

Health Physical Education and Recreation Department
Utah State University

M.Ed. IN PHYSICAL AND SPORT EDUCATION CREATIVE PROJECT

The purpose of the M.Ed. degree is to help educators develop their professional effectiveness. The M.Ed. creative project is not the traditional research thesis commonly associated with MA and MS degrees, although it may involve action research. Instead, the creative project is an opportunity for the student to make a practical application of knowledge to a professional interest, such as the development or improvement of curriculum materials, teaching techniques, a management system, or an evaluations system; but not limited to these.

A written proposal for the project is necessary to avoid misunderstandings and to protect the best interests of the student and the program. In effect, the proposal has many of the attributes of any good contract. It should specify in adequate detail all important facets of the project. (Problem statement, literary review, etc.) The proposal provides a record for both the student and members of the committee of the specific nature and extent of the project.

EDUC 6810 or starting with Fall 2009 semester PEP 6820 Research for Classroom Teachers, is intended to help the student develop the proposal for the creative project. The student must then work with his or her committee chairperson (strong chair concept) to produce the draft of the proposal. Several drafts of the proposal may have to be submitted before it is accepted; therefore, ample time should be allotted for this possibility. Each member of the committee should be provided with a copy of the approved proposal and the student should keep a signed copy verifying the acceptance of the proposal.

WRITING THE PROPOSAL

The proposal should be well written in a format approved by your department, such as described by the Graduate School's Publication Guide for Graduate Students or the most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. These guides provide examples of the correct form for such matters as citing references in text, listing references, headings and pagination.

Each of the following sections will typically be included in a proposal for a creative project, in order that the student and his or her committee will be clear about the purpose of the project and the procedures to be followed.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this section is to present the problem—that is, the quandary, dissonance, or perplexity—to be addressed by the creative project. Problem statements are usually derived from concerns for professional improvement based on the individuals' own experience. An overview of pertinent literature on the topic, in which the student identifies professional knowledge in the area of concern, is also vital.

Identification of existing and desired conditions and the knowledge available should lead to a clear problem statement, typically expressed in terms of a “lack”. It is frequently a good practice to consult secondary sources such as Review of Educational Research, Encyclopedia of Educational Research, or Review of Research in Education. Such sources often provide a good overview of topics and can aid the student in conceptualizing clearly the problem underlying the proposed creative project. When the creative project is an internship, a statement of problem may not be appropriate.

Purpose and Objectives

Once a problem has been clearly established, the next step is to explain what the project is to accomplish in regard to the need. In this section, a general statement of purpose is usually followed by specific objectives that can be meaningfully addressed by the project. The objectives should indicate the intended outcomes of the project.

Review of Literatures

The purpose of the review of literature is to provide further support for the problem statement and for the statement of purpose and objectives. This section should be a well-organized critique and synthesis of the literature, especially in regard to its relevance to the proposed project. The skills and concepts learned in PEP 6820 should be helpful in critiquing the literature for this section. The source material might include research reports, secondary sources, and position statements. Trends and controversies in the area will be of particular interest.

The student should demonstrate that he or she is sufficiently familiar with the relevant, significant literature to be permitted to proceed with the project. The purpose is to demonstrate to the supervisory committee the student's readiness to proceed, not to present a final review. Although there may be exceptions (for example, in some reports of internships), the review of literature in the proposal will typically not be as comprehensive as that in the project report. Often a further literature search will be planned, and the specific indices to be searched, key words to be used, and the time period of interest should be specified.

Procedures

In this section of the proposal, the steps to be taken to carry out the project are described. The description should be specific enough to communicate to the supervisory committee the extent of the work to be done to achieve each objective. In this section, the student should anticipate committee members' questions about the population, the sequence of activities, and/or the materials to be involved in the project. A time line specifying the projected sequence and date of completion of the various steps can be helpful to the student and the committee members.

Evaluation

Judging the value of the completed project is critical, and a description of the evaluation procedures to be used must be included. The evaluation should be designed to answer such questions as whether the project objectives were fulfilled, whether there were any ways in which the project might have been, or could be, improved, and whether the project merits continued use by the student and/or others.

References

All of the literature cited in the proposal (and only that literature) should be listed in a References section using proper style and format. A supplemental reference list may be included in an appendix if the student wishes to identify other sources that were of value for the project but were not cited.

WORKING ON THE PROJECT

The student must be continuously registered until degree completion. As the project nears completion, the student should register for the departmental M.Ed. project course. The student must be registered for a minimum of 3 semester hours during the semester the project is presented to the committee. If you do not complete your defense during the spring term of your final year, you may have to pay for 3 credit hours to defend. This is not a good situation; but is up to you to finish in a timely manor.

Potential problems will be avoided if the student consults with his or her committee chairperson as work on the project progresses. Ample time should be allowed to complete the project.

PROJECT REPORT/ORAL EXAMINATION

Because of the varied nature of M.Ed. projects, no single format is ideal for every project. At the time the proposal is approved, the student and committee should agree on the most appropriate method for presenting the completed project to the committee. Even though the report to the supervisory committee may be in the form of a performance or demonstration, a written report must include, as a minimum, the following:

1. Proposal (with appropriate verb tense changes);
2. Results (included materials produced, description of the demonstration or presentation);
3. Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations.

The title page should follow a format that allows for signatures of committee members (see the attached example).

The report on the creative project is made as part of the M.Ed. Defense of the Project.

The written portion of the report should be presented to the committee at least two weeks prior to the defense. The "Appointment for Examination" form must be obtained from the department, completed, and circulated to the committee members at least one week before the final meeting. For the exam, the student should be prepared to discuss the project and answer questions regarding it, as well as to discuss major concepts from the coursework in his or her M.Ed. program.

After successful completion of the creative project final copies of the report are to be provided to the following:

1. One copy to the committee chairperson;
2. One copy to the department office to be placed in the office library collection.