MANHATTANVILLE COLLEGE
FIVE-CHAPTER EMPIRICAL DISSERTATION/PROPOSAL FORMAT\(^1\)

\textit{Note: When preparing a dissertation proposal, write in the future tense. When writing the completed dissertation, write in the past tense.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER ONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Approximately 15-30 pages)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Overview of Problem (1-2 pages) | • Purpose of chapter 1 and how it is organized  
• Overview of the research problem  
• Need for this study  
• State the purpose(s)/goals of your study  
• How does the research relate to the themes of the Mville doctoral program |
| BACKGROUND OR CONTEXT = Summary of Review of Literature (3-5 pages) | • Description of the problem and the research setting.  
• Summary of related literature & the gaps in it.  
• How your research will expand our understanding of the problem and inform practice in the field |
| RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND/OR HYPOTHESES OR PROPOSITIONS (as applicable) | • List research questions that describe what you want to know (e.g., “What is the relationship between socioeconomic status and achievement among students in Westchester County?”)  
• List hypotheses or propositions, if applicable, to be tested (e.g., “There is no statistically significant difference in the achievement scores of Black and White students.”) |
| CONCEPTUAL & METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN (3-5 pages) | • Briefly describe the conceptual framework and/or theory which will guide your study (e.g., Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory)  
• Describe your research design (quantitative or qualitative and the specific type - case study, correlation, program evaluation, policy analysis, survey, mixed methods, historical, etc.)  
• Briefly describe type of data collection techniques used (e.g., author created surveys or U.S. Census data)  
• Briefly describe type of data analyses to be used (e.g., multiple regression, etic coding, etc.) |
| SIGNIFICANCE AND | • Explain why this research is important to the field and how it |

\(^1\) We acknowledge ideas from both Hofstra University and Columbia University in creating this model.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIMITATIONS OF STUDY (1-2 pages)</th>
<th>might be applied in practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How does it contribute to existing research?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Why is the study necessary? (e.g., knowledge learned could inform new programs to help children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are significant limitations of study? (e.g., small sample size in rural area of the US: might not be generalizable)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUMMARY (1-3 paragraphs)</th>
<th>● Summarize the “big ideas” that will be investigated.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Summarize the compelling reason to do this study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Transition the reader to the next chapter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE     |    |    |
|-------------------------------------------|    |    |
| INTRODUCTION = Purpose of lit review (1-2 pages) |    |    |
|                                            | • Restate purpose of the study/    |
|                                            | • Explain the purpose of this chapter … “The purpose of this review is to examine and synthesize relevant and related literature…”    |
|                                            | • Describe organization of chapter |

| Literature Review (suggestion: use the conceptual framework – your concept map- to identify the sections of the literature to be reviewed) |    |    |
|                                                                                            | • Start each section of the review with a statement of its purpose (how it related to the RQ’s and a description of how you have organized the section. |
|                                                                                            | • The student may wish to organize literature referenced within each section using one or more of the following approaches (note: select the organizing framework that best complements the research problem/question): |
|                                                                                            | • Thematically |
|                                                                                            | • Chronologically |
|                                                                                            | • Theoretically/conceptually |
|                                                                                            | • Philosophically |
|                                                                                            | • Each section should contain a full description of relevant studies and elucidate any or all of the following: |
|                                                                                            | • History of problem (what other researchers have done to gain “working knowledge” of problem, how it has been examined) |
|                                                                                            | • Theoretical nature of problem (what are the issues involved) |
| SUMMARY (1-2 pages) | The merits of previous work (for basis on how to study problem in current study)  
|                     | Gaps in the literature & how your study will help fill the gap.  
|                     | Summary of current state of knowledge on the topic  
|                     | Gaps in that knowledge (what is unknown)  
|                     | Reiteration of what present study seeks to do in light of the literature discussed (your contribution to the profession)  

Key points to remember about the purpose of the Literature Review:

