

Graduation Paper Manual

Guidelines for Research-Article Monographs



4th Edition - 2018

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(SNIES 104645)
- **B.A. in Foreign Languages Teaching - English**
(SNIES 106287)



Foreword

Research has a catalytic power. When teachers conduct research, their teaching practices improve and their professional identity blossoms (Edwards & Burns, 2016). When teachers publish their research, benefits accrue beyond their own classrooms and carry over into the entire academic community (Cárdenas, 2003). That is why professional language teachers should not only engage in research but also systematize and disseminate their research-based practices.

The times when graduating students were required to write obscure and long-winded theses that were later shelved in a library to collect dust are long gone. In line with the above arguments, senior students from the English teaching program at Luis Amigó are expected to conduct research relevant to their teaching and to pour it into potentially publishable articles.

To aid in the attainment of that goal, I wrote up the first edition of this research-paper manual in 2014. Students and teachers from the program piloted it in 2015. Later that year, the Curriculum Committee and the Council of the School of Education approved it as an official guide for student-teachers' graduation papers. Nevertheless, now that it has reached its fourth edition, many changes have taken place in the program.

Graduates today have multiple options to structure their graduation paper: Besides a research article, they can alternatively produce a reflection article, an article describing a pedagogical innovation, or a review of the literature on a specific theme in ELT. In any case, the ultimate form their paper takes must be agreed upon with their advisor.

This manual provides the essential requirements of format, structure, and style to write a monograph that mirrors a research article. To that aim, it follows the publication guidelines offered by both the American Psychological Association (APA - 6th edition) and reputed national academic journals in language teaching.

One fundamental change in the structure of the manuscript has to do with the presentation of the context. Even though students are still encouraged to integrate the analysis of the broader context into the presentation of the research problem, they are now required to describe the context wherein their study was conducted in the method section. This modification seeks to help manuscripts better fit into the structure of research articles today.

I still believe that, as far as academic writing goes, quality should take precedence over quantity. Therefore, in line with the extension requirements of most academic journals, the manuscript should be between 5,000 and 8,000 words. However, neither advisors nor students should be mistaken by this premise. The type of academic writing expected for the graduation paper should be rigorous, methodical, accurate, relevant, and concise. If done properly, this type of writing will require a change of paradigm that will nonetheless ensure that the graduation papers we produce reflect the professional, personal, and academic qualities expected from our graduates.

By following this model, we intend to (a) familiarize our graduating students with the procedures and principles of both conducting research in education and systematizing the results derived from it, and (b) increase the likelihood of publishing students' graduation papers as relevant contributions to the ongoing conversation of the academic community in our profession.

If you are a student, use this manual to write your monograph in the wake of a research article. When in doubt, check with your advisor. You can also check the APA manual to solve specific questions regarding style and format. If you are an advisor, keep in mind that this manual is meant to be used as a guide, not as an ironclad prescription. Use it wisely. Make sure your students preserve the necessary rigor in their writing, but give them sufficient leeway so that they can express the richness of their pedagogical and research explorations.

Above all, let's not forget that we are all embarked on continuous learning.

José V. Abad

December 11, 2018

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Part 1: Structure and Submission Requirements

Structure

	Research Proposal	Graduation Paper
Title Page	Required	Required
Abstract & Key Words		Required
Degree Requirement		Required
Acknowledgements		Optional
Table of Contents		Required
1. Introduction		Required
1.1 Statement of the Problem	Required	Required
1.2 Literature Review	Required	Required
1.3 Research Question	Required	Required
1.4 Objectives	Required	Required
1.4.1 General		
1.4.2 Specific		
2. Method	Required	Required
2.1 Research methodology	Required	Required
2.2 Context	Suggested	Required
2.3 Sample	Suggested	Required
2.4 Data collection	Required	Required
2.5 Data Analysis		Required
3. Results		Required
4. Discussion		Required
4.1 Interpretations and Implications		Required
4.2 Conclusions and Recommendations		Required
References	Required	Required
Appendixes		Optional

