

Guidelines for Practicum Project Proposals And Final Report

Proposal

The following are requirements for your practicum project proposal and leading up to your final report. As you develop your project, be aware that the aspects discussed are not unique to research. They are critical to good treatment of any type.

Use the following checklist **as a guide** to the timely and accurate completion of your project. Your proposal must be submitted to your GSU practicum supervisor in the term in which you plan to undertake the project. Some items need to be accomplished prior to consultation with your GSU supervisor.

Your timetable should be adjusted accordingly for an 11-week versus 13-week assignment. Check your placement schedule to make sure you account for enough weeks to complete your project by the end of the term. Keep in mind that GSU supervisors may need to adjust the schedule as they see fit.

The Practicum Project Proposal Review form should be signed at each stage of your project.

Week 1: Identify an area of interest that you want to investigate further and a possible subject at your placement. Have a discussion with your site supervisor about current therapeutic interventions in place, unique needs of the subject, challenges of therapy, and special history or circumstances.

Your goal at this point is to identify a **subject**, with a particular **disorder** of interest (i.e., speech sound production; language) and a possible **intervention** to improve communication (i.e., minimal vs maximal pairs; social stories). Use of the Individual Observation Documentation form is recommended to guide your decision making.

Week 1: Begin to review the literature on the disorder of interest. Identify an evidenced based intervention related to the disorder you have chosen. You should be looking at **peer-reviewed studies and research**. Avoid research based on pseudo-science (claims that appear to be based on the scientific method but are not), articles from websites which claim efficacy of a product or approach without evidence to support it, or a curriculum. Locate studies that are current but **no more than 10 years old**.

Week 2: Discuss your ideas with your on-site supervisor. Request a conference with your GSU supervisor to discuss your ideas and obtain **verbal** consent regarding your subject, the disorder area of interest, and the topic/intervention you have identified as a result of your initial investigation.

This is also the time to discuss the type of research design best suited for your project (i.e., ABAB versus alternating treatment).

Again, at this point you should be checking your calendar and schedule to make sure you have enough weeks/time allowed to complete your project by the end of the term. Discuss the schedule with your GSU supervisor.

Questions for discussion based upon your schedule:

How do I establish adequacy of baseline?

- Will the baseline be measured enough times to ensure that it is not changing for other reasons prior to the administration of the treatment?

What is the minimum/maximum number of measurements needed during each phase to demonstrate solid results?

Will the target behavior be measured enough times based upon my treatment design and schedule?

- When will treatment be withdrawn?
- When will treatment be reinstated?
- When will treatment be applied to another behavior?
- When will treatment be terminated?

Week 2: Review the American Psychosocial Association (APA) guidelines for journal writing using available online sources such as Purdue OWL. (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)

Identify how to correctly cite authors within text and within the reference sections of a report, and requirements for the title, spacing, formatting for headings, graphs, and quotations.

Week 3: Begin drafting the Abstract, Title, Introduction, Experimental question(s), Variables, Methods, Participant, Materials, Procedures and References sections of your study.

Definitions for each section are at the end of this document labeled **YOUR FIRST DRAFT**.

Week 4: Submit your first draft. The first draft of your project must be sent to your GSU supervisor for review with the Practicum Project Proposal attached. Keep in mind more than one revision may be needed as you progress through your project.

Week 4 (5): Resubmit your paper based upon the feedback and suggested revisions you receive from your GSU supervisor. Obtain consent to collect baseline data.

NOTE: You are not allowed to collect data until the project proposal has been reviewed and approved by your GSU supervisor.

Week 5: As long as your project has been approved, begin collecting baseline data over consecutive sessions.

Week 6 -7 - 8 - (9): Continue baseline/begin collecting data from treatment phases.

Week 9 -10: Continue to gather data for the end phase as necessary. At this point you should begin drafting your Results, Discussion, and Appendices sections. Submit for approval to your GSU supervisor.

Week 10 (11): Complete revisions following your GSU supervisor's review. If you are in an 11-week assignment, your final paper should be read and reviewed by week 10. If you are in a 13-week assignment, your final paper should be read and reviewed by week 11.

Week 11 (12): If you are in an 11-week assignment, your final paper should be completed by week 11, and the Practicum Proposal Review form should be signed by your GSU supervisor indicating a final read has been made. If you are in a 13-week assignment, make revision as necessary by week 12.

