ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY

Thesis and Project Guidelines

Master of Education
Faculty of Education

Last updated: January 8, 2026

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Introduction

Congratulations on embarking on your academic journey towards the completion of a Master of Education project or thesis at St. Francis Xavier University.

We have created this document as a guide. Please reference it often; as well, refer to the **Master of Education Student Handbook** for specific guidelines related to your degree pattern, academic writing, and APA referencing.

Project & Thesis Timelines

Students and faculty each have important roles and responsibilities in the research, writing, and program completion processes. The following sections list these roles in a somewhat sequential order. These lists are intended to indicate the relative roles and responsibilities, but each student and his or her faculty advisor may adjust some of their interactions as appropriate and mutually agreed upon.

Student Role: What You Do

The information on your role as a student is presented below with a series of checkboxes so you can track your progress. **The Chair of the Department of Curriculum and Leadership must approve all applicants for a project or thesis. Note: some tasks are applicable to thesis students only.**

Status	Task	Date Completed
☐	Students completing a thesis will normally complete all required courses prior to enrolling in EDUC 506 or 507. Students completing a project will normally complete all required courses prior to enrolling in EDUC 508.	
☐	Take EDUC 506, 507 or 508.	

As a student, when you complete EDUC 506, 507, or 508, you will:

☐	Meet with the Chair of the Department of Curriculum and Leadership and share program goals and request a supervisor. Complete the *Declaration of Research Interest and Advisor Request Form* **(see p. 6)**. The Chair, in consultation with the Dean, will determine the eligibility for an applicant to undertake a project or thesis. The Chair, in consultation with your supervisor, will solicit other professors to serve on your committee (the project requires a second reader; the thesis requires second, third and external readers).	
☐	Enroll in EDUC 593 (if you have space in your program) upon recommendation of the Chair of the Department of Curriculum and Leadership.	
As per the *StFX Academic Calendar*: Candidates must make a formal presentation of the thesis proposal. The formal presentation is normally made to the Faculty of the Department for which the thesis is being written, and it is open to members of the Committee on Graduate Studies, other interested faculty members, and graduate students. The Department Chair (and/or the candidate's thesis		

Status	Task	Date Completed
	supervisor) will ensure that at least two weeks' notice is given of the date, time, and place of the presentation of the thesis proposal. After presentation of the proposal, and after obtaining the approval of the appropriate ethics committee(s), and on the recommendation of the candidate's thesis supervisory committee, and the Department Chair or Director of the school, the candidate will be permitted to register in the thesis. (p. 28)	
☐	If appropriate, consider external sources of funding to support research.	
☐	In collaboration with your supervisor, develop and submit a first draft of your proposal.	
☐	Revise and resubmit subsequent proposal drafts to your advisor.	
☐	If your supervisor provisionally accepts the project or thesis proposal, submit it to the second reader on your committee.	
☐	Present your proposal in a meeting with your committee.	
☐	Upon approval by the Chair of the Department of Curriculum and Leadership, contact the Program Office at 1-877-867-3906 to register in EDUC 590 (Research project) or 599 (Thesis).	
☐	With your supervisor, complete and submit a Research Ethics application, if necessary.	
☐	Make requested revisions to the Research Ethics application and re-submit, if required. Typically, approval by the Research Ethics Board requires a **minimum of 6 weeks** after submission but can take longer. Once all required revisions are made, the Research Ethics Board will grant approval.	
☐	**In addition to StFX REB approval, most regional centres for education/school boards require their own ethics approval.** **No data may be collected before receiving ethics approval from both the StFX REB and other bodies, where appropriate.**	
☐	Submit a copy of the approved ethics application to the Chair of the Department of Curriculum and Leadership.	
☐	Conduct your research.	
☐	Submit first draft to your supervisor, following the Faculty of Education's writing and style guidelines outlined in this document, the MEd Graduate Student Handbook, and in the APA manual.	
☐	Revise and resubmit to your supervisor as required.	
☐	For thesis candidates, meet with members of the examination committee for the final oral presentation, which consists of an in-camera defense. Members of the Committee on Graduate Studies, and other faculty members of the Faculty of Education, may attend as observers. Note, a formal oral presentation of the project is not required.	
☐	Sign the Library Release Form.	
☐	After revisions, submit an electronic copy of the project or thesis to the Angus L. Macdonald Library as well as the Curriculum Resource Centre.	
☐	Ensure that all course requirements are complete and all outstanding accounts with the University are cleared.	