Submission Requirements

Copies Research Proposal	One copy for (course instructor) advisor.
Copies of Graduation Paper	Once the advisor corrects and approves the paper, one copy in CD-ROM will be required for the Library. Check submission procedures on the institutional website for specific instructions. Visit http://www.funlam.edu.co/modules/departamentobiblioteca/
Page size	Standard Letter Size (21.59 cms. x 27.94 cms.)
Font	Times New Roman 12 pts.
Length	Between 5,000 and 8,000 words, not including appendixes.
Margins	3 cms. for all four margins (top, bottom, left, right)
Alignment	Do not justify lines. Instead, use the flush-left style and leave the right margin uneven.
Spacing	Use 1.5 spacing throughout the paper between all text lines of the manuscript and after every line in the title, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and figure captions. Keep the 1.5 spacing also for the change of paragraph. Do NOT use double spacing to separate paragraphs.
Page Numbers	Use Arabic numbers on the upper right-hand side. Begin with title page and continue with all pages of the paper.
Running Head	A running head is a shorter version of the title placed in the header of every page preceding the page number. It is <u>optional</u> , but if you choose to use it, do it consistently. It should be typed with upper case and lower case combination, not with block capitals.
Indentation	Indent (one tab) the first line of every paragraph and the first line of every footnote. Type the remaining lines of the manuscript to a uniform left-hand margin. The default settings in most word-processing programs are acceptable. The only exceptions to these requirements are (a) the abstract, (b) block quotations, (c) titles and headings, (d) table titles and notes, and (e) figure captions.
Punctuation	Use standard English punctuation for academic papers. Leave one space after periods and commas. See APA 6 th ed. for further details.

- Seriation** Use a comma before the coordination conjunction and the last item in a list —This comma is known as Oxford comma or serial comma. Within a sentence, use commas to separate three or more elements that do not have internal commas; use semicolons to separate three or more elements that have internal commas.
- As an option, you may use bullet points or lower case letters in parentheses, eg. The participants’ three choices were (a) working with another participant, (b) working with a team, and (c) working alone. Make sure to keep the parallel structure within all seriations. See APA for more details.
- Title** The title should effectively summarize the content of the paper and invite reading. Combine upper case initials with lower case for the rest of the words. Do not capitalize function words such as articles or prepositions, unless they are the first word of the title. Do not use abbreviations in the title. Titles should be no longer than 12 words. Avoid using the name of institutions in the title. If you were granted authorization to use the name of an institution in your manuscript, do it in the body of the text.
- Style** The manuscript should be typed with adequate use of English grammar, syntax, spelling, and mechanics. Elements such as the use of contractions, which are acceptable in informal texts, are not appropriate in academic writing. The vocabulary used must fit an academic register. Seek words that allow you to express your ideas with clarity, economy, and precision. Avoid ambiguous, illogical, offensive, or highly colloquial terms. Check the APA manual for specific details on style.
- Abstract & Keywords** Abstract and keywords must be written both in English and in Spanish. The English and Spanish versions go one after the other, but on separate pages. Put the English abstract and keywords on the back cover of the electronic copies submitted to the library.
- The abstract should be a concise yet comprehensive summary of the contents of ALL the paper. It starts on a separate page after the title page. Do not indent the first line. The abstract should be between 180 and 200 words. It should briefly mention (a) the problem (topic) under study; (b) the essence of the method (data collection, analysis, context, and population); and (c) the key findings and implication(s).
- Keywords (one word) go right below the abstract after the word *Keywords* italicized and indented. Use three to five keywords. Place them in alphabetical order. Make sure they are neither too general nor too specific. Choose them in accordance with the topic and the research findings. It is recommendable that at least some of the key words correspond to technical descriptors used in the UNESCO’s thesaurus, in order to facilitate the indexation and retrieval of the text. Finally, at least one of the key words should refer to the learning or teaching of English.

In-text Citations & Quotations

Follow APA rules for in-text citations. Use a variety of direct and indirect citation styles. Remember that direct citations include word-for-word information enclosed in quotation marks, author(s)' last name(s), year of publication, and page or paragraph number. Indirect citations require paraphrased or summarized information without quotation marks but citing authors' last names and year of publication. Do not forget to introduce quotations with a signal verb or expression, such as "according to".

