APA Reminders When Writing Your Dissertation

As you write your dissertation, you should consult your *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* – 6th edition frequently because the requirements for your dissertation in both content and form are delineated in great detail and depth in this manual. The manual covers so much more that the rules for “in text citations” and the “References” list. I recommend looking through this book to get an idea of all the items covered by the manual so that in your writing you will be certain to follow the APA requirements. If you ever have any questions or need further information, you can always contact me. Remember in all things pertaining to your dissertation, your dissertation chair is the decider. Start from the very beginning of your dissertation process using correct APA 6th edition format style requirements plus the Manhattanville dissertation formatting and documenting guidelines.

These sections go into great detail on the following subjects: Chapter 3 – writing clearly and concisely; Chapter 4 – the mechanics of style; Chapter 5 – displaying results (tables and figures); Chapter 6 – crediting sources; Chapter 7 – reference examples.

Here are a few highlights from the manual. These will be but a few items of the wide-ranging information contained in the manual. Refer also to the APA Style Blog ([http://blog.apastyle.org/](http://blog.apastyle.org/)). Refer also to the Manhattanville College School of Education and College Library *Formatting guidelines for doctoral dissertation*. This guideline, plus other helpful documents or links, can be found in the Ed.D. Educational Leadership Library Guide – link available on the Library home page.

- Go to the Mville College Library homepage –
  http://mville.libguides.com/libraryhome
- Click on “Library Guides” – under “Resources” left side of page
- Click on “Ed.D. in Educational Leadership”
- Click on “Dissertation Format Guidelines”

Dissertations written and published by graduated doctoral students at Manhattanville College are now available in the full text in the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. While not all follow exactly the same format style, they follow the same format style in general and will provide real examples from published dissertations. The dissertations published more recently are more apt to follow more closely the doctoral dissertation format style guidelines.
A. Chapter 3 – Writing Clearly and Concisely

1. Organization – 3.03, pp. 62-63 – Levels of Headings – The heading style recommended by APA consists of five possible formatting arrangements, according to the number in a top-down progression.

   APA Heading Levels
   Example taken from OWL at Purdue – APA Headings and Seriation (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/16/)

   Level 1       Centered, Boldface. Uppercase and Lowercase Headings
   Level 2       Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings
   Level 3       Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period. The text begins after the period.
   Level 4       Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period. The text begins after the period.
   Level 5       Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period. The text begins after the period.

In this example for the Traditional Five Chapter Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER ONE</th>
<th>INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>Heading Level 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Approximately 15-30 pages)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overview of Problem (1-2 pages)  **Heading Level 2**

- Purpose of chapter 1 and how it is organized **Heading level 3**
- 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

Please note: Entries in the Table of Contents match wording and capitalization of heading level structure in the body of the dissertation.
Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology  

Dependent Variables  

There were two dependent variables in this study: superintendent tenure and superintendent longevity.  

Superintendent tenure.  

Tenure refers to the number of years served as the superintendent of schools in one’s current or, for retirees, most recent school district.  

District population.  

District population refers to the number of residents living within a school district’s catchment area.  

Case study district one.  

This district had the smallest population of the three case study districts.  

2. Organization – 3.04, pp. 63-64 – Seriation – for key points within sections, paragraphs, and sentences: numbered lists; bulleted lists; and lists within a paragraph or sentence. There is very detailed information in this section for what types of lists are appropriate for each situation. Use numbered lists only to communicate chronology, importance, or priority.  

3. Grammar and Usage – 3.06 (Smoothness of Expression, pp. 65-66) and 3.18 (Verbs, pp. 77-78) - select tense carefully and maintain tense consistency throughout your dissertation. As you know for your dissertation proposal, you will write in the future tense because the study will not have been completed. For the dissertation defense and publication of the dissertation, “past tense (e.g., “Smith showed”) or present perfect tense (e.g., “researchers have shown”) is appropriate for the literature review and the description of the procedure if the discussion is of past events. Stay within the chosen tense. Use past tense (e.g. “anxiety decreased significantly”) to describe the results. Use the present tense (e.g., the results of Experiment 2 indicate”) to discuss implications of the results and to present the conclusions. By reporting conclusions in the present tense, you allow readers to join you in deliberating the matter at hand” (pp. 65-66). That being written, Dr. Wan prefers simple present or past tense be used in the final dissertation. Please remember that the present tense is used when
discussing what a chapter covers and past tense when discussing what a chapter has covered. For example, the literature review in this chapter presents past research in the areas of ....... . Then, the last concluding paragraph in the chapter - The body of literature reviewed in this chapter outlined the research pertaining to ...... .

