Final Paper Directions for MAT Degree Participants

The first draft of your paper is due May 9, 2010. It is expected that you will have worked with your Research Buddy on this draft prior to posting. This draft does need to include Author’s Notes and buddy responses. Post it on Blackboard. You will receive further instructions about where on Blackboard to post it. Be sure to include your name in the file title (i.e., LewisDraft1.doc) If you aren’t using Word, please save your file in rich text format (rtf).

You will be given feedback on your paper quickly, and your second draft will be due May 26, 2010. Our goal for most of you is that your second draft will be your final draft, or that you will have minimal (less than 10 minutes) of revisions to make to your second draft before it becomes final. Our other goal is for you to finish this paper before the summer classes begin and before you receive your MAT exam questions.

You are doing a shorter version of what those receiving their MA degrees through Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education will do.

See the handout “APA Notes” for instructions about the physical layout and mechanics of your paper, including how to format your paper and how to cite your references. This was handed out in January, and is also posted on Blackboard.

Your final paper should have a title page that looks like this, including all of the following information, centered vertically and horizontally on the paper, title in bold face.

Title of Your Paper Centered

Your Name
Your Hometown, NE

Math in the Middle Institute Partnership
Action Research Project Report

in partial fulfillment of the MAT Degree
Department of Mathematics
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
July 2010
On the second page of your report it should look like the following, centered vertically on the paper:

Title of Your Paper Centered

Abstract

Create a short summary of your paper (approximately 150 words), double-spaced. Your summary will say something like: In this action research study of my classroom of 7th grade mathematics, I investigated ______. I discovered that ____________. As a result of this research, I plan to ____________.

You now begin your paper. Pages should be numbered, with the first page of text following the abstract as page one (to do this in Microsoft Word, you need to insert a “section” break rather than a page break after your abstract).

You will divide your paper into sections (use these headings in your paper; recall that headings are bold, centered, and capitalized). Consider the page length guidelines to be minimums.

I. Introduction (1 page minimum)

What is the topic of your inquiry?

How did you come to select it?

How does this topic to your current classroom practice?

Suggestion: Return to the Problem of Practice statement you wrote for TEAC 888 to help with this. [be sure to update verb tense where necessary so that you consistently use past tense to talk about what you did]

II. Problem Statement (1/2 page minimum)

Explicitly answer these questions:

- Why is this topic and the problem of practice worth knowing about?
- Why should anyone but you care about this problem?

Note: in this section you are foreshadowing the literature review.
III. Literature Review

What does the scholarly literature have to say about your topic and this problem of practice?

For this section, you should use the literature review you wrote last fall for TEAC 888. Check over your introduction and conclusion before just pasting the whole lit review into this final paper. Make sure your introduction and conclusion provide good transitions for your lit review as part of this larger paper. Also check your verb tense (past tense talking about what you did, present tense talking about the literature).

IV. Purpose Statement (1/2 page minimum)

Having identified the research problem and why others should care, describe the point of your project.

What is the purpose of your study?

What are you seeking to understand in your inquiry?

What are your research questions?

V. Method (1 page minimum)

Here tell the story of your data collection.

How did you go about this study?

What data did you collect?

How did you gather it?

How did you organize the data?

How did you analyze the data?

Be sure to include the dates you collected data. If you ran into challenges or dilemmas during data collection, here is the place to briefly and concisely explain anything that may have happened that influenced your data collection.

Explain any instruments you used to help yourself with data collection and explain why you used these particular instruments. Make reference to your instruments and add them to your paper as appendices.

VI. Findings (5 pages minimum)
Look at your analytic memos. Many people find it helpful to organize this section around their research questions: include one section for each research question. This helps the reader of your paper see that you did address all of your research questions.

Describe your “average day” teaching during this action research project (2 pages minimum); this should address all of the questions from analytic memo 2 & 3

What does your inquiry yield?

What does the data have to say about your research questions?

What are your findings?

How did you arrive at these?

What evidence do you have to support your findings (recall that you need THREE forms of evidence to support each finding)?

VII. Conclusions: So what? (1/2 page minimum)

What do your findings have to say to you as a teacher?

What scholarly literature do the findings of your research support or challenge? Go back to some of the articles from your lit review. Be very specific in detailing how your findings fit with or contradict other authors’ findings.

VIII. Implications (1/2 page minimum)

As a result of your study, what action(s) will you take next with regard to your classroom practice?

IX. Author’s Notes & Buddy Responses

You need to include at the end of your paper your Author’s Notes and buddy responses you received while working on drafts of this paper. It is expected that you will include at least TWO sets of notes/responses as part of this process. You may wish to also add some commentary about how you incorporated your buddies’ feedback into your later drafts. If you chose to not incorporate some of their suggestions, please explain.

Total: minimum 10 pages (double-spaced) of writing + literature review + title page, abstract page, Author’s notes & buddy responses, references and appendices

On a new page after the last page of writing, use the heading: References. Use the “APA Notes” handout to help draft your references in APA format. (You can start from the references page from last semester’s lit review)
You need to include appendices. Each should start on its own page and have a heading: **Appendix A** (then Appendix B, C, etc.). You might include your interview questions, copies of surveys, codes you used for watching videotape, graphs created as part of your data analysis, etc., as appendices. Any appendix you include should be referenced in the text. For example, if you say you used a set of interview questions in the methods section. After stating that you, you may say something like, see Appendix A. Appendices are a way to include important information but not distract the reader.

**WRITING HINTS**

Paragraphs, when properly written, generally take up one third of a piece of paper. One sheet of paper should roughly contain three paragraphs. If it has many more than that, it is likely the paragraphs are too short and ideas in separate paragraphs should be combined into one. If you have a page with just one paragraph, it is likely the paragraph is too long and should be broken into two parts, with separate main ideas.

When you turn in a draft, it is assumed that you have written several drafts prior to create the “first draft” to turn in. It is also assumed that you work has been proofread for content clarity and mechanics before being submitted. Spell Check is not enough. Watch for complete sentences, full paragraphs, proper grammar and correct punctuation. Your Research Buddy will help with this.