Restrict the number of block quotes (more than 40 words quoted) to only one throughout the text. Block quotes go without quotation marks, in a block that is centered according to APA rules and with a smaller font size (10 points). There should be no inconsistencies in the spelling or number of authors that are cited and those who are referenced for the same work.

References

Start the reference list on a new page. The word *References* should appear in uppercase and lowercase letters, centered. Use 1.5 spacing between all reference entries. Use APA style, i.e. alphabetize references and use a hanging indent format (the first line of each reference is flushed left and the subsequent lines are indented).

For the graduation paper there is a minimum requirement of 10 references. Make sure that 80% of them are no older than 8 years. Also, make sure there is perfect correspondence between in-text citations and referenced works. In other words, all the works cited should be referenced and vice-versa.

Each reference must contain all the information necessary to trace back the original source, according to APA standards. Remember that laws, language policies, institutional documents, linguistic frameworks (such as the Common European Framework of Reference [CEFR]), theoretical concepts, and research methodologies or instruments not designed by you should all be referenced. Check the APA manual when in doubt as to whether you should cite a source or how you should do it.

Tables and Figures

All tables and figures should be adapted to the APA style. Each table and figure must have a number and title explaining its content. Number and title are placed on the upper left-hand corner of the corresponding table or figure. These elements are numbered as they appear, and they should be referred to in the body of the text.

Vertical lines are eliminated of tables in APA style. Tables and figures should complement (not repeat) information that has been presented in the manuscript. Tables have a white background (no shading). In figures, avoid the use of dark backgrounds that prevent the reading of the text. Create contrast between font and background to facilitate reading.

- Appendices** In general, an appendix is appropriate for materials that are relatively brief and that are easily presented in print format. For only one appendix, on a separate page write *Appendix* in uppercase and lowercase letters, in bold-face, centered at the top of the page. For more than one appendix, label each one with a capital letter (Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.) in the order in which it is mentioned in the main text. Each appendix must have a title. In the text, refer to appendices by their labels. Tables in appendixes (for example, rubrics) should not be longer than one page.
- Footnotes** According to the APA manual, “footnotes are used to provide additional content or to acknowledge copyright permission status.” (APA, 2010, p.37). Use footnotes sparingly. Content footnotes are only to amplify, clarify, or exemplify information. But each footnote should contain only one idea. Use footnotes to provide the original version in Spanish of material from the data that you may have translated.
- Translations** Translate all the information obtained in Spanish and cited in the text, including the comments made by research participants. Indicate with a footnote that the original versions were translated for publishing purposes. Inasmuch as it is possible, translate all the appendixes into English, too.

Plagiarism

Properly using the knowledge created and published by others to build up your own research is a fundamental part of joining the dialogue of the academic community in our field of study. By doing it you acknowledge that scientific developments do not emerge in a vacuum but as part of an ongoing process of social construction. Therefore, using others' ideas and words is an essential requirement to your graduation paper that will increase its pertinence and authoritativeness. However, if you do not accurately credit those ideas and words to their original authors, you may fall into plagiarism.

Plagiarism involves presenting the material of others as though it were your own or even material that you may have previously published or submitted as coursework as though it were new content (self-plagiarism). Plagiarism is a very serious offense that has both ethical and legal implications. At Universidad Católica Luis Amigó, plagiarism constitutes a disciplinary fault deserving of the strictest sanctions.

Plagiarism in a graduation paper will not be excused. If it is proven that a student committed plagiarism in his or her graduation paper, the paper will be annulled, the course will be failed with a 0.0, and the student will not be allowed to graduate. Students charged with this offense have three days to appeal before the Director of the Program, who will take the case up to the members of the Curriculum Committee (Comité Curricular), who will make any final decision on this regard.

To avoid plagiarism you should resort to well-established techniques for in-text citation. Citations could be direct or indirect. For direct citations, you cite what an author said word for word. For indirect citations, you use techniques such as paraphrasing and summarizing.

