

The phrase "Running head:" is noted on the title page only, followed by the abbreviated title. The abbreviated title should be a maximum of 50 characters.

TITLE OF ACTION RESEARCH REPORT IN ALL CAPS AND CENTERED GOES HERE

- The title should clearly describe your problem and intervention.
- A good title should be full explanatory when standing alone and contains the fewest possible words that adequately describe the contents and/or purpose of the report.
- The recommended length for the title is no more than 12 words.
- The title should indicate clearly what the report is about.
- The title should avoid describing the results.

An Action Research Project

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership

Lamar University

This document is designed so that you can save it and use its formatting for your own document. You can type your text over the sample text or delete sample text where necessary. Green information boxes can also be deleted.

~ To delete information boxes, click on its outer edge and press the Delete key. ~

(The title page is an exception to APA style, but a Lamar University requirement.)

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education in Education Administration or Education Technology Leadership

Select your degree.

by

Student's Name

Month and Year of Graduation (Month Year)

1 inch margin from Month and Year to bottom of page

Abstract

TITLE OF ACTION RESEARCH REPORT

by

Student Name

This is an exception to APA Style,
but a Lamar University requirement.

The abstract is an overall summary of the completed action research study. Wait until you have the results and conclusions of your research study to write the abstract. The purpose of an abstract is for the reader to quickly see if this is a report they wish to read. A reader should get a general overview of your whole project from reading the abstract. In your abstract, include a sentence on the purpose of the project, a brief description of your topic, the research setting and participants, your research methods, your basic findings and the conclusions and recommendations. Be sure to include the basics, i.e., school, location, problem addressed, intervention, and results as clearly and succinctly as possible. The abstract should “stand alone” on the paper’s second page. You should begin your paper on the third page, without paragraph indentation. Abstracts are typically 250 words or less.

Your action research report should begin on page 3 and should be:

- Double-spaced between all text lines
- Times New Roman typeface
- 12-pt font
- 1-inch margins on all sides
- The general rule is to use numerals to express numbers 10 and above and words to express numbers below 10.
- In-text citations: Follow the author-date method. This means that the author's last name and the year of publication for the source should appear in the text, for example, (Jones, 2014), and a complete reference should appear in the reference list at the end of the paper.
- Each source cited in text must appear in the reference list at the end of the paper and “each entry in the reference list must be cited in text” (APA, 2010, p. 174).
- Review carefully the APA guidelines to ensure all references and citations are formatted correctly.
- Use direct quotes only if you have good reason. Most of your paper should be in your own words. You should summarize or paraphrase.

Section One**Title of Action Research Report****Center and Bold the Title
(Lamar Requirement)**

Because the introduction is clearly identified by its position in the paper, it does not have a heading. Your paper opens with an introduction that sets the stage for the reader to better understand the overall action research project. The action research paper's first paragraph is an introduction to your topic. In this section you explain the problem that you are investigating and why this is a problem of practice which interests you. The purpose of the report should be stated in the first or second paragraph. The first part is typically several paragraphs describing the overall scenario or context of your study, e.g. name of school, location, relevant history, demographics (ethnicity and socio-economic level of students, grade levels, urban or rural, etc.), and any other relevant information that will assist the reader in understanding the context of your study. Include any significant challenges or biases discovered that might impact the project. The reader should have a good idea what the paper is about before finishing the first page.

The introduction section includes the APA level two headings for Background, Problem Statement, Significance of the Study, and Definitions. The introduction section is usually about three to five pages.

Background**Level 2 Heading**

In the background section provide a description of the problem you confronted, e.g., students disrupting class, detention hall not causing any improvements, low levels of knowledge or skill in reading or computer applications, etc. In general terms, try to describe to the reader the nature of the problem including severity, how long the problem has occurred, or any other relevant information so that the reader has a full understanding of the details of the problem or issue.

Problem Statement

The next part is a brief paragraph stating what you want to find out. This may be in the form of a research question or simply a statement describing the purpose of conducting your action research. You need to clearly state the fundamental question inherent in your research topic under investigation. The goal is to be able to answer the question at the end of the study. Qualitative problem statements are more open-ended; whereas, quantitative problem statements should be more focused. You should ask questions that are researchable given your limitations. Ask questions that can be answered with data. Include the intervention and the outcome in the question. The problem statement should not be stated in a manner that assumes the answer before the data has been collected.