Faculty's Role: What Others Do

- In consultation with each graduate student, the Chair of the Department of Curriculum and Leadership determines a possible supervisor, consults with potential faculty supervisors, and informs the student of the appointed supervisor.
- The supervisor makes contact with the student soon after the appointment is made.
- The EDUC 506 or 507 instructor and the supervisor provide direction and clarification regarding your potential research.
- Your supervisor collaborates with you during the proposal development stage.
- After submission of the first draft, your supervisor gives feedback; the collaboration and feedback may include advice about course options—particularly electives—and relevant bodies of literature appropriate for the topic to be researched.
- Your supervisor continues to give feedback.
- The second reader's role is to advance the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological rigour of the proposal. In the case of a thesis, once the second reader accepts the proposal, the thesis proposal is sent to a department reader. Then, a proposal presentation meeting is scheduled.
- The thesis committee accepts the proposal, or asks for revisions and resubmission.
- Your supervisor supports and assists you in a mutually-negotiated manner.
- Your supervisor provides feedback on all drafts.
- Your supervisor provisionally accepts your work and submits it to the second reader. In the case of a thesis, it is submitted to the third reader for comments.
- After your committee members approve the thesis, it is sent to an external reader. The external reader is external to the Faculty of Education and normally has **at least one month to read and respond to the thesis**. The external examiner submits a written report of the thesis to the Chair at least one week prior to the final oral examination date.
- The supervisor, in collaboration with the committee, sets a date and time for the final oral presentation of the project or thesis.

> **The last date for students to submit graduate theses for fall convocation is September 19, and for spring convocation, the deadline to submit graduate theses is March 23.**
>
> In order to apply for graduation at spring convocation, you must fill out an Application for Degree/Diploma online by October 31, and by July 5 for fall convocation.

- The candidate's committee has three options: (a) accept the work as presented, (b) accept with revisions, or (c) reject the work.
- After acceptance of the completed project or thesis, the committee members sign the relevant acceptance form.
- The Chair of the Department of Curriculum and Leadership will distribute one bound copy of the completed project or thesis to the Angus L. Macdonald Library, including an electronic copy, and an additional bound copy to the Faculty of Education Curriculum Resource Centre's project and thesis collection. Please note that a student may purchase additional bound copies for their own personal use through the Angus L. Macdonald Library.

Roles of Project and Thesis Committee Members

Thesis Supervisor
The thesis supervisor works closely with the student through all phases of the thesis process, including proposal preparation and ethics review application, and makes substantive, theoretical, and methodological suggestions. In consultation with the student, the thesis supervisor makes suggestions to the Chair of the Department of Curriculum and Leadership for the second and third reader and arranges for an external reviewer. The thesis supervisor also arranges for the proposal presentation and the final thesis presentation seminar. An announcement of the proposal and thesis defense needs to be communicated electronically two weeks in advance of the session. Templates for these announcements are available from the Program Office.

You have the option to request changing your thesis supervisor, if you so desire. The Chair of the Department of Curriculum and Leadership, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty of Education, has the final decision based on faculty members' workload.

Second Reader
The second reader works with the thesis supervisor and the student to advance the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological rigor of the thesis proposal and then the thesis.

Third Reader (thesis only)
The third reader normally receives a copy of the final draft of the proposal and the thesis for comment. The Third Reader provides an additional set of eyes to raise any issues for consideration that may have been missed by the student, supervisor, or second reader. The third reader plays a consultative role in the thesis preparation process.

