	D/8.5	D/9.5	n/a	Extra time given on reading
Corey	D/6.2	n/2	M/2.7	M/4.4	-
Brandon	M/3.5	M/6.2	M/5.3	M/6.9	Extra time given on reading
Ricardo	M/5.2	M/6.6	M/6.2	D/8.7	
Robert	D/7.8	D/12.0	M/5.8	D/6.8	

All classrooms in adult education work on the premise that the student-teacher relationship is one of mutual respect. Classrooms are informal by design, and students are treated as adult learners. Since behavior problems are rare, teachers can concentrate on motivating students and supplying content. Therefore, when the Dunn and Dunn Learning Style Inventory indicated that students needed mobility or informal design or

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independent learners. However, when examining preliminary data on the students who had started the class and dropped out, it was found that the majority of these students also considered themselves to be persistent and independent learners, leading one to believe that students may not accurately assess their motivation. Concerning the students who did complete the sementer, teacher observation confirmed the students' self-assessment on this attribute, including Corey's self-assessment that he was not persistent. Corey, as i truneed out, was the only student who had to be remained to "stay on tak."

One student, Robert, did test out of the class, obtaining a reading level score of 12.9 on the TABE. Robert attempted to attend the FasiTrack session but due to scheduling conflicts was unable to do so. He elected to take the GED test in November and passed four of the five sections. He will retake the writing section of the GED test in February, 2007. Ricardo also elected to take the GED test in December although his reading scores did not indicate that he was ready to do so. To date, his scores have not been returned.

In summary, the students in this research project all experienced academic gains in their areas of study although little evidence exists that indicates exposure to and knowledge of their individual learning styles was influential in these gains. However, the teacher, for instructional purposes, was able to use information from these instruments to better understand the students and to, therefore, target instructional methods more effectively.

DISCUSSION

Overview of the Study

Restate the general purpose of the study and briefly describe how the results were obtained.

Limitations of the Study

- Describe those things that may have affected or hindered your findings.
- Describe those things that you needed to change during the study, or things that did not go as expected.
- Describe the limitations or applicability of the findings.

Conclusions

 Move beyond the data. Tell what these results mean. Describe possible implications of the results.

Recommendations

- Describe how the results might be used in your classroom
- Describe how the results might be used to bring understanding to other classrooms or situations.
- Describe ideas for future research related to your research.

DISCUSSION

Overview of the Study

This serversh projection with the messes academic progress and notation in a pre-GED chargeon by incorporating statent assumers of barring system and multiple methysness.

Limits tions of the Study

Obviously, the number of student who completed all part of this meansh project one extensely limited. Therefore, any conclusions are not validated by large amount of date.

Also, the Dramand Dram Learning Intendery word in this project was an abbreviated one and was leard scenard by the newsoclast. As such it may not be as accurate as the complete survey. When student supernet to the survey indicated opposite answers to what was, in effect the same question the newscoler had no basis for determining which as proceeds as a two space ratio to not file students preference. Conclinear

CORDEDE

Falare is most obviou conclusion to this means a poject is that if demonstrates the fullity of making local gaussilizations about the adult odwards a student. Here when considering the way small number of participant, for every individual that filled a pippen helt, another compiled it. Some suffered from poor soff or team, others disket. Some, although milements of methods and field to passy loss: mathematical procedures. The one substitution the chest. The majority teacher methods also well the strongest pass of any substitution the chest. The majority of the (pojeggy whe, at the beginning of the some two did heme loss as being persistent

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individual that filled a pigeon hole, another emptied it. Some suffered from poor self esteem, others dish. Some, although inherently mathematically talented, had failed to grap basic mathematical procedures. The one statient who dish t acknowledge strang teacher motivation showed the strangest gains of any student in the class. The majority of the students who, at the beginning of the semester rated themselves as being persistent, drapped out, some after standards grady one or two class sessions. Two of the students with the most observable low self-esteem, persisted.

The incorporation of learning styles and multiple intelligence theory into the classroom had little discensible effect on either-tuident atimates or achievement. The teaches/instructor did, however, find this information valuable as it helped to individualize instruction and increase undestanding of student thought processes.

Recommendations

As long as students enter GED classes with the sole aim of passing a specific test, they may be relation to explore topics that are not test-related. However, any information short the students' learning processes on be instructionally valuable, particularly inpirpointing individual quicks in learning.

One point that should be addressed early on in the closorom is having students set realistic goals. Students must realize that spending a few weeks in a closorom, no matter how hard they work or how individualized the instruction, will not overnight remediate years of deficiencies in learning. Perhaps this is where the true value of teaching learning styles and multiple intelligences can have the most effect. If students set realistic goals, maybe they would allow themselves time to explore their learning styles and multiple itelligences.

REFERENCES

- List all references used in your thesis.
- Every work that is cited in the text must be listed alphabetically in the References.
- Every work that is listed in the References must be cited in the text.
 - 1. For reference citations in the text, use only the surname of the author and the year of publication.
 - 2. In the reference list, use the author's surname and initials.
- To cite the work of others, you must either paraphrase or use a direct quotation. All paraphrases must be cited using the author's(s') name(s) and dates of publication. All direct quotations must:
 - 1. be cited using the author's(s') name(s), dates of publication, and page number(s) from which the quote was taken.
 - 2. appear in quotation marks if the quote is 39 or fewer words.
 - appear as an indented block without quotation marks if the quote is 40 or more words. The quotation must be indented ¹/₂ inch from the left margin. Do not indent the right margin or justify the text.
- When citing others, make every attempt to paraphrase instead of using quotations. However, if you use three or more consecutive words from the author(s), you must cite by direct quoting.
- The names of journals and books are italicized, not underlined. Volume numbers are italicized. Issue numbers appear in parentheses and are not italicized. Use issue numbers only if each issue in a volume begins with page one. You must include both the first and last page numbers on journal article references.
- Do not separate references on two different pages.



APPENDIXES

- Attach items relevant to the study but that do not need to be in the main part of the text. For example, you may attach a copy of a test that you used. The appendix(es) must be arranged in the order that they are cited in the text.
- Label appendixes with upper case letters (unless there is only one) in the order they are mentioned in the text. The name of the appendix should be in title case letters. List all appendixes with their titles, both in the Table of Contents, as well as on the individual title page of the appendix. The appendix section should come after the references and must have a separate title page that says "APPENDIXES."



APPENDIX A

Name of Appendix



APPENDIX B

Name of Appendix