Pronouns – 3.20  p. 79 – use who for human beings; use that or which for nonhuman animals and for things.

B. Chapter 4: The Mechanics of Style

1. Punctuation

a. Spacing after punctuation marks – 4.01, pp. 87-88

1) Insert one space after commas, colons, and semicolons; periods that separate parts of a reference citation; and periods of the initials in personal names.

2) Exception: Do not insert a space after internal periods in abbreviations (e.g., a.m., i.e., U.S.), including identity-concealing labels for study participants (F.I.M.), or around colons in rations. Spacing twice after punctuation marks at the end of a sentence aids readers of draft manuscripts.

b. Period – 4.02, p. 88

1) use periods in the abbreviations for United States and United Kingdom when these terms are used as adjectives – U.S. Supreme Court (do not abbreviate U.S. when used as a noun – APA blog-abbreviations FAQ). I visited the United States two years ago.

c. Comma – 4.03, pp. 88-89

1) use a comma between elements (including before “and” and “or”) in a series of three or more items

2) use a comma to separate two independent clauses joined by a conjunction – compound sentence
3) do not use a comma between two parts of a compound predicate
d. Semicolon – 4.04, pp. 89-90
1) to separate two independent clauses that are not joined by a conjunction.
2) to separate elements in a series that already contain commas.
e. Colon – 4.05, p. 90
1) use a colon between a grammatically complete introductory clause (one that could stand as a sentence) and a final phrase or clause that illustrates, extends, or amplifies the preceding thought. If the clause following the colon is a complete sentence, it begins with a capital letter.

The school has students from the following towns: Bedford, Bedford Village, and Mt. Kisco. NO – not a stand alone sentence.

The school has students from three different towns: Bedford, Bedford Village, and Mt. Kisco. YES – stand alone sentence.
2) do not use a colon after an introduction that is not an independent clause or complete sentence.
f. Parentheses – 4.09, p. 94 – do not use back to back parentheses; separate with semi colon.

2. Spelling
a. Datum/Data – 4.12, p. 96
1) Datum is singular
2) Data are plural – The data for all participants were listed in Table 1.
Capitalization, Italics, Abbreviation are also covered in this section. The APA Style Blog has a very good blog on capitalization and on abbreviations, both by Chelsea Lee.

   a. Below 10 as words; ten and above ten as numbers
   b. Grade 8; but eighth grade
   c. Use words to begin sentence (avoid if possible), title, or text heading.

3. Removing line spacing – particularly helpful where there are three lines rather than the required two lines between the content of the dissertation.

C. Chapter 5: Displaying Results

1. There are very specific format styles for displaying tables and figures – see APA manual – 128-161 – and follow closely.
2. Permission to reproduce data displays – 5.06, p. 128 – if a table, figure, questionnaire, or test item is reproduced or adapted from a copyrighted source, you must obtain written permission from the copyright holder and give credit in the tale or figure caption. Also very important – Permission to quote, reprint, or adapt – 6.10, p. 173.


3. RECENT APA Blogs on Copyright by two APA Style Experts

a. Navigating Copyright: How to Cite Sources in a Table by David Becker on June 22, 2016
   http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2016/06/navigating-copyright-how-to-cite-sources-in-a-table.html

b. Navigating Copyright for Reproduced (chart, graph, picture clip art, photograph,, infographic, figure, etc) Images – Overview and four parts by Chelsea Lee January 2016
   http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2016/01/navigating-copyright-overview.html

D. Chapter 6: Crediting Sources

1. Quoting and Paraphrasing –

a. Direct quotation written in a sentence - 6.03, pp. 171 - if the quotation appears within the sentence, close the quoted passage with quotation marks, cite the source in parentheses right after the quotation marks, and end with a period or other punctuation marks outside the final parenthesis.