External Reviewer (thesis only)
The external reviewer is a person with a doctorate or equivalent qualifications who is external to the St. Francis Xavier University Faculty of Education, and has expertise in the area of study of the thesis. The external reviewer reads the thesis and makes a recommendation as to whether or not it should be accepted, accepted with revisions, or rejected. The external reviewer sends a summary of her or his comments to the Chair of the Department of Curriculum and Leadership, along with questions she or he would like asked at the oral defense.

Research Declaration Form

Students interested in doing a project or thesis as part of their MEd program have the option of meeting with a faculty member to discuss their research interests, and filling out the Project/Thesis Declaration form together. Conversely, students may complete as much of the form as possible and submit it to the Chair, at which point an advisor will be assigned to you. All faculty/student research supervision must have the written approval of the Chair and the Dean, and a copy of the Declaration Form must be on file with the Dean's office and with the Program Office. The Declaration form can be accessed at the following link: Project Declaration Form.

Research Ethics Protocol

The Faculty of Education adheres to the Tri-Council's (2014) policy statement entitled *TCPS 2: Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.* The Tri-Council comprises, jointly, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). This policy, administered by the StFX Research Ethics Board, is outlined briefly below, and the relevant appendix of the Tri-Council's policy statement is presented in detail. In some cases, additional research ethics clearance may be required from research settings (for example, government, school board, Band Council). Please go online to https://www.stfx.ca/research/research-ethics-board to obtain complete ethics guidelines.

Policy in Brief
Any student or faculty member undertaking research that in any way will involve human beings as research subjects is required, **before** initiating such research, to receive approval to conduct that research from the University Research Ethics Board (REB). **There is no exception to this.** It is only after a student or faculty member receives written, documented permission from the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board that the student or faculty member may proceed with the portion of their research that will involve human subjects.

Protocol
The St. Francis Xavier University ethics application form is available online at https://www.stfx.ca/research/research-ethics-board/forms-templates. All students must complete their REB forms with their thesis advisors before submitting them to the REB for review and approval. Documentation of REB approval must be forwarded to the Chair of the Department of Curriculum and Leadership.

Important Documentation
A copy of your letter of approval from the Research Ethics Board is included in your completed thesis as an appendix.

Writing a Project Proposal

A project proposal should be approximately **15 pages, double-spaced in length** (maximum). It should include an overview of the project's purpose; a concise, relevant literature review; and a section that outlines the intended research methodology and potential presentation format.

An MEd project may take any number of forms. For instance, graduate students have produced Web sites, multimedia presentations, autobiographical narratives, interactive CDs, extensive unit plans, teacher manuals, PowerPoint™ presentations, etc.

Project Preparation & Style

The project should be written in the past tense (I did, I observed, etc.) and it should adhere to the guidelines of APA (7th ed.). The project is usually more practical than a thesis, with less emphasis on research methodology and theoretical underpinnings and more emphasis on practical applications.

Although no formal oral presentation to faculty members of the project is required, it is recommended that you present your findings to a suitable public audience such as school in-services, school board meetings, public audience of teachers, school board officials, parents, etc. The completed project will be read by your project advisor (who is the course instructor for EDUC 590) and a second reader in the Faculty of Education.

Reference List

All projects must have a list of references following the last chapter and preceding any appendices. The reference list must include all references cited in the project, and no other references. The references are listed in alphabetical order, in accordance with APA 7th edition guidelines. Most projects require only a reference list. However, some projects may also have a bibliography following the reference list. A bibliography provides an extended list of references closely related to the project topic, but which may not be cited in the project itself, and which may be of interest to the reader. A bibliography may be subdivided according to subtopic, if useful. Page numbering of the reference list continues from the last section, in the same format.

Appendix/Appendices

All appendices should be labeled using letters (Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.), in the order cited in text, even if only one appendix is cited. Headings for each appendix should be parallel with section headings (i.e., Level 1), and each appendix begins on a new page. All appendices' pages should be numbered, in sequence continuing from the reference list (and bibliography if one is included), and in the same format. Styling (page margins, font, etc.) within most appendices should be similar to that in the rest of the project. Documents used as appendices should be retyped or electronically transferred and reformatted into the project document. When scanning images, please use high quality print and reproduction settings.

