[Insert Title Here]

**FOR USE WITH QUALITATIVE METHODS**

Please note that this is only a template. Relevant headings and subheadings should be included or excluded (particularly with grounded theory approaches).

by

[Insert Name Here]

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the

Abraham S. Fischler College of Education

and School of Criminal Justice in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University

[Enter Year Here]

**Approval Page**

This applied dissertation was submitted by Xxxxx Xxxxxx under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

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**Statement of Original Work**

I declare the following:

I have read the Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility as described in the *Student Handbook* of Nova Southeastern University. This applied dissertation represents my original work, except where I have acknowledged the ideas, words, or material of other authors.

Where another author’s ideas have been presented in this applied dissertation, I have acknowledged the author’s ideas by citing them in the required style.

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I have obtained permission from the author or publisher—in accordance with the required guidelines—to include any copyrighted material (e.g., tables, figures, survey instruments, large portions of text) in this applied dissertation manuscript.

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Name *>above the line, type your name<*

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Date *>above the line, type the date signed,* *e.g.,* March 31, 2020. Update date with each submission.*<*

**Abstract**

[INSERT TITLE OF DISSERTATION, e.g., Faculty Members’ Experiences With Integrating Mobile Devices Into an Undergraduate Teacher Education Program: A Phenomenological Perspective]. [INSERT NAME, e.g., Richard Dadier, 2020]: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: xxxxx, xxx xxxxx, xxxx, xxxxxxx

The first paragraph must contain all of the elements shown in this sample. The applied dissertation title, your name (surname last), and the year must be identical to the title, name, and year on the title page.

Single-space within each paragraph, but double-space between paragraphs. Do not indent the first lines of paragraphs. The narrative portion (i.e., after the informational first paragraph) of the abstract should be 220-270 words. The abstract must not exceed one page in length. See section 2.04 of the APA manual for content guidelines.

[INSERT DESCRIPTION OF DISSERTATION- Example Follows]: This applied dissertation was designed to provide better access to current information for the students and staff in a middle school. The printed materials located in the school’s media center were outdated, scarce, or inadequate. Electronic databases were available in the media center for online searching and information retrieval. However, the students did not know how to use databases as a source for completing class assignments or how to browse within these online services to find additional information. Teachers also did not know to use electronic information to enrich their lessons.

The researcher developed lesson plans and strategies to train students and teachers on two online services available in the media center. Daily sessions on these databases provided students and teachers with training in (a) e-mail usage, (b) searching and locating current events information, (c) printing from the screen, (d) saving messages, and (e) dialing into the online services. Teachers were encouraged to continue to use these services for curriculum enrichment and as an additional source for future lesson plans.

An analysis of the data revealed that students were more likely than teachers to use the online databases. The most successful activities were those that involved students in research information about current events. Although teachers planned assignments that required the use of online services, they did not want to provide additional time for students to be in the media center.

**Table of Contents**

Page

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

Xxxxxxxxxxx xx Xxxxxxxxx 1

Xxxxxxxx Xxxx Xxxxxx 2

Xxxxxxxx Xxxxx 4

Chapter 2: Literature Review 6

Xxxxxxx Xxxxxxxxx 6

Xxxxxx Xxxxxxxxxxx 9

Xxxxxx xx xxx Xxxx 11

Xxxxxxxxxxxx xx xxx Xxxxxxx xx xxx Xxxxxxxx 14

Chapter 3: Methodology 24

Xxxxxx 24

Xxxxxxxx Xxxxxxxx 25

Xxxxxxxxxxx xx Xxxxxxxx 27

Chapter 4: Findings 29

Xxxxxxxxxx xxx Xxxxxxxxx xx Xxxxxxxxx 29

Xxxxxxxxxxx xx Xxxxxxx Xxxxxxxxx 39

Xxxxxx xx Xxxxxx Xxxxxx 43

Chapter 5: Discussion 46

Xxxxxxxx 46

Xxxxxxxxxx 50

Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx 54

Xxxxxxxx xx Xxxx 57

References 59

Appendices

A Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case—Begin a Second Line Directly Below the First Line 60

B Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case 62

Tables

1 Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case 10

2 Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case 48

Figure

Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case 47

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

**Statement of the Problem**

This should include (a) a clear statement that the problem exists, (b) evidence that supports the existence of the problem, (c) evidence of an existing trend that has led to the problem, (d) definitions of major concepts and terms (this can be provided below in a subsection), (e) probable causes related to the problem or impact of the problem , and (f) what will be your focus within the larger problem with the intended site/participants.

*[This should be a substantial part of Chapter 1 (minimum 1-2 pages)]*

***Phenomenon of Interest***

Discuss the phenomenon/ problem in general; set the literary hook to draw the reader’s interest.