Follow the instructions provided above and check the APA Manual when you cite a specific source. Remember that you should always provide author and date of publication regardless of the type of citation you are using. Also, keep in mind that all works cited should be properly referenced¹. Use the citation of secondary sources (as cited in...) sparingly. Finally, use self-citations only when necessary; this practice should never surpass 10% of all citations.

¹ See APA and examples provided in this manual for a clearer understanding of how to cite.

Heading levels

The 5 levels of headings below are to be used by students in the graduation paper. The main sections of the report correspond to the first heading level below. Within a section, students may need to use two or more levels of headings. It is recommended to create these headings as styles in your text processor, so they can be used to create the table of contents automatically.

Level	Style of Heading
1.	<p style="text-align: center;">Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use it for independent sections: Title, Abstract, Degree Requirement, Acknowledgements, Table of Contents, References, Appendices) - Use it for sections with one numeral that comprise the body of the text (1. Introduction, 2. Method, 3. Results, 4. Discussion)
2.	<p>Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use it for sections with two numerals that are part of the main sections (e.g. 1.1 Context, 1.2 Statement of the Problem, 2.1 Research Methodology, etc.)
3.	<p>Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use it for sections with three numerals, except for the specific objectives, which could go after a single space, with bullet points.
4.	<p><i>Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.²</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use it for sections with three numerals.
5.	<p><i>Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</i></p>

² The use of heading levels 4 and 5 is discouraged. Use them only if they facilitate the organization and understanding of the text.

Part 2: Sample Pages

Sample 1: Cover Page

Running head: PEDAGOGICAL FACTORS IN EFL TEACHING

1

Running head is optional. But if you use it, be consistent.

Pedagogical Factors that Influence English Teaching in Medellín Public Schools

Juan Sebastián Agudelo Mejía

Title centered and with capitalized initials in content words, followed by author's full name.

Graduation Paper Advisor: María Cristina Torres

Include name of thematic advisor of your research paper.

Universidad Católica Luis Amigó

Facultad de Educación y Humanidades

Licenciatura en Inglés

Medellín

June, 2019

Include institution name, school, program, city, month, and year at the bottom of the cover page.

Sample 2: Abstract and Key Words

Running head: Pedagogical Factors in English Teaching

Abstract

This action research study aimed at identifying the pedagogical factors that influence the teaching of English in Medellín public schools. Ten teachers from 12 public schools were observed once a week during two months. Participants completed a questionnaire that asked them to assess four factors: English proficiency, pedagogical ability to teach English, attitude towards English, and strategies to help develop students' communicative competence. They later took part in a focus group to clarify their answers. The data analysis led to the conclusion that teachers' linguistic ego, view of their teaching role, attitude towards English, and area-specific training greatly influence their teaching practices. The author suggests that these factors be explicitly addressed in English teachers' professional development.

Keywords: pedagogical factors, teachers' professional development

Abstract title should be centered. It should summarize the essence of the study in no more than 200 words.

Limit key words to 5. Alphabetize them and make sure that they facilitate indexation and tracking of the study.

Abstract should make mention of study's purpose, context, population, method, main findings and conclusion(s).

Sample 3: Statement of Degree Requirement

Running head: Pedagogical Factors in English Teaching

3

You may indicate the type of research project you conducted, i.e., action research, case study research, narrative research etc.

Degree Requirement

This action research project is submitted as a requirement to graduate from the Bachelor's Degree in English Teaching (Licenciatura en Inglés) at the School of Humanities and Education, Universidad Católica Luis Amigó, in Medellín, Colombia.

Indicate the adequate title of your program: Bachelor's Degree in English Teaching (Licenciatura en Inglés) or Bachelor's Degree in Foreign Languages Teaching – English (Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés).

Sample 4: Acknowledgements

Running head: Pedagogical Factors in English Teaching

4

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my advisor, Maria Cristina Torres, for her ongoing support and guidance. Conducting this action research project and writing this report would not have been possible without her support.

I would also like to thank my parents and family for their xxxxx.

In addition, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the teachers who participated in this study. With their work, xxxxx.