- Identify, evaluate and synthesize relevant and related literature  
- Provide selective summaries of the related and relevant literature  
- Distinguish between what has been done and what needs to be done  
- Provide a historical context and highlight the major developments  
- Establish context of topic or problem and provide a background for your study  
- Discover important variables relevant to the topic and understand structure of subject  
- Synthesize and gain new perspective  
- Relate the theoretical framework that you have chosen for your study to one or more of the main themes of this Doctoral Program  
- Identify relationships between theories (ideas) and practices  
- Identify main methodologies and research techniques that have been used  
- Describe the similarities and differences between your study and other studies  
- Place your own research study in a historical context to show familiarity with state-of-the-art developments  
- Demonstrate the value of your study in solving the real-life problems (Roberts, 2010; Burtin, 2010; Fink, 2010; Ridley, 2008; Hart, 1999)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER THREE</th>
<th>RESEARCH DESIGN &amp; METHODOLOGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| INTRODUCTION = Summary of problem (1-4 paragraphs) | • What is research problem?  
• Restate your research questions and/or hypotheses/propositions exactly as in Chapter 1 |
| CONCEPTUAL DESIGN | • Present a conceptual map and narrate a description of the factors at work in your research problem & question  
• Describe and provide rationale for any theory brought to your data analysis |
| METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN | • Describe the research design and provide a rationale for its use relative to your research question(s) |
| SETTING | • Provide a detailed description of the research context (district and/or school, personnel/teachers, demographics) |
| SAMPLING, CONSENT, CONFIDENTIALITY | • Explain all sampling decisions (inclusion and exclusion criteria)  
• Describe participants and evidence of access to them  
• Describe procedures for recruitment and obtaining consent  
• Explain provision of confidentiality in collection and handling of data  
• Explain informed consent and steps taken to obtain it (inc. copy of consent letter/form in appendix) |
| DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS (Quantitative studies) | • Describe each instrument  
• What is being measured  
• Description of instrument creation (or source of instrument)  
• Description of how validity has been established and potential threats to validity  
• Presentation of reliability statistics (e.g., Cronbach’s alpha) and potential threats to reliability  
• Description of how responses are coded  
• Describe instrument administration procedures |
| DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS (Qualitative studies) | • Describe the type of data needed to answer each of the research questions and the data collection procedures (e.g. interviews, focus groups, observations, documents, archival data, etc.).  
• Describe pilot testing if appropriate (and results and how it changed the instrument)  
• Describe triangulation procedures  
• Describe reliability tests (i.e. Cronbach’s alpha) if appropriate |
| **DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES** (Quantitative) | • Description of all statistical procedures to be used to analyze data  
• Rationale for procedures chosen |
| **DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES** (Qualitative) | • Discuss sequence and specific steps you have taken to analyze the different forms of data collected.  
• Describe etic coding referencing the theory (ies) you are bringing to the study.  
• Describe emic coding that was used (after data were analyzed) |
| **THREATS TO RELIABILITY & VALIDITY** | • Describe reliability assessment techniques (e.g. Cronbach’s alpha, piloting of instruments, etc.)  
• Describe how you have anticipated threats to validity  
• Researcher reactivity (including biases and how these will be minimized, your role as a researcher, your prior experiences with the research setting) |
| **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY** | • Describe the cautions that the reader should consider when considering how this study might apply to similar problems or settings. |
| **SUMMARY** | • Bring all the methods together in 2-3 paragraphs so the reader understands the approach you have taken to answer the research questions. |
## CHAPTER FOUR
### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

| INTRODUCTION | • Review of study’s purpose, significance, grounding in theory and methodology  
|              | • Organization of chapter and findings |
| RESULTS/FINDINGS | • Main body of chapter includes: 
|                 |   • Summary of setting and data collection procedures  
|                 |   • Themes (for qualitative research)  
|                 |   • Recapitulation of research questions/propositions/hypotheses  
|                 |   • Narrative presentation of data analysis including statistical tests and findings in quantitative or mixed methods research, with reference to appropriate tables and figures* |
| SUMMARY | Summary of key findings (without elaborating on implications)** |

### NOTES:

* Tables and figures supplement textual narrative, they do not replace it. Figures, and especially tables, usually include much information which is not referenced in text, and are normally placed in the appendix. Tables and figures need concise, descriptive titles which allow them to stand alone, without the reader needing additional explanatory narrative to interpret them.

** Chapter Four does not “discuss” the conclusion or implications of the findings. This chapter usually presents findings in qualitative/quantitative form. In qualitative studies, however, connections can be integrated (bordering on discussion) into the discussion to add some interpretation or definition of results.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| INTRODUCTION (1-3 paragraphs) | - Should include brief description of the organization of the entire chapter.  
- Restate research questions and/or hypotheses. |
| DISCUSSION | - Overall, what did you find (de-emphasize statistics)?  
- How do you interpret what you found?  
- What are the relationships/interrelationships and connections among the findings?  
- Relevance of findings to research questions  
- Unexpected findings |
| CONCLUSIONS/ IMPLICATIONS | - What does it all mean?  
- How have the research questions been answered?  
- What is the significance of findings?  
- What do the findings imply for participants, the topic, the problem and the field (what is your specific contribution to the field?)  
- Implications for practice in individually addressed groupings (education, students, teachers, leaders, preparation)  
- How do the findings relate to the themes of the Mville doctoral program? |
| LIMITATIONS | - What were shortcomings of study and research design?  
- What were shortcomings of data or analysis procedures?  
- How might generalizability of study be restricted? |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | - Recommendations for organization studied or other related organizations  
- Recommendations for policy makers.  
- Recommendations for future research. |
| SUMMARY | - A brief summarization of the major findings, and how this piece of research fills the gap in the literature and contributes to better understanding the problem. |

Follow last chapter with:

REFERENCES (only literature cited in chapters)
APPENDICES (in order of appearance in text)

- Glossary of terms
- Consent forms/letters
- Assent forms/letters
- Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval letter
- Surveys/questionnaires
- Data collection guides/protocols
- Models/conceptual models
- Sample codes/interview responses/transcripts
- Handwritten responses/writing samples
- Maps, handouts, flyers, brochures
- Computer printouts
- Supplementary tables

Revised: December 15, 2012
Doctoral Faculty approved on 01-15-2013