Writing a Thesis Proposal

Writing a thesis proposal is a signal that you have identified an area of interest that you deem worthy of formal research. Your proposal will be a concise outline of what you plan to do throughout the course of your inquiry. Thesis proposals are normally **no more than 30 pages (double-spaced) in length**, including references and appendices.

The proposal should include information on the following categories (Note, these headings are not necessarily the same headings you will use in your thesis):

Introduction (What do propose to do and what is your rationale?)

Untitled introductory paragraph(s). This is a brief statement in one or a few paragraph(s) to introduce your thesis topic and your practitioner focus, and to orient the reader toward a better understanding of your proposed research.

Personal educational context. This section provides the reader with a picture of your practical experience as an educator and of your research interests. It situates your study within *your* particular geographic/demographic and work setting. Often, this section is the largest component of this section.

Background to the study. This section provides a setting for you to state the focus of your inquiry (research question) in a way that is meaningful to a reader who may not be familiar with your specialized area of interest. It should not contain a full-fledged discussion of definitions or a review of the entire literature concerning the stated topic of inquiry, but may well cite an especially illuminating exposition or conception of the topic (e.g., educational trends related to the topic; unresolved issues; social, instructional, or organizational concerns).

Significance of the study. Usually, this section describes why your intended topic is significant to the field of education. If brief, the significance of the study may be part of the introductory paragraphs for this section.

Organization of the proposal. In a paragraph or two, establish the theoretical or conceptual framework of the ensuing sections for the reader.

Survey of the Literature (What do others say about the topic?)

This section provides a brief overview of *who* has written *what* about inquiry. The literature provides a theoretical or conceptual framework for the study and methods used. This locates your work in the larger field of education and focuses specifically on your topic.

Themes and sub-themes. Sections and sub-sections vary greatly according to the nature of the proposed research.

Be comparative and critical. In citing others' ideas and findings, be comparative (among references) and critical (use published literature to critique published ideas). Take the stance of a journalist reporting on the existing literature. Be sure references cited are relevant and current for

your proposed study; also, recognize relevant early theorists. You may occasionally show the connection between specific ideas and your context, but, in most cases, it is best to refrain from entering into an introspective conversation on the ideas—unless such an introspective conversation is part of a thesis whose main thrust is a comparative analysis of theoretical concepts.

Definition of terms. Terminology can have different meanings to different people, or unfamiliar technical terms may need to be explained for readers to fully grasp their implications within a project.

Methodology and Data Collection (How do you intend to explore your research question?)

This final section describes what you propose to do, how you will do it, and who will be involved. It explains the general approach you propose to take in pursuing the research and the specific steps you propose to use to collect data. Include ethical considerations here.

Methodological approach. This section includes a brief overview of the research genre you propose to use, and it may present the key theoretical constructs (citing literature) of the approach. It is important to explain why you chose this method, why this approach is appropriate for your study, and how you may be adapting and/or applying that approach.

Data collection activities. This section explains where and how you propose to obtain the data, including the nature of any human sources. It outlines the specific activities you propose to engage in (e.g., interviewing or self-reflective writing and analysis) to complete your study. Provide the generic characteristics of any participants, and describe how they will be approached/solicited to participate. Give the reader a sense of the uniqueness or generalizability of the data sources, especially in relation to the intended uses for the thesis.

Ethical considerations. Explain the steps you will take to protect the voluntary nature, ability to withdraw, and confidentiality of study participants during the study. Clarify how you propose to extend these considerations within the actual thesis (such as the use of fictitious names, removal/revision of identifying comments or descriptions, and opportunity for participants to review drafts).

Timeline

Be realistic in outlining the time it will take to carry out the various stages of your research. Plan for periods of research, writing, revision, and presentation. Be sure to add the targeted deadlines for Research Ethics Board Meetings and thesis deadlines.