Week 12 (13): If you are in a 13-week assignment, revisions should be completed by week 12, and the Practicum Proposal Review form should be signed by your GSU supervisor indicating a final read has been made by week 13.

YOUR FIRST DRAFT should include a description of the project with the cover sheet. Make your first draft as complete as possible.

It should be understood that more than one draft may be needed. Label your drafts accordingly. It is imperative that revisions are made upon receipt of feedback or suggestions and resubmitted accordingly. The project description should incorporate the following information:

Abstract

The abstract should be descriptive and tell what your report contains. It is meant to introduce your subject to a reader, who must then read the report to learn the study results. It should be short (one paragraph) and include the purpose, methods, scope, but NOT results, conclusions, and recommendations.

Title

The title of your paper should give the reader some of idea of the nature of your study. Your title may include the independent and dependent variables. Keep your title limited to 13 main words.

Introduction

Do not label this section. Start with statements that lead the reader in the general area of your topic. To the extent possible, review pertinent literature on your therapy method. If applicable, indicate omissions or gaps in previous studies which gave you the idea for your study. Provide a logical and convincing rationale for the study via your review of the literature. End with a statement of your research question(s) or the purpose(s) of your study. Overall, the purpose of the introduction is to support your study questions or purposes. Everything should flow to that. Your first draft should include at least 3 – 5 well researched articles. Your final draft may include more.

Experimental Question

State your experimental question. Write your experimental question to specifically address the treatment you are providing. You should address which components of the treatment package you seek to improve and if the treatment chosen will be effective for a particular disorder.

Variables

Part of your statement of purpose or experimental question will specify your variables. These statements should be precise. Include a specific measurement where applicable (ex., frequency, duration, words, phrases, sentences).

Dependent variable (*i.e.*, the target behavior that you are measuring and are attempting to alter with treatment).

Independent variable(s) (*i.e.*, the treatment strategies, factors, or variables you are systematically manipulating or conditions that may produce change in the dependent variable).

Method

Provide your strategy for investigating your questions. This section typically will have three subsections.

Participant

Describe the participant (subject) in your study. Remember to maintain your subject's confidentiality and do not provide any specific identifying information which may allow the identity of the subject to be determined. Be specific about all relevant characteristics and include **as many that apply**. You may include the following (write narratively, not in a list):

1. age of the client
2. gender
3. ethnicity
4. native language
5. diagnostic label/diagnosis
6. medical history
7. educational level
8. symptoms of communication or swallowing disorder for which treatment is being provided
9. present level of performance
10. history of speech-language pathology and audiology services received
11. nature of support system/family
12. specific measurable therapy goal: This is the short-term goal or objective determined at the time of or prior to your working with your subject.

Materials

Describe the various tests, therapy materials, human observers, or equipment you will use. Be specific.

Procedures

Here you will describe your experimental treatment design. Provide a clear and *complete* description of your research design and of your treatment method. It should be very clear to the reader what your treatment entails in every aspect. Explain each phase of the design including detailed activities that will take place within each phase. Include how you will elicit, track and measure data.

Results

Describe what data you collected and how you analyzed and displayed them (e.g., tables, charts, or graphs). Your graph(s) should facilitate a visualization of the functional relationship between the treatment and target behavior. Your goals here is to describe what change in behavior suggests a treatment effect.

Discussion

This section focuses on what your results mean. Your discussion section should move from specific to general. Make careful and conservative statements about the clinical effectiveness of your results. Explain why you think you got the results you did. You will want to interpret your findings, evaluate your hypotheses, or research question, discuss unexpected results, and tie your findings to the previous literature (discussed first in your literature review).

Final Report

The final report is a description of how you completed your project. Your final report will draw heavily from your proposal. However, there are some changes you will make.

- If your project changed in any way from the proposal, prepare your final report to reflect the changes. Do not submit a final report that contains information about things you did not do.
- The final report is written in past tense. Change any future tense used in your proposal to the past tense, to indicate what you did.
- You will need to change your Results section to reflect the results you obtained.

References

If you have references at this point, list these, in APA format, on a separate page.

Appendices

Include items such as examples of therapy materials and prepared score sheets for data collection. Label appendices alphabetically, and consecutively as you referred to them in your narrative.