***Background and Justification***

Provide evidence from the literature showing that the problem exists and the relevance (justification for studying the phenomenon). The phenomenon should be discussed within the specific context and include assumptions, biases, and perceptions found in the literature.

*[This should be a substantial part of Chapter 1 (minimum 1-2 pages)]*

***Deficiencies in the Evidence***

Include a brief discussion of the gaps in the research literature (citing current sources) in relation to your problem and the specific gap(s) that your proposed study will address.

*[It is expected that your study addressing this gap(s) will add to the body of knowledge on your topic.]*

***Audience***

Discuss who would benefit from reading this dissertation and why.

**Definition of Terms**

Provide academic definitions (with references) of terminology used in this dissertation, that may be specific to this phenomenon or discipline.

**Purpose of the Study**

In this section, begin with a clear purpose statement as shown below:

The purpose of this qualitative study (specify approach/ design) will be to\_\_\_\_\_\_(explore, examine, investigate, further understand ) the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(central phenomenon/focus/ academic gap) for  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_(participants: person, process, groups) at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(site).

*[Ensure that qualitative terminology used in the purpose statement aligns with your specific approach (case study, phenomenology, grounded theory, narrative, ethnography, etc.). Also ensure that you do not identify the site by name, or any description that would enable identification of the site.]*

Then, follow with additional sentences that elaborate on this purpose statement.

*[This section should be a minimum of one paragraph.]*

**Chapter 2: Literature Review**

*[This chapter must be a minimum of 30 pages and include at least 30 current, peer-reviewed research articles. It is advisable to submit the list of all references intended for this chapter to your chair prior to beginning writing this chapter.]*

This chapter should contain the following elements and be well-organized using appropriate APA level headings: (a) an introductory paragraph: (b) a discussion of the theoretical perspective (theoretical lens) within which the study will be grounded; (c) a historical context of the overall phenomenon of investigation, if applicable; (d) the bulk of this chapter should be a synthesis of the relevant research findings and theoretical literature on this problem area, including additional evidence on the nature and the importance of the phenomenon; an elaboration of the gaps and limitations in the literature; a clear discussion of how further research should extend, differ from, or replicate past studies; and an articulation of the unique contribution that will be made by this study.

**Research Questions**

The research questions should be aligned to the purpose statement and grounded in the research gap/s identified in this chapter. Qualitative dissertations have main research questions, and some of these may also have sub-questions.

Main research questions may be written as follows:

* What are the experiences of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (participants) as they make meaning of\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (central phenomenon/ gap)?

* How and in what ways do\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (participants) describe \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (central phenomenon/gap)?

Sub-questions may be written as follows:

* “(What) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (aspect) does \_\_\_\_\_\_(participant) engage in as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(central phenomenon/ gap)?

*[In a qualitative dissertation, the literature review may need to be extended and research questions may be revised through the completion of Chapter 5. For example, you may be asked to refine your research questions based on knowledge acquired in data analysis]*

**Chapter 3: Methodology**

[*In this chapter, it is strongly recommended that only methodological textbooks and articles be cited as references when justifying methodological choices and decisions*.]

**Aim of the Study**

This section should be a minimum of a paragraph and should include a restatement of the purpose of the study and the expected contributions of the proposed investigation to the field.

**Qualitative Research Approach**

Provide some background to the approach/ design (narrative, phenomenology, case study, ethnography, historical studies, grounded theory, etc.) and why this is an appropriate strategy for your research. This section should include the following (with references from methodological textbooks/ articles): (a) identify and describe the approach/ design to be used; (b) provide some background information about the approach/ design (e.g., its discipline of origin, applications, and for phenomenology, the specific type, whether transcendental, IPA, etc.); (c) discuss why it is an appropriate approach/ design, and (d) describe how the use of this approach/ design will inform the sources of data collection, and the steps of data analysis.

**Participants**

Consistent with the purpose statement and the research questions, (a) identify the relevant characteristics of the participants (this should also include demographic information such as age, gender, ethnicity, etc.); (b) state and justify the number of participants (including inclusion and exclusion criteria); (c) discuss the type of sampling (e.g., purposive, criterion, snowball, etc.) with methodological references to support this decision; (d) describe the research site where you will recruit participants, and (e) your role in the research site, if applicable (e.g. organization, online platform, etc.)

**Data Collection and Instruments**

Identify data sources (individual interviews, focus group interviews, observations, documents, visual and audio materials, etc.) Describe in detail and justify each data collection method and the data collection instrument used. If you developed or modified the instrument, describe the process in detail, including references that influenced its development and how you established trustworthiness/validity of the instrument.