Chapter Outline

Writing a draft chapter outline at the research proposal stage serves to help you to think about how you will organize your research and how you will present it.

References

Be sure to include all cited references used in this proposal, following APA guidelines.

Appendix (Appendices) [if appropriate]

Your appendix section is a place to include information such as learning models and/or drafts of questions for participants. The nature of your thesis will determine the nature of or need for appendices.

Thesis Preparation & Style

These guidelines provide merely one way of organizing your thesis. They are *not a recipe* or a rulebook. You must still determine what is best for you and the presentation of your work. These guidelines can help you, as a graduate student, and your advisor, to focus relatively more of your time on the research process and the content to be included in the thesis, and relatively less time on presentation considerations.

Overview of the Preparation and Style

The Faculty of Education follows the American Psychological Association's (APA) style. This style has become the standard for most publications in the social sciences and humanities. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th edition, is to be adhered to closely. **You may also refer to the [Academic Writing Handbook](#) for more information on writing and referencing.**

Length and Appendices

The thesis text should be **approximately 100 pages in length (double-spaced)**. It should incorporate reference citations. The reference list and appendices follow the text. Appendices, if any, should comprise only that material that cannot usefully or easily be accommodated within the text. Use original text and not photocopies in your appendices. Appendices should normally constitute no more than 10% of the total number of pages.

Editing

You are strongly encouraged to have someone read and edit your work. Even the best and most famous writers regularly use editors. An editor improves the flow and readability of your work by recommending changes in style and structure. Ask that person to look for such things as quality of content, presentation of ideas (smoothness, transition, precision, consistency, and clarity), grammar, punctuation, and spelling. **Remember, the entire thesis should read as a whole.**

Timelines and Review Process

The external reader requires at least one month to read and to respond to your work.

It is imperative that you be accessible by telephone and/or StFX email while you are completing your thesis. Please provide your thesis supervisor with an updated list of numbers and addresses where you can be contacted, and also send this list to the MEd program office via email, med@stfx.ca, telephone (902) 867-3906, or fax to (902) 867-5154.

Confidentiality

Your thesis is a public document. To avoid potential ethical issues regarding participant confidentiality, you should use fictitious names, unless written permission has been explicitly granted to use real names for persons and organizations. Use only personal data for which you have received informed consent (e.g., recorded interviews), and not from informal conversations for which consent was not specifically extended. Be sure fictitious names are not transparent (e.g., by revealing place of institution or identifying background detail of persons).

Publishing your Thesis on StFX Scholar

All theses submitted to the library must be in electronic format and will be deposited to StFX Scholar. StFX Scholar is the university's institutional repository, where academic and research materials are stored and made openly accessible to the public. Graduate theses submitted to StFX Scholar will also be deposited into the Theses Canada database run by Library and Archives Canada.

To prepare Your thesis for publication on StFX Scholar:

- Ensure your thesis is in electronic format and saved as a .pdf file.
- The thesis should not include any personal information other than the student's name (e.g., do not provide a student number, any signatures, or contact information on the thesis) as this is what will be publicly posted online.
- Ensure you have removed or have permission for any 3rd party material used.

To deposit your work, complete this online form and attach any relevant forms:
https://stfx.libwizard.com/f/grad_thesis_deposit

See this webpage for more information and permission forms:
https://stfx.libguides.com/theses/depositinggradtheses

Students may opt to purchase bound copies of their completed thesis/project. Your work is valuable and others may appreciate having copies presented to them. You may want or need to provide a copy to your school board, participants in your research, etc., and a copy for yourself of course! It may be appreciated if you provide copies for each of your committee members. Please note that all binding costs are the student's responsibility. Please follow this link for more information: Page for Page

A Typical Thesis Outline

Not all the suggested categories are necessary or appropriate for all studies, and the order of items within chapters (or the number of chapters) may vary somewhat. A sample title page, signing page, and table of contents are included in this handbook.

