Full Title of Your Senior Capstone Experience Thesis

Your Full Name

Washington College

This Senior Capstone Experience thesis is has been submitted to, and approved by, my Psychology Department research advisor, Insert Name of Advisor Here, in partial fulfillment of the Bachelor of Arts (or Bachelor of Science) degree requirements.

Acknowledgements

This page is optional. You can opt to put a personal touch here by thanking those who supported you or provided you with resources during the SCE process.

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Abstract (This title is not bolded)

Add a succinct summary of your study here. The summary should include information regarding your intro, hypothesis, methods, results, and discussion. There is no indentation of the first line of this paragraph. Pages 25 through 27 of your APA Manual will guide you in writing a brief, but comprehensive, summary. The abstract should be around 150-250 words and attention grabbing. Paper formatting should be 1” margins, 12pt font, and using a serif font (Times New Roman, Cambria…).

*Keywords*: Type all words pertaining to the main idea of your thesis that would be useful for those who are searching your topic

Your Full SCE Thesis Title

Think of this intro as the basis for your paper. The "funnel" order would begin by stating the general problem. Explain what you are investigating and why that is interesting or worthwhile. Provide statistics, if appropriate, to motivate the research topic. This beginning should motive the reader to want to continue reading the remainder of the paper.

For the next several sections, define all variables of interest and discuss pertinent literature. This will be the longest part of the introduction. Review the literature that is closely related to your topic, usually giving more emphasis to work that is most similar to your project. It might help you to put in subheadings for your variables (the subheadings can then easily be reorganized later, as needed). It is a good idea to continually add to the reference list as soon as you mention contents of the reference in the body of the paper. In other words, work on your reference pages as you write.

The last paragraph (or two) of your intro should explain how you intend to fill the gap in the literature you described with your study. Some students use the heading the “Current Study” to differentiate this section. You need to clearly state your specific hypotheses by the end of this section.

**Data-Driven Intro** (subsection heading – flush left, bold, first letter of words capitalized)

  If you are doing a data-driven SCE, a well-polished draft of the introduction is due early in November. Be sure to include a reference page when turning in the introduction. Make notes for yourself about any gaps or further research you think needs to be done.  It doesn't all have to be completed now.  This will guide you over winter break and during next semester to know what still needs to be added to develop your intro more. A final intro that is well developed will be a solid 10 pages or more in its final form.

**Theoretical Review** (this is a subsection heading)

A theoretical review is an in-depth examination of the recent literature in a particular area that is written to help to answer a research question (or questions) that are not clearly answered at this time. That is, a theoretical review should still be guided by a research question, but instead of answering the question(s) with data that you collect, you will answer the question(s) with the literature. For example, a question could be, “Which type of talk therapy results in better goal-driven outcomes for adults with ADHD?”

If you are doing a theoretical review, the final paper must be **at least 30** double-spaced pages of text, not including tables, figures, references, and appendices. A substantial portion, often about 10 pages, is due in November. Your final theoretical review might not have a results and methods section. Instead, the paper might be more easily broken up into chapters. While your SCE advisor may direct you toward papers to use as samples, there are a number of professional journals that publish review articles. You can model your review after articles in the following journals: *Psychological Review; Psychological Bulletin; Advances in Experimental Social Psychology;* and *Annual Review of Psychology*. Additional journals which may be particularly helpful to Behavioral Neuroscience concentrators are *Annual Review of Neuroscience, Nature Reviews Neuroscience,* and *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*.

**Method** (this is a major heading, center, bold)

**Participants** (this is a subsection heading)

Thoroughly describe human participants and/or animals (sample size, demographics, etc.). A summary table can be helpful in describing participants/subjects.

**Materials**

**Other headings.** Any further headings under the subsection (such as those you might use for each of the assessments) should be indented, bold, and with the first letter capitalized. It should be followed by a period and the first sentence of the section should follow on same line.

Thoroughly describe the apparatus and measures used. Whenever possible, comment on the reliability and validity of instruments used. Appendices are used to refer to scales/instruments that you created (e.g., demographic and debriefing forms). If using a premade scale you need only to refer to its title and author.