Significance of the Study

The next paragraph explains who will benefit from the information that your action research project will provide, and how, or in what ways they will benefit. Be sure to add a sentence noting that your study will add to the knowledge base of your topic (e.g. middle school discipline, elementary peer tutoring, etc.)

Definitions

The last part of the introduction section will be a listing of terms that you believe need to be defined so that readers outside of your school or field can better understand. Education seems to have its own language. Arrange the terms in alphabetical order and use a separate paragraph for each term. Begin each paragraph with the term formatted as a level 5 heading (indented, italicized, only the first word capitalized, and ending with a period). Begin the definition on the same line as the heading. Definitions must be complete sentences.

Term one. Define the term, using a grammatically complete sentence. Definitions should be derived from professional or academic sources, not from dictionaries, and should include an APA style citation.

Term two. Define the term, using a grammatically complete sentence. Definitions should be derived from professional or academic sources, not from dictionaries, and should include an APA style citation.

Section Two**Review of the Literature****Level 1 Heading**

This is a new section of the paper. Use APA Level 1 heading (a bold, centered text header). The Review of the literature consists of an introduction, body (with subtopics/themes) and a summary (conclusion). The subtopics/themes that are identified should be APA Level 2 headings in this section. You should have at least three Level 2 headings. Write your literature review using the third person (i.e., do not use "I"). Use the past tense to describe results (e.g., "Ames observeded that . . .").

A literature review is a way of organizing what has been written about a topic by accredited scholars and researchers. Your purpose is to convey to your reader what you have learned through a careful reading of literature related to your action research project. The goal of this section is to introduce the reader to the major issues and themes from experts in the field. By broadening your readers' understanding of the major issues surrounding your research, you further solidify the credibility and trustworthiness of your work. The review of the literature section should contain no commentary, personal opinion, or reference to your Action Research Project; only synthesize the findings of the experts. Give an objective review of the issues involved. Be sure to explore all sides of an issue or topic. Highlight areas that have been successful in an organization. Also examine areas that pose challenges to the organizations. The

goal of the literature review is to create a coherent narrative that lays the foundation for your action research questions. You will cite research from articles, studies, books, etc., including district or state information gathered that is pertinent to your study. You do not need to review all the research, but try to find quality articles from experts in the field.

There is no limit on the number of references cited but typically, ten to fifteen studies will suffice. You are expected to include a minimum of 10 current references (no more than 10 years old) that clearly support best practices that relates to your study. At least 50% of references must be peer-reviewed articles. Use direct quotes only if you have good reason. Most of your paper should be in your own words. You should summarize and paraphrase. What you what from the source is the idea expressed, not the specific language used to express it. The review of the literature section may be several pages or many pages that explain what the current research shows about your topic. Typically, this section is six to ten pages. It is important that you present your action research report as one cohesive document, so make sure your literature review fits accordingly. Transition sentences are the best way to make sure your final action paper reads like one document. The review of the literature should exhibit synthesis, not just a descriptive lit of material available or set of summaries. You must discuss findings and conclusions. Each paragraph should provide the reader with strong "umbrella," topic/main idea sentence at the beginning, then provide evidence and analysis sentences (paraphrase and limit quotations), conclude with a transition/conclusion sentence to preparing for the next idea. All paragraphs within a subheading must be concise, cohesive, and related to the subheading.

Remember that each reference cited in the literature review should be written in APA format and included in the references section of your report.

Since there is a lot of information to convey in this section, in the introduction, you should identify the general topic, issue, or area of concern, thus providing an appropriate context for reviewing the literature. Point out the overall trends in what has been published about your topic and establish your reason for reviewing the literature. In the body, the main themes/subtopics that are identified as APA Level 2 headings and you may even need Level 3 headings. As you review the articles you found on your topic, look for at least three variables or themes that are consistently described in the articles you read. See if you can divide the articles by methodology, theme of the research, or any other significant factor. Make these groupings and decide what the subtopics should be based on your subgroups. These subgroups will evolve into a separate heading of the literature review. You should have at least 3 APA Level 2 headings. Finally, use an APA Level 2 heading for the summary section of your literature review.

Subtopic/Theme One

Indent and objectively present the best information you have found relevant to your second subtopic. Each subtopic must relate to your title/topic/central phenomenon. Each subtopic should have a minimum of two references and at least two paragraphs. Each subtopic must have support synthesized from the literature with logical transitions.

