

BYU TESOL MA THESIS/PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

THESIS OPTION

A thesis is a carefully designed research study that tests a theory or hypothesis, or that answers specific research questions. This is usually intended to produce generalizable findings that are publishable in a quality academic journal. This may be a good option for students who wish to pursue a doctoral degree with a research focus.

Format

A thesis usually includes the following components:

INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the question(s) that will be addressed in the thesis. It explains why the question is worth trying to answer and outlines the key elements of the thesis.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section situates the question and the study within the broader context of previous research. This section helps provide a rationale for the study and its methods and often ends with a clearly stated hypothesis or research questions.

METHODS

This section outlines research methods and may provide a rationale for the various quantitative or qualitative methods that will be used. It must include adequate detail regarding processes, procedures, participants, or treatments so the work can be easily replicated.

RESULTS

This section presents the statistical or qualitative findings of the study. These findings usually are aligned with the hypotheses or research questions presented earlier.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This section discusses the results in light of the information presented in the review of literature. It helps the reader process the results in terms of its implications and practical applications in areas such as pedagogy, materials development, administration, etc. The discussion is typically followed by a concise concluding commentary on the study and its overarching message.

Manuscript and Product

Manuscripts can either be the traditional five chapters or a publication-ready article length based on the style guide of the intended publication venue.

6 Thesis Credits

L699R Thesis Research & Writing

9 Elective Credits

Must include L670 or L671

OR

one of the four specializations listed on the right.

ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT OPTION

Action research is classroom-based research. Teacher-researchers use their students as participants in studies that seek to solve a specific pedagogical problem, enhance some aspect of teaching and learning, or provide opportunities for analytical reflection that leads to further inquiry.

Action research is often interactive and dynamic. It may utilize any method common to traditional forms of research, but often is less hindered by the controls and constraints of more formal types of research. While projects usually strengthen teaching and learning within a specific context, they may not produce generalizable results that contribute to theory.

Format

Action research often follows the same format as a thesis though it may not always include the same level of detail. Nevertheless, the work must be well written and organized and clearly articulate the exigency for the work. The format may follow the same pattern described for the thesis option including:

INTRODUCTION

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

METHODS SECTION

RESULTS SECTION

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In some cases an alternative format may be preferable depending on the specific nature and purpose of the action research or the journal to which the manuscript will be submitted. Practitioners may choose to emphasize changes they would like to make in the classroom or address the effects of specific changes. Students should work closely with their Chair to determine the most appropriate format for their project manuscript.

Manuscript and Product

A publication-ready manuscript should be prepared according to the style guide of the intended publication venue.

6 Project Credits

3 credits of L688R Internship related to specialization and

3 credits of L698R Project Research and Writing

9 Credits toward Area of Specialization

Teaching - L655, L670, L671,

Program Administration - L679 and L677, plus L670 or L671,

Curriculum & Materials Development - L677 and L678, plus L670 or L671,

Curriculum & Assessment - L677, plus L670 or L671,

plus one chair-directed elective such as IP&T 652

Note that administrators at the English Language Center are eager to assist MA students who need to collect student data. However, since multiple research projects run concurrently, the ELC must carefully coordinate research and data collection to ensure that one study does not interfere with another. Therefore, data collection at the ELC will need to be approved by a student's Chair and the ELC. Frequent and thorough communication between all involved in the research process ensures that work progresses appropriately.

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DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OPTION

A development project is a carefully designed academic endeavor that produces a useful product. Usually this product will improve, enhance, or facilitate some aspect of teaching or learning within the curriculum.

Format

INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the developed product and clearly articulates the exigency for the work. It describes the design context. It also identifies the stakeholders and end users.

ANALYSIS

This section includes relevant documentation that informs the design of the product. It should include a needs analysis, constraint analysis, and literature review. It argues the case for the creation of product and provides valuable information that directs its design.

DESIGN

Based on the analysis, this section describes the design methodology (e.g., Layers, Backward Design, etc.) and outlines the content of the product. It answers design questions and describes decisions made by the designer.

DEVELOPMENT

This section describes the development of the product in terms of the processes and resources used. It may also mention situations that involved altering the initial design.

IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION

The implementation section may describe how the product was implemented or instructions for implementing the project. The evaluation section may describe how the product was evaluated or provide suggestions for future evaluation.

CONCLUSION

This section includes a brief overview of the development experience and any implications or recommendations regarding the continued use of the product.

Manuscript and Product

A publication-ready manuscript should be prepared according to the style guide of the intended publication venue. The product itself or information regarding access to the product is included at the end of the document.

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3 credits of L698R Project Research and Writing

9 Credits toward Area of Specialization

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Curriculum & Materials Development - L677 and L678, plus L670 or L671,

Curriculum & Assessment - L677, plus L670 or L671,

plus one chair-directed elective such as IP&T 652

EVALUATION PROJECT OPTION

An evaluation project is a carefully designed study that produces an evaluation report. It usually provides useful insight about the value or merit of some aspect of a program or any of its curricular components to determine where appropriate improvements can be made. This might include any number of curricular materials, how they are being implemented, administrative policies and procedures, or a variety of other things that may be worth evaluating.

Format

INTRODUCTION

This section frames the evaluation in terms of need and impetus for the evaluation. It describes the evaluand, context, and stakeholders associated with the evaluation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents research that relates to the evaluand. It highlights research that describes the efficacy of the evaluand and outlines criteria by which the evaluand will be evaluated. It may also refer to other evaluations that have examined similar evaluands.

EVALUATION DESIGN

This section outlines the evaluation questions, participants, and data collection methodology. Evaluation questions may be similar to research questions, but specific to the context of the evaluation. A description of the participants and data collection methodology is similar to those provided in research studies.

DATA ANALYSIS

This section gives a brief report about the data collected. It gives an overview of the data analysis procedures and describes the results of the analysis.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This section outlines strengths and weaknesses of the evaluand as well as limitations of the evaluation. It also provides recommendations for further action based on evaluation results.

Manuscript and Product

A publication-ready manuscript should be prepared according to the style guide of the intended publication venue.

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3 credits of L698R Project Research and Writing

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