b. Direct quotation of more than 40 words or more – 6.03, p. 171 - display it in a freestanding block of text and do not include quotation marks, begin the quotation on a new line at the same point a new paragraph would begin, double-space the entire quotation, and put the period at the end of the quotation with the parenthetical citation outside of the period.

c. Permission to Quote, Reprint, or Adapt – 6.10, pp. 173-174 – you may need written permission, which will appear in the Appendix section of your
dissertation, from the owner of copyrighted work if you include lengthy quotations. Each individual publisher has different quoted word use requirements pertaining to the permission. Please discuss with your dissertation chair if you have any questions about this.

2. Citing References in Text

a. Basic in text citation styles – follow examples in Table 6.1, p. 177

b. Two or More Works Within the Same Parenthesis – 6.16, p. 177 – Order the citations of two or more works within the same parentheses alphabetically in the same order in which they appear in the reference list with a semi colon between each entry. (Bandura, 1977; Creswell, 2014; Light & Light, 2008; Yin, 2016).

Specific examples for more specialized circumstances of two or more works within the same paragraph. Answers to my email query provided by an APA Style Expert.

Question 1:

Please notice that the in text citation appears at the end of the sentence rather than just after the quoted material. Is this okay? Please give me the correct answer.

Top down initiatives fail “to garner ownership, commitment, or even clarity”, while bottom-up initiatives fail to thrive (Fullan, 2016, p. 11; Hall & Hord, 2006; Sansosti & Noltemeyer, 2008)

Answer 1 from Stephanie, the APA style expert:

Citations should immediately follow direct quotes. Therefore, I suspect that the citations the author intended are actually something like this:

Top down initiatives fail “to garner ownership, commitment, or even clarity” (Fullan, 2016, p. 11), while bottom-up initiatives fail to thrive (Hall & Hord, 2006; Sansosti & Noltemeyer, 2008).

Question 2:
Please notice in this example that the page number is with the last in text citation in the parenthesis. Now what?

Research has shown that “as teacher efficacy increases, the perception of responsibility for and capacity to effect outcomes also increases” (Bandura, 1997; Erdem & Demirel, 2007; Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Nunn & Jantz, 2009, p. 600).

Answer 2 from Stephanie, the APA Style expert:

The citations should look like this:

Research has shown that “as teacher efficacy increases, the perception of responsibility for and capacity to effect outcomes also increases” (Nunn & Jantz, 2009, p. 600; see also Bandura, 1997; Erdem & Demirel, 2007; Guskey & Passaro, 1994).

c. Secondary sources – 6.17, pp. 178 – Use secondary sources sparingly, for instance, when the original work is out of print, unavailable through usual sources, or not available in English. Not appropriate for dissertations.

d. Giving attribution

1) Quotation – every quotation must be cited with the author(s), date, and page number. Use quotations very, very, very sparingly in the dissertation.

2) Paraphrased material – must also be cited in the text. Within a paragraph make certain that any text that is not your own and is paraphrased from an outside source is properly cited. From an email I sent in early May.

e. Remember - on p. 174 – “Each reference cited in text must be appear in the reference list, and each entry in the reference list must be cited in text”. Use “Control F” (find search) to cross check going through the dissertation to make certain each in text citation has an entry in the reference list and each entry in the reference list is cited in the text. Verify that the names are spelled correctly and the same in each place and that the date of publication is the same in each place.
I consulted the APA Style Web site (http://www.apastyle.org/) and did more searching about in text citations – paraphrasing. I clicked on “browse the blog” (http://blog.apastyle.org/), then, clicked on “paraphrasing” (http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2011/03/citing-paraphrased-work-in-apa-style.html#comments) and found this information about the requirements of in text citations when citing one source within a paragraph. Here are the highlights: As Mr. McAdoo mentions, personal pronouns can be used when there is a clear referent. I still advise (on a recommendation from another Mville Librarian) to frame the paragraph as well with the author’s name, date, p. #(if required) in the first sentence and last sentences. If your paragraph contains citations from two or more different sources, it is imperative to give individual, easily recognized, proper in text citation throughout the paragraph to any ideas that are not your own.