Subtopic/Theme Two

Indent and objectively present the best information you have found relevant to your second subtopic. Each subtopic must relate to your title/topic/central phenomenon. Each subtopic should have a minimum of two references and at least two paragraphs. Each subtopic must have support synthesized from the literature with logical transitions.

Subtopic/Theme Three

Indent and objectively present the best information you have found relevant to your second subtopic. Each subtopic must relate to your title/topic/central phenomenon. Each subtopic should have a minimum of two references and at least two paragraphs. Each subtopic must have support synthesized from the literature with logical transitions.

Summary

Text goes here. The review of the literature will conclude with a brief summary that directs the reader to the following sections. Summarize major contributions of significant studies and articles to the body of knowledge under review, maintaining the focus established in the introduction. No new information should be presented or cited in the summary.

Action Research Design

Subjects or **Participants**

Use APA Level 2 heading to introduce this sub-section. Describe your target population, including demographic information and number of males and females. If you used a sample, how did you select your sample and the rationale for your sample size? In this section also describe your setting, such as overall population, demographics, where the research took place, grade level, number of students, content area, etc.

Procedures

Use APA Level 2 heading to introduce this sub-section. Describe the actions (in research terms, this is the intervention) you took to address the problem you were trying to solve. Include a timeline of when you began and the completion date. If your intervention utilized steps of a longer process, include the timelines for each step. Also include resources used and persons responsible, if others were involved in your action research project. Remember that other

teachers and administrators may read your report, so think about how best to describe what you did so that they may replicate, if desired.

Data Collection and Analysis

Use APA Level 2 heading to introduce this sub-section. Describe the sources of information (data) you used to answer the research questions and how you collected the data. For example, this could be collecting data from direct observations, journals, interviews, journals, videotapes, office referrals, homework assignments, etc. (qualitative data) or test scores, surveys, questionnaires, rating scales, etc. (quantitative data). Be sure to accurately describe the method. For example, if you used a survey, was it for the entire group or individually; was it a pre and post survey; or was it a checklist or open-ended questions? If the survey was researcher-designed, describe the process by which it was developed.

Also, describe, in general terms, the data analysis techniques you used to analyze the data collected. Your data analysis techniques must be aligned with your research questions. The type of data you collect determines the data analysis techniques you use. For example, if you collected narrative, descriptive, and non-numerical data, such as observations, interviews, or journals, qualitative data analysis techniques will be used. In contrast, if you collected numerical data, such as test scores, survey results, questionnaires, rating scales, quantitative data analysis techniques will be the most appropriate way to analyze the data. (Refer to Mertler text, pp. 162 – 179.)

Section Four

Findings

This section presents the findings from your study. Notice that this is a new section of the paper. Use APA Level 1 heading (a bold, centered text header). In this section, you report the results from your data analysis. The discussion should be thorough and include information

about how the results relate to your research question. Any limitations or factors that should be taken into account when interpreting the results should be included here. Remember you are just reporting in this section. Save your interpretations of the findings or results for the “Conclusions and Recommendations” section. In the first paragraph of the “Findings” section, it is helpful to give the reader an introduction into the section’s content. Thus, you should introduce the themes which emerged from your data analysis and briefly explain how you arrived at the themes.

If you collected quantitative data (numbers of office referrals, grades, etc.) you should present the data in a clear fashion with tables, bar graphs, etc. In short, present numerical data in a simple way that the reader can easily see the results. If you collected qualitative data (observation notes, interview highlights, etc.) you may present your findings in narrative but bullets or sub-headings may help the reader better understand your results. This is not the section for long explanations of how’s or why’s, but the simplest and clearest way for the reader to see your results.

Summary

For the “Findings” section, it is helpful to include a short summary paragraph. Use APA Level 2 heading to introduce the paragraph and summarize your findings. Describe the results in terms of what you expected to find, and whether or not your original expectations were supported by the data. Tie the results back to the introduction, referring back to the articles you presented in the review of the literature.

Section Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

This is a new section of the paper. Use APA Level 1 heading (a bold, centered text header). The previous sections presented the facts of your action research project. This section begins with a brief summary of your project.

Conclusions

This final section is for you to present the conclusions that you believe can be drawn from the results you found. This is your judgment, as you are now an expert on your study. The discussion should be thorough and include information about how the results relate to your research question. Any limitations or factors that should be taken into account when interpreting the results should be included here.