**Procedure**

Describe the procedure in enough detail that if someone had your materials and necessary expertise, they could easily replicate your study. Referring back to your IRB form is helpful.

**Results**

In this section, you will characterize the numerical findings for each of your hypotheses. Do not forget to include descriptive statistics for your variables. Tables are labeled in numerical order, based upon the order they occur in the paper (e.g., Table 1, Table 2, Table 3 . . .). Check APA manual for correct formatting of tables and figures. The same is true of Figures. Consult with your SCE research advisor about the placement of your Tables and Figures. While standard APA format for submitting manuscripts requires placing them after the reference list, some advisors prefer them integrated within the text of the paper. Please make sure statistics are rounded to two decimals (except for *p* values) and that statistical abbreviations are italicized (e.g., *r, t, F, p, M, SD)*.

**Data Analysis Meetings**

You should meet with your advisor to go over your data and results. Beforehand, enter all of your data into an SPSS file. Make sure to appropriately name all of the variables. If you did an online survey, download it from Qualtrics as an SPSS file. Select the column for the Gen Psych ID's, copy it, and paste the numbers into an email to the Psychology Student Worker. Copy your advisor on this email. Clean up the SPSS spreadsheet by getting rid of unneeded columns and putting in clear variable names. Qualtrics sometimes just numbers the variables by question number.

If you have your scoring information, you can use “Transform-Compute" to add up or average the item responses for each individual scale. This creates new variables by adding up appropriate item numbers. Be sure to reverse score any item numbers that require it by recoding first (Transform – Recode into Different Variables).

  Check to be sure there are no glaring errors by running descriptive statistics (Analyze, Descriptive Statistics, Descriptives) for all variables.  It defaults to mean, SD, min and max so you can check the minimums and maximums to see that everything is in order.

  Save the SPSS data and output files and send it to your advisor. Set up a meeting to go over your analyses. Try to analyze your main questions before the meeting so that your advisor can look over it and see what still needs to be done. Be sure to bring your list of hypotheses along with you to your meeting with your advisor, as well as all of your data in case any changes are needed.

**Discussion**

Most discussions begin with a comment about whether or not the original hypotheses were supported. First, remind the reader of your hypothesis, then discuss whether or not it was supported and explain why. Connect your findings to previous studies that you discussed in the literature review (were your findings in agreement with past research?) and/or find new literature to explain your findings that are different from what was expected. This should be the longest part of your discussion.

Your discussion should have a section about future research. Based on your findings, what further research questions need to be answered?

Include a section about the limitations of your study. Try not to end your discussion/paper with limitations. You want to leave your reader on a positive note, not after talking about all of the things you wish you did differently.

Include a section of implications. Consider why your results matter in the real world. Think about how counselors, medical practitioners, parents, college administrators (whomever seems relevant) can use your results to better their practice or others’ lives. This is usually a nice positive note to conclude the paper.

If you are seeking the Behavioral Neuroscience and/or Clinical Counseling Concentration(s), ensure that you have included all relevant information in your SCE paper that is required to meet the requirements of your concentration. If you are not sure if you have met the requirement, consult with the BN or CC directors who will have your original approval form.

References (start on a new page)

You can use Insert-Page Break to make sure the References always start on a new page.

Use reverse indenting and double-spacing throughout. In Word go to Layout – Paragraph and in the Indentation section under Special select Hanging.

Refer to your APA Manual for the appropriate referencing format for different types of sources.

Make sure your sources are in alphabetical order.

Notice there are not extra lines in between each reference.

The number of resources you need to thoroughly cover your topic ultimately depends on the topic chosen and what is considered acceptable by your SCE advisor.

Choosing your topic is arguably the most important step in the SCE process. Students choosing topics that are more general or methods examining many variables will likely need more resources than someone who chooses a somewhat novel, less researched, and more specific topic.

Cornell University Library’s website has excellent APA citation resources as does Purdue OWL.

Appendices follow the Reference section on a new page.