Order of Prefatory Pages

The thesis should contain the following prefatory pages, in the order presented here:
- title page (see example)
- faculty signing page (see example)
- library release form
- dedication page (optional)
- acknowledgements (optional, maximum one page)
- abstract (see details below)
- table of contents (see example)
- list of tables (if any)
- list of figures (if any)
- list of symbols or abbreviations (if applicable)

N.B. Leave these pages unnumbered.

Abstract

The abstract is a summary or condensation of the thesis and states the background and focus of the inquiry, the methods used, the key findings, and any significant conclusions and implications. The abstract should not exceed 250 words.

Table of Contents

The table of contents lists the main divisions (headings) of the thesis and all the sub-divisions (sub-headings) as well. It identifies the reference list and the appendices (if any). It is followed by a list of tables (if any) and a list of figures (if any), formatted in the same style.

Chapter 1: Introduction (Describe what you set out to do and why)

This chapter is preferably titled using appropriate, descriptive, succinct wording. Chapter 1 should deal with the following kinds of information, keeping in mind that this is an overview of the key elements of the thesis presented in a length and order that is most appropriate for your particular study (roughly 10–12 pages).

> **Untitled introductory paragraph(s)**. This is a brief statement in one or a few paragraph(s) to introduce your thesis topic and your practitioner focus, and to orient the reader toward better understanding the rest of the thesis.

Personal educational context. This section provides the reader with a picture of your practical experience as an educator and of your research interests. It situates your study within your particular geographic/demographic and work setting. Often, this section is the largest component of Chapter 1.

Background to the study. This section provides a setting for you to state the focus of your inquiry (research question) in a way that is meaningful to a reader who may not to be familiar with your specialized area of interest. It should not contain a full-fledged discussion of definitions or a review of the entire literature around the stated topic of inquiry, but may well cite an especially illuminating exposition or conception of the topic (e.g., educational trends related to the topic; unresolved issues; social, instructional, or organizational concerns).

Significance of the study. Usually, this section describes why your topic is significant to the field of education. If brief, the significance of the study may be part of the introductory paragraphs for the chapter.

Organization of the thesis. In a paragraph or two, set up the theoretical or conceptual framework of the ensuing chapters for the reader.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature (What do others say about the topic?)

This chapter provides the reader with a brief overview of *the works of the people who have influenced* your inquiry. The literature provides a theoretical or conceptual framework for the study and methods you will use in your study. This chapter locates your work in the larger field of education and focuses specifically on your topic.

Themes and sub-themes. Sections and sub-sections in Chapter 2 vary greatly according to the nature of the individual thesis. In certain theses, such as those that comprise comparative analysis of theoretical concepts, the literature review may comprise more than one chapter. In certain other theses, the review of ideas from the literature may be scattered among the other chapters.

Be comparative and critical. In citing others' ideas and findings, be comparative (among references) and critical (use published literature to critique published ideas). Take the stance of a journalist reporting on the existing literature. Be sure references cited are relevant and current for your study, but also recognize relevant early theorists. You may occasionally show the connection between specific ideas and your context, but, in most cases, it is best to refrain from entering into an introspective conversation on the ideas—unless such an introspective conversation is part of a thesis whose main thrust is a comparative analysis of theoretical concepts.

Definition of terms. Be aware that terminology can have different meanings to different people, or that unfamiliar technical terms may need to be explained so that readers can grasp their implications within a thesis.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Data Collection (Describe how you explored your research question)

In Chapter 3, you describe what you did, how you did it, and who was involved. Explain the general approach you took in pursuing the research and the specific steps you used to collect data. Include the ethical considerations here as well.

Methodological approach. This section includes an overview of the research genre you used, and it may present the key theoretical constructs (citing literature) of the approach. It is important to explain why you chose this method, why this approach was appropriate for your study, and how you adapted and/or applied it.