Sample 5: Table of Contents

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Sample 6: Starting Page

Running head: Pedagogical Factors in English Teaching

6

1. Introduction

1.1. Statement of the Problem

An unprecedented educational reform in the field of language teaching and learning is well on its way in Colombia since 2004, when the Ministry of Education presented the National Bilingual Program (NBP) (Programa Nacional de Bilinguismo, Colombia 2004 – 2019). The plan seeks that Colombian citizens become bilingual in English and Spanish by year 2019 to strengthen the country's position in the arena of global politics and transnational markets. Although stakeholders at the academic, political, and financial levels agree on the need for a policy to guide the dissemination of foreign and second languages within the national territory, the program has not been without critics.

Back in times of the General Education Law (Ley General de Educación, 1994), some researchers (Cadavid, McNulty & Quinchía, 2004; Valencia, 2006 as cited by Usma, 2009) had already declared that the conditions to properly implement foreign language teaching and learning in Colombian public schools were not given. The ambitious goals set by the NBP once again have brought to the forefront the impending need for a structural revamp of the educational system, as most public schools are humanly and logistically unprepared to measure up to the challenge of turning bilingual the student population of the country. Some researchers (de Mejía, 2006; Usma, 2009) have also warned that the plan, based on imported policies and adopted without any consideration to the local culture and knowledge, could easily contribute to widen the social gap between cultural minorities, underprivileged citizens, and elite economic groups. Furthermore, by demanding the same results from all Colombian students without making any provisions for their social background, the plan accentuates the disparities between private and public education, and perpetuates existing conditions of inequality thereby.

In this climate of concern as to the implementation of the plan and its impact on the public school system, an interdisciplinary group of teacher-researchers in the areas of psychology and English teaching at Fundación Universitaria Luis Amigó conducted a mixed research study about the psycholinguistic and pedagogical factors that influence the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in four public schools in Medellín, Colombia.

Sample 7: References

Running head: Pedagogical Factors in English Teaching

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References

- Abad, J., & Maturana, L. (2010). *Pedagogical and psycholinguistic factors that favor the learning of English in Medellín public schools*. Unpublished research report. Medellín: Fundación Universitaria Luis Amigó.
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- Cadavid, I., Quinchía, D., & Díaz, C. (2009). Una propuesta holística de desarrollo profesional para maestros de inglés de la básica primaria. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 14 (21), 135-158.
- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1-47.

Part 3: Guidelines on Content

For the content of the graduation paper, this manual provides some general guidelines as to the type of information that each section should include. However, you should consult your advisor or course instructor for further details.

1. Introduction

The introduction is made up of four sub-sections: the statement of the problem, the literature review, the research question, and the research objectives. The statement of the problem helps to contextualize the project and to justify its realization. It lets the reader know why it was important to conduct that specific research study on the selected topic within the context in which it was carried out. For those sections the writer should consider the following elements.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The presentation of the problem should be interwoven with the description of its context, whether it be global, or local, or both. Therefore, start this section by supplying a general picture of the **educational context** in which the problem was identified. Consider, for example, the social, historical, cultural, economic, and political conditions that configure that context. Mentioning the current language policies that regulate English teaching and learning may prove beneficial to that aim.

Then, proceed to describe to the reader how the topic under study is problematic in that particular context. Supply sufficient and solid arguments to explain why it is necessary or beneficial for a school community in particular and for the academic community in general that the topic you selected be investigated and how the study will contribute to solve the problem previously stated or to improve the school conditions described. Here you may include a statement of purpose, which goes beyond the objectives and states the ultimate aim that is pursued with the study. The statement of purpose should therefore describe what you would like other people to do once they learn about your research results.