*[Write up each instrument under a separate 3rd level APA heading.]* Some of the commonly-used instruments in qualitative research include, the interview protocol (sometimes referred to as questionnaire or interview guide), observation checklist and data extraction form (sometimes referred to as document checklist or document form). Include relevant information pertaining to each instrument such as the source or developers of the instrument. Permission for use of the instrument in your study must be granted by the developer or you must state why permission was not necessary. Both the instrument and permission letter or email must be included in the appendix section. If an original instrument is created, you must identify the influencing literature. Next, describe how the instrument was validated. Ensure that your validation process includes an expert review panel and the pilot testing of your instrument with your intended participant group.

*[Do note that the pilot testing can only be done after preliminary IRB approval and information collected during the pilot study, cannot be considered as data for your study, nor should pilot study individuals be included as participants in your study. After conducting the pilot study you will need to submit the revised instrument for final IRB approval to begin data collection.]*

**Procedures**

Specifically, this is the “how-to” section of the chapter; a detailed description of the process of data collection based on the research questions. This begins from the final IRB approval, through the recruitment, the consent process, the data collection (describing the number of interview/ observation sessions, length and location of these sessions, and process of document collection if doing document analysis) through the member checking process checking. This section should read like a step-by-step recipe of how the study will be conducted. This section could also include a timeline of the data collection process and should be detailed enough to be replicated by another researcher.

[*This section should be a minimum of 2-3 pages. Please note that this section can later be copied and pasted when completing your online IRB application*]

**Data Analysis**

Describe how you will organize all your qualitative data (interview transcripts, document forms, observation checklists, etc.) including the transcription process if interviews were conducted, as well as your audit trail. Then, identify the model for data analysis (Saldana’s model, IPA, VSAIEEDC, etc.) and describe the steps involved in conducting analysis of your data. If data will be collected from multiple sources, explain the data analysis model/ strategy for each. If using a qualitative data analysis software (NVivo, MAXQDA, Quirkos, ATLAS.ti, Dedoose, etc.), discuss the specific qualitative software, Make sure that the language used when describing the analysis is reflective of the approach/ design used for the study. For example, a phenomenological study has specific language when describing the stages of analysis.

**Ethical Considerations**

This section should describe all the steps you will take to maintain ethical standards of the study. This includes voluntary participation and ability to withdraw at any time without penalty, steps taken to preserve anonymity and security of the data (password protected, encrypted, etc.). In qualitative research, ethical considerations must also include the power differential between the researcher and participant, and how this will be addressed.

**Trustworthiness**

This section should demonstrate aspects of the trustworthiness of both the data and the analysis. What makes the finding of your study credible? Steps taken to check the accuracy of the data collected and the interpretation might include the following: (a) member checking—asking participants to check the accuracy of the data and/or the findings (b) triangulation of the data - using corroborating evidence, (c) memos – notes while conducting interviews or immediately after, (d) field notes – making notes throughout the entire research process to document your thinking and decision-making.

**Potential Research Bias**

In this section, describe your own biases related to the topic, describe your personal and professional experiences with, and perceptions about your research topic and lingering questions that remain, that led you to conduct this investigation. Also, explain how you will manage potential bias, utilizing strategies such as bracketing/ epoché, journaling, etc.

**Limitations**

Include any limitations, restrictions, or constraints that may affect the dissertation outcomes. Limitations are not necessarily negative but rather make explicit the boundaries of the investigation, particularly as it pertains to recruitment and data collection. For example, the sample size in qualitative research is typically small, hence, it should not be considered a limitation. However, if during recruitment, the intended sample size was not achieved then it can be discussed as a limitation.

**Chapter 4: Findings**

This chapter usually has the most variation in its organization. Begin with an introductory paragraph to describe how you will present your findings in this chapter. Then, restate you research questions, as well as the research approach that you have used. This chapter present your data that should include quotes from interviews with participants and/or selected texts from analyzed documents, as evidence of the significant findings and themes. These are generated from analyses of your transcripts, documents, observation checklists and/ or other data sources.

**Chapter 5: Discussion**

In this chapter, you will interpret your findings from Chapter 4 (with references). Incorporate the following: (a) preconceptions and ideas as discussed in your introduction as well as through the analysis process (with references), (b) place your findings in the context of the existing literature and in some cases, practice (with references). (c) how your findings are similar or dissimilar to previous research findings.

This is the where we hear your voice in the dissertation. Include the following:

Meanings and understandings

* Implications of the study
* Relevance of the study

Interpretations and reflection:

* Significance and substance
* Importance to discipline
* Critique of findings with recommendations for change and future research

**Conclusion**

**References**

Last Name, F. I. (date). [*References should be included in correct APA style (7th ed.). Make sure to use a hanging indent and to double space the entire reference list. Please include the DOI as a URL if it is available. As a reminder the city of publication is no longer included.]*

Smith, J., & Creswell, R. (date). *[Make sure references are in alphabetical order and the hyperlink is in plain, black font (no underlining or blue font). To do this hit Enter after you type the URL and then go back and remove the underlining and change the font to black.]*