Data collection activities. This section explains where and how you obtained the data, including the nature of any human sources. It outlines the specific activities you engaged in (e.g., interviewing or self-reflective writing and analysis). Provide the generic characteristics of any participants, and describe how they were approached/solicited to participate. Give the reader a sense of the uniqueness or generalizability of the data sources, especially in relevance to the intended uses for the thesis.

Ethical considerations. Explain the steps you took to protect the voluntary nature, withdrawal ability, and confidentiality of the participants during the study. Clarify how you extended these considerations within the thesis (such as use of fictitious names, removal/revision of identifying comments or descriptions, and opportunity for participants to review drafts).

Assumptions. In applying general research techniques to specific situations, often, assumptions are made that underlie the nature of the data and findings, for example, assumptions about the wording of questions may influence responses received. If, upon reflection, you may have made any assumptions that could have influenced the nature of the data or findings, make them explicit here.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings (Describe what you found)

In this chapter, provide the reader with the key findings of the study. Generally, the findings are presented in an analyzed and digested format, and not as raw data. However, interpretation of the significance of study findings for you or other educators is often done in a separate chapter.

Organization of the findings. Sections and sub-sections are used to organize the findings; these are unique to each thesis. The headings chosen should enable the reader to grasp the basic nature of the findings by skimming the chapter.

Presentation format for the results. The themes that have emerged should be presented in a manner that enables the reader to easily perceive the most important elements first, and the nuances and detail (or sub-themes) in relationship to these key elements. Specific details, including dialogue, are used to amplify and illustrate the themes. Sometimes, figures and tables can help, especially for comparing numbers or expressions of perspectives, but be sure to describe the key features of each figure and table in the text as well. Perspectives expressed in the participants' own words can add insight and understanding for the reader.

Studies where findings are lengthy and fall into two or more discrete categories. In some studies, the findings may constitute the majority of the thesis or may comprise quite discrete categories. In such cases, the findings may be presented in two (or more) separate chapters, perhaps each of interest to different readers.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Interpretation, Implications, Conclusions, Recommendations (What does it all mean?)

The final chapter (or two) is the place to make sense of the findings in relationship to educational practice, previous understanding, or the research question posed in Chapter 1. In some theses (such as those that present a new model for practice), two chapters may be required to separate the relevant interpretation and implications from the conclusions and recommendations. Some of the topics you might consider are suggested below (note, these are for illustrative purposes only).

How do your findings support or challenge the literature? Show how specific findings (perhaps use specific examples from your data) contrast with or provide consistent evidence with comparable literature if the findings extend the literature (new contexts), expose weaknesses or gaps in it, or reinforce tentative ideas expressed in the literature.

What interpretations have you constructed to answer your research question? If you have a new model or interpretation to offer about a practice concern, describe it here and explain its features. Point out how your interpretation is distinct.

How do you integrate the new knowledge or perspectives you have generated? If your findings point to a new way of doing things, discuss the implications for your practice as an educator. Similarly, examine the implications your findings may have for other educators in their approach to practice. Discuss the significance of any changes implied.

Conclusions drawn from the study. Any conclusions you make should be based on your data and should flow from the findings.

Recommendations. Recommendations are your suggestions for others to consider as a result of the findings and interpretations presented in the thesis.

Bringing closure. Various techniques can help to bring a sense of closure to the thesis. First, be sure that any narrative threads, metaphors, or logical ideas you introduced in earlier chapters are tied together, without any loose ends. Sometimes, the conclusions and recommendations are presented in a separate short chapter. Often, a short, reflective, final section discussing the personal impact of doing the thesis is useful. In other theses, a short reflective chapter, often without section headings, is used to bring closure. Another useful closure strategy is to discuss the ideas for further research that completing this thesis has inspired.