1.2 Literature Review

Research is not done in a vacuum but as part of social, political, and cultural contexts in which scientific knowledge is preserved, transformed, and validated by academic communities across different areas. The literature review lets your reader know that you are not doing research on a clean slate or in isolation but rather acknowledging the tradition of an ongoing academic dialogue that you wish to advance through your own contribution. If done properly, completing a literature review will help you

- ❖ increase your understanding of both the issue you want to investigate and the research methods that have been used to explore it
- ❖ identify research that has already been conducted or that is still required in the topic of interest you want to explore
- ❖ become conversant with the scientific terminology used to refer to the phenomena you want to explore
- ❖ clarify the thematic, methodological, practical, or ethical orientation you want to give to your research question
- ❖ enhance the credibility of your study by supporting it on research-based educational theory or practice
- ❖ help to contextualize the problem in our local reality

According to the APA manual, “citation of and specific credit to relevant earlier works are signs of scientific and scholarly responsibility and are essential for the growth of a cumulative science” (p. 28). However, failing to properly credit your sources, whether intentionally or not, may lead you to commit plagiarism. To avoid this grievous situation, follow APA standards for citing and referencing sources. Keep in mind that every source you cite must be referenced and vice-versa.

The literature review provides the conceptual and methodological foundations of your study. The **conceptual framework** is often considered a fundamental component of your literature review, so as a general rule use this section to explain to the reader the concepts that you will address in your study as defined in the literature. You should also use the literature review to present your **research antecedents**, that is, previous research work conducted on your area of interest.

Whatever your approach, the literature review should follow a clear text structure. Use the past tense to refer to research work already conducted by other authors and the present tense to define concepts. However, be consistent within paragraphs by avoiding undue shifts in verb tense or mood.

For the purpose of completing your graduation paper, a minimum of 10 sources will be required. You are encouraged to cite both international and local authors. Furthermore, if you are doing research within a field that previous cohorts of students in the program have already explored, you should also make mention to their work

Nonetheless, be mindful that quotations originally in Spanish have to be translated into English and the original version has to be included as a footnote. Finally, prefer a combination of direct and indirect quotations to give variety to your writing style. Make sure that direct quotations are short, relevant, and accurate. Only one block quote (forty words or more) is allowed for the whole paper.

1.3 Research Question

Keep in mind that a good research question should be meaningful both to you and to the school community in which your project will be carried out. To that aim, it should be an open-ended question, NOT a yes-no question. Research questions usually start with *What*, *How*, or *Why*. In addition, your research question should (a) state the issue to be investigated and/or the action to be implemented and (b) Include the teacher-, students-, or classroom-related variables that affect your study. Finally, make sure that it is free from jargon and value-laden terms that may induce the answer.

1.4 Objectives

For every research project you should have a set of objectives that help you focus the study on getting the information necessary to solve the problem or answer the question you posed. Clear objectives guide the research process as they establish what you want to get out of the study and how you will proceed to do it. They should be phrased using the infinitive, e.g. to establish, to explore, to examine, to evaluate.

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective reformulates the research question as a general plan. It clearly and concisely states what you expect to achieve through the study by means of a broad action that encompasses a complex process.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives, which should be limited to three, describe the logical sequence of steps through which you will achieve the general objective. To a large extent, they constitute the parts into which the general objective is broken down. Therefore, they should state concrete actions that you should be able to complete regardless of the results you obtain.

2. Method

In this section you will describe in detail how the study was conducted. This will allow the reader to assess whether the methodological steps you followed were appropriate for the research objectives you wanted to achieve and for the question you wanted to answer. It will also help determine the validity and trustworthiness of the results you obtained.

2.1 Research Methodology

Start by stating the research paradigm—or approach—to which your study subscribes and the research methodology you followed. Make sure they are within the list of research lines and methodologies approved by the program to conduct the graduation paper project³. The program has adopted the qualitative research approach as a general rule, so you do not need to bring this up unless you clearly broke away from it. You may mention, however, if you used quantitative instruments to complement the data collection and analysis. The method is traditionally subdivided into three sections in which you will describe the specific context wherein you worked, the subjects who participated in your study, and the procedures you followed to collect and analyze data.

³ The research line for the English teaching Program is called CILEX (Construcciones Investigativas en Lenguas Extranjeras). Check with your advisor or with the Research Coordinator (Coordinador de Investigaciones del Programa) for details on the specific fields or thematic nodes included in this line.