Citing Paraphrased Work in APA Style

by Timothy McAdoo  March 18, 2011
As the Publication Manual notes, citing your sources is imperative: “Whether paraphrasing, quoting an author directly, or describing an idea that influenced your work, you must credit the source” (p. 170).

But, we are sometimes asked how a writer can properly and clearly attribute multiple ideas within a paragraph yet maintain a readable and interesting text.

It’s a challenge! If you include a citation only at the end of the paragraph, the reader won’t know how many of the ideas in the previous sentences you are attributing to the cited author. But, including the citation at the end of each sentence, an absolutely clear and correct approach, can become redundant:

The cross-pollination and fusion of musical genres over the last 2 decades has exposed children to a diversity of musical styles (Viglione, 2010). Technology has also made possible the distribution and sharing of music in exciting new ways (Viglione, 2010). Music is shared through social media sites, analyzed and tailored for the individual listener via sites like Pandora, and simply given away by musicians on their websites (Viglione, 2010). As a result, in the future, children will likely develop eclectic musical tastes early and expect a diversity of musical styles at younger and younger ages (Viglione, 2010).

The paragraph above clearly attributes the work of Viglione (2010), but imagine a 20-page literature review written in this style! Page 16 of the Publication Manual shows an example of how to paraphrase multiple ideas without this redundancy.

Can you rewrite the paragraph above in a way that avoids redundancy but maintains the attribution of all of the ideas? Submit your suggestions in the comments section! There are many
ways to improve this paragraph, so we won’t post a “winner,” but we will follow up with comments and commendations on the suggested rewrites!

THERE ARE INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS IN THIS SPACE.
Timothy McAdoo said in reply   November 26, 2012 at 11:45 AM

Everyone who replied above has the right idea. When writing a paragraph, you can alternate between citing an author parenthetically and using the author’s name in the running text. You can also use “he” or “she,” when you know the gender of the author (see SA’s reworded paragraph above). **Just be sure that these pronouns have a clear referent.** By using these variations, you can avoid redundancy in your writing and still make clear throughout the paragraph that the ideas are those of the original researcher.

To your specific question, the Manual does not specify any number of sentences at which an author’s name must be mentioned. **The writer’s goal should be to delineate which are his or her original ideas and which are those of other scholars.** For more, see pages 15–16 and pages 170–173 of the Manual.

As Harris (2005) states, “if in doubt, cite it” (p. 19).

Also refer to APA, page 174 for suggestions when the in text citation is in the narrative (and not parenthetical) and including the date in subsequent citations within the same paragraph.

3. Reference Components are also in the section.

E. **Chapter 7: Reference examples** – **BECOME VERY FAMILIAR WITH THE CORRECT FORMAT STYLE FOR CITATIONS IN THE REFERENCES LIST! YOUR APA manual is your constant companion. “Authors are responsible for all information in their reference lists. Accurately prepared references help establish your credibility as a careful researcher” (APA Publication Manual, 2010, p. 180).

1. Do not rearrange order of listed authors to alphabetical; leave the order as appears on author listing. The first author listed is the lead author.

2. Supplemental citation information is found in the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Library Guide – Citing Sources in APA Style.

3. Much information is found in what is called the “grey literature” – technical and research reports published by educational, governmental, and non profit organizations. It is referred to as “grey literature because it is outside of book

4. Remember - on p. 174 – “Each reference cited in text must be appear in the reference list, and each entry in the reference list must be cited in text”. Use “Control F” (find search) to cross check going through the dissertation to make certain each in text citation has an entry in the reference list and each entry in the reference list is cited in the text. Verify that the names are spelled correctly and the same in each place and that the date of publication is the same in each place.

Supplemental Comment

1. Literature Review: Do not simply report what other people have done. “In a good literature review, the researcher doesn’t merely report the related literature. He or she also evaluates, organizes, and synthesizes what others have done” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 77). Here are some examples of what you might do:

   a. compare and contrast varying theoretical perspectives on the topic

   b. show how approaches to the topic have changed over time

   c. describe general trends in research findings

   d. identify discrepant or contradictory findings, and suggest possible explanations for such discrepancies

   e. identify general themes that run throughout the literature. (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 79)


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