References

All theses must have a list of references following the last chapter and preceding any appendices. The reference list must include every reference cited in the thesis, and no other references. The references are

listed in alphabetical order, in accordance with **APA guidelines (7th ed.).** Most theses require only a reference list. However, some theses may also have a bibliography following the reference list. A bibliography provides an extended list of references closely related to the thesis topic, but which may not be cited in the thesis, and which may be of interest to the reader. A bibliography may be sub-divided according to sub-topic if useful. Page numbering of the reference list continues from the last chapter, in the same format. **As an exception to APA formatting, references are presented singled-spaced, with one space between each reference.**

Appendices

All appendices should be labeled using letters (Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.), in the order cited in text, even if only one is cited. Headings for each appendix should be parallel with chapter headings (i.e., Level 1), and each appendix should be started on a new page. All appendices' pages should be numbered, in sequence continuing from the reference list (and bibliography if one is included), and in the same format. Styling (page margins, font, etc.) within most appendices should be the same as used in the rest of the thesis. Documents used as appendices should be retyped or electronically transferred and reformatted into the thesis document. When scanning images to be used in appendices, pay attention to print and reproduction quality.

Sample Page Formats

The following pages show sample formats for the title page, signing page, and table of contents.

Title Page

St. Francis Xavier University

CLASSROOM STORIES OF DIVERSITY

By

Leslie Smith

A Thesis Submitted to

The Department of Curriculum and Leadership
Faculty of Education

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Education
in Educational Administration and Leadership
[*or*]
in Curriculum and Instruction

Antigonish, Nova Scotia
Copyright, Fall [or] Spring, Year

Thesis Acceptance Form (Signing Page)

<div align="center">

St. Francis Xavier University
Faculty of Education

</div>

The undersigned have read, and recommend to the Committee on Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled [**Insert in Bold Font the Thesis Title**] submitted by [Insert Student Name] in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Education.

_____
Dr. [insert name]
Supervisor

_____
Dr. [insert name]
Second Reader

_____
Dr. [insert name]
Department Reader

_____
Dr. [insert name]
External Reviewer
Reviewer's University

_____
Date

Creating a Table of Contents

These instructions will help you to use MS Word to create a Table of Contents that is formatted and aligned correctly to APA 7th edition standards. You can avoid frustration and errors in style formatting by not linking your Table of Contents to the headings in your text and by not using MS Word's template function to create your Tables of Contents. It is best to create a Table of Contents from a new blank page of text. To get started, use MS Word help to find the official instructions for creating a Table of Contents for your version of MS Word; look for information about Creating a Table of Contents, Tab Leader and Alignment. A sample setup for a Table of Contents is given below; you will also see examples of tabs, alignment and leaders by looking at the Ruler Bar as you look through the sample Table of Contents below.

1. First, format the tabs for the first line as follows:
   a) Set tabs at 0.5, 1.0, and 1.5 for indents at the beginning of the lines according to the heading level using the following specifications:
      - Alignment: left
      - Leader: none

   b) Set tab at 0.3 or 0.4 inch *before* the right margin (say at 5.6 inch for page margins of 1.5 inch left and 1.0 inch right margin) using the following specifications:
      - Alignment: right
      - Leader: dotted

   c) Set tab at right margin (6.0 inch) using the following specifications:
      - Alignment: right
      - Leader: none

2. Type the headings, type one space after the last word, press the tab key for the dotted leader, press the tab key for the right-margin tab, then type in the page number.

3. Sometimes you need to delete a tab stop for a particular line if the heading is short in order to not have one of the first three tabs (rather than the leader tab) invoked after the heading. Conversely, if you have four levels of headings, you will need to add another initial tab at 2.0 inch for the indent at the beginning of this line.

The following is an example of how these tabs should align if formatted properly (Note the layout if a heading wraps to the next line):

Chapter 6. Reconceptualizing the Traditional Language Lab.. 89
    Perception versus Reality 89
    Seeing Second-Language Learners as Kindred Spirits 91
            A Closer Look at the Second-Language Learner Community 93
    Practical Implementation: Forming Second-Language Teaching–Learning
      Communities 97
                Seeing Things Differently Through World Traveling 104
                    Cultural differences in learning approaches 105
            Possibilities for Changing Second-Language Teaching 108
    Questions of Courage along the Way While Journeying 110