2.2 Context

Describe the specific **school context** where you conducted your study. Consider the social, educational, and economic conditions of the school community; the physical infrastructure; and the surrounding neighborhood environment. Describe the specific conditions under which English is taught and learned in the school and the overall role and purpose it plays within the school curriculum (Proyecto Educativo Institucional). Consider the **classroom environment**, the teaching physical and human resources, the methodological approach used by teachers, the frequency and length of English classes, among other key aspects.

2.3 Sample

Describe the sampling criteria you used to select the subjects who participated in your study, including restrictions based on demographic, linguistic, educational, or cognitive characteristics. Detail the participants' major demographic characteristics, such as age; sex; ethnic and/or racial group; level of education; and socioeconomic status. For research projects in our field it is recommendable and often necessary to include the participants' language proficiency whenever that is possible. Also, include aspects such as disability status, health problems, sexual orientation, gender identity, language preference, and other topic-specific characteristics if they are relevant to understand the nature of your population or have an influence on the results you obtained. Briefly describe any agreements made with participants and institutions to collect and handle data within ethical standards, for example, through the use of consent forms.

2.4 Data Collection

Describe the sequence of actions you took and the instruments you used to collect data (written questionnaires, interviews, observations, etc.). Give specific information about the instruments that may help the reader understand their nature and scope. You should also include them as part of your appendixes. Provide the specific goals you sought to achieve through each of those actions. Give general information about the locations where you collected the data and the times used for completing this process. You may provide all or part of this information through an **Action Plan Table**.

For descriptive studies, describe the procedures for data collection in sufficient detail so that the reader may understand the complexity of the study. For intervention studies, describe the conditions under which the intervention was carried out, including information regarding the preparation, content, location, duration, time intervals, activities, and instruments used for the intervention.

2.5 Data Analysis

Describe the procedures you used to analyze the data. Indicate, for instance, if and how the data were categorized, reorganized, compared, assessed, or measured. Describe if analysis followed inductive, deductive, or integrated models for the identification of categories. Indicate measures taken to guarantee validity and reliability of the analysis, for example, through triangulation of sources, researchers, or instruments.

3. Results

This term is generally used for purposes of publication. In teacher research studies it involves the presentation of the findings. According to the APA manual, “In the Results section, (you should) summarize the collected data and the analysis performed on those data relevant to the discourse that is to follow. Report the data in sufficient detail to justify your conclusions. Mention all relevant results, including those that run counter to expectation (...)” (APA Manual, p. 32).

Provide a significant reflection upon the data, articulating it with both the information supplied by the literature and your own interpretations. Avoid generalizations, which should be left for the discussion. Instead, stick to what the data is revealing concerning the subjects of your study under the particular conditions you studied them.

Use descriptive rather than judgmental language and prefer the active over the passive voice when describing the findings. Use the past tense to describe what the participants or researchers did or did not do as evidenced by the data. Use the first person point of view (I or we) to describe what the researcher(s) did, but not to refer to all teachers or researchers. Employ significant samples of the data you obtained to support your findings.

Finally, whenever possible, group findings under subtopics for the sake of clarity and organization, and make sure that through your findings you are providing the necessary information to achieve the objectives you set. One way of understanding the use of sub-

topics is imagining them as separate and distinct results that describe specific sets of data. When several independent results are put together, you may say that you arrive at a significant finding.

4. Discussion

In this section you will provide the most significant contributions of your study to the field of English teaching and learning. After describing your findings, you are in a position to evaluate their significance and to describe their implications for a greater audience of researchers, teachers, and students. If you conducted an intervention, describe how the actions and instruments you used will help solve the problem you identified or answer the question you posed. Explain how the results you obtained may inform curriculum design or qualify teaching practices. Describe the limitations of your research and make general recommendations for future research studies that may be necessary to delve deeper into the issues you investigated. Finally, reflect on how the study impacted your development as a professional English teacher.

As a rule, use the present tense for this section. You may divide this section into two sub-sections: 4.1 implications and interpretations and 4.2 conclusions and recommendations, or you could keep them joined in a single text, but make sure that all of these elements are included in your text

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