

Dissertation Examples: Education

About this document

This PDF lists 5 **education dissertation examples** and thesis examples (2019–2020), each a complete, openly licensed document you can read in full, with a note on what it does well and who it is useful for. Use them to see how a finished dissertation is structured and argued at your level before you write your own.

By [Derek Jansen](#) (MBA) · Reviewed by [Eunice Rautenbach](#) (DTech) · Grad Coach · October 2026

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Education dissertations

1. A Critical Ethnography of University Student Activism in Postcoup Honduras

Jairo I. Fúnez-Flores · PhD · Purdue University · 2020 · 373 pages

APPROACH Ethnography

WHY WE PICKED IT

A specialist read, and the one document here that shows you fieldwork going wrong. Chapter 3 carries Fúnez-Flores's research journal, dated. On 7 January 2019 he messaged two student organizations in Honduras and heard nothing, and the entry is him sitting with that: "I still do not have participants. It is frustrating." A reply came days before the semester started on 28 January, and that group then never wrote to