Writing an Undergraduate Research Proposal

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Tips

• Take deep breaths and breaks.

• Discuss ideas with your mentor and/or peers. Collaboration is key.

• Start the writing process early (Liu & Wang, 2022).

• Understand your parameters:
  • Page length
  • Required documents
  • Structure, format (such as APA format)

• Appreciate the process.

• Finalize: check for spelling/grammatical errors.
What Is the Purpose for the Current Research Proposal?

- **Relevance** - Is your project important? Explain. Think about why your project should be funded? Impact.

- **Context** - Is the content connected to previous literature or a theoretical frame?

- **Method** - explore multiple methods, choose one specific to your proposal’s purpose; think measurement!

- **Feasibility** - is your project feasible? This is directly connected to the project’s timeline.
Important Components

• Introduction/Literature Review
• Research Design and Methods
• Competency, Skills, and Talents.
• References Page
• Timeline Example
• Budget Template
• Additional Documents...
Introduction/Literature Review

- What was interesting about your topic area?
- What research has already been done in this topic area?
- What are the gaps in the literature? What is missing and what would your research add to the topic area of interest?
  - Describe the problem or topic in detail.
- Explain how your current research proposal will contribute to the current literature.
- Be specific, concise, and clear in your writing.
  - Metacognitive strategies may help.
Literature Review: Metacognition

- The cognitive process of writing involves preparation, self-monitoring, and self-reflection.
Research Design & Methods

- Consider independent and dependent variables.

- Measurements?
  - Quantitative or Qualitative?
  - Mixed-methods design?

- Describe specific activities and connect activities to specific outcome.
  - Example (visual charts are helpful to organize information/ideas):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will engage in a professional development workshop for 1 hour/each week (for the duration of 6 weeks).</td>
<td>Students will learn one specific teaching strategy or skill each week. In summary, students will learn 6 new strategies/skills by the end of the project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Competency, Skills, and Talents

• Identify you and your team’s strengths.
  • Emphasize these areas in the proposal.
  • Discuss your qualifications.
    • Most research proposals request information about you or your mentor’s background/area of expertise.
    • Connect to purpose of research proposal.
    • Example: if applicable, discuss your access to research materials/equipment that the current proposal will allow you to utilize.
Contribution to Knowledge

Keep this component salient throughout the writing process, and especially in the middle of the proposal.

Remind yourself, “this work is important!”

• Will you be adding to a current theory or introducing a new theory/model?
• Influencing policy changes?
• Improving best practices or recommendations?
• Always have a reference page!!!
### Timeline Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time Period</th>
<th>Identified Task</th>
<th>Purpose/Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June-July 2020</td>
<td>Prepare questionnaires and databases.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August/September 2020</td>
<td>Pre-data collection for students and instructors</td>
<td>Baseline data on current skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October-December 2020</td>
<td>Assess learning strategies.</td>
<td>Time 1; Learning Assessment 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January- May 2021</td>
<td>Assess intervention and progress with specific learning strategies.</td>
<td>Time 2; Learning Assessment 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2021</td>
<td>Post-data collection</td>
<td>Final Learning Assessment &amp; College Experience Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August- December 2021</td>
<td>Report Writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Budget Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Stipends/Costs</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>500 Misc. travel expenses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3500</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Integrative Process of Writing/Editing

Hayes & Flower's cognitive model
Additional Documents....

• Curriculum Vitae/Resume
• Abstract (brief summary of entire research proposal)
• Theoretical Models/Figures/Charts
Funding Opportunities

Funding Opportunities (csudh.edu)
Thank you

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