Your study may have shown major or minor results or no changes in the problem you were trying to solve. Regardless of whether you got the results you hoped for, the findings of your study are a help to others. To know whether a particular intervention in a particular context works or not, is good information for educational leaders to have. So, be honest and do not feel your study failed if you did not have major changes or you completely solved the problem.

Reflection

Use APA Level 2 heading. Following your conclusions, you should reflect on your entire study and findings and conclusions. Remember there is no such thing as a perfect research study, you can always make revisions. In this reflection you summarize and explain what you gained from the action research process. Reflect on how your findings will contribute to a change in practice for you, your colleagues and your school. Reflect on aspects of your study that you might want to do differently next time. Mertler (2014) emphasizes the importance of the action research project through reflecting on questions such as: *Was I able to sufficiently answer my research questions? Might it be necessary for me to change the questions for the next cycle of my research and data collection? Did my research design end up being appropriate for what I wanted to address with my research questions? Were the data I collected the most appropriate for enabling me to answer my research questions?*

Recommendations

Since you led the action research project, you were in the position to best advise the reader with recommendations. Present recommendations *based on your findings*. Avoid the temptation to present recommendations based your own beliefs or biases that are not specifically supported by your data. Recommendations fall into two categories. The first is recommendation to those close to your study. What actions do you recommend they take based upon the data? A recommendation could be for all teachers or administrators with the same problem you solved to use your intervention or not to use. Most often you will recommend better ways to implement the intervention due to all the lessons you learned in your study. The second is recommendations to other researchers. There are always ways that a study could be improved or refined. What would you change if you were to do your study again? In short, this section is your opportunity to teach those reading your study what worked, what did not work, and ways to better solve the problem, as well as make recommendations for future research.

Concluding Remarks

Finally, end the report with general conclusions, and what they mean to the current state of the theory, what gaps still exist (what is still not well understood). You might add specific actions that the field of education needs to conduct further research on to fill those gaps.

Final Section – New Page

References

Begin typing here. Do not press the Enter key until the entire entry has been typed. Press Enter to begin the next entry. The references below are provided only as examples.

Barbour, M., & Ferdig, R. E. (2012). Virtual schooling. In S. McLeod & C. Lehmann (Eds.), *What school leaders need to know about digital technologies and social media* (pp. 53-66). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Reference from a chapter in a Book

Bonvillian, W. B., & Singer, S. R. (2013). The online challenge to higher education. *Issues in Science & Technology*, 29(4), 23-30. Retrieved from <http://www.issues.org>

Article from periodical with no DOI, provide home page URL for the online archive; if retrieved from a subscription database, not necessary to include retrieval information.

Harding, T. (2010). Fostering creativity for leadership and leading change. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 111(2), 51-53. doi:10.1080/10632910903455827

Article from periodical with DOI.

Mertler, C. (2014). *Action research: Improving schools and empowering educators* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Reference from a book.

Milligan, C., Littlejohn, A., & Marjaryan, A. (2013). Patterns of engagement in connectivist MOOCs. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 9(2), 149-159. Retrieved from http://jolt.merlot.org/vol9no2/milligan_0613.pdf

Article from an online periodical.

Texas Education Agency. (2013). *Texas academic performance reports*. Retrieved from <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/tapr/2013/index.html>

Reference from governmental agency.

- The reference section begins on a separate page.
- References are listed in alphabetical order by last name of the first author.
- Use hanging indentation.
- Double-space all entries.
- Format all hyperlinks so they appear with no underline.
- Capitalize only the first word of a title, proper nouns, and a word after a colon or terminal punctuation.
- Italicize book titles and journal titles.
- Italicize journal volume number, but do not italicize the journal issue number.
- Do not include retrieval dates unless the source material may change over time
- A common error is to forget a comma before the “&” when two authors or more authors are listed in a reference.
- Only list references mentioned in the paper on the reference page.
- Use current references, no more than 10 years old; at least 50% must be peer-reviewed articles.
- If no DOI number is provided and the article was retrieved from a subscription database and not an open-access URL, according to APA (2010), you are to “provide the home page URL of the journal or of the book or report publisher” (p. 191). You may need to do a web search to locate this URL. Do not add a period after the URL. In general, it is not necessary to include database information. Do not include retrieval dates unless the source material may change over time (e.g., Wikis).
- **Note: Automatic reference generators often make errors! Be sure to double check that each of the references listed in the reference section are cited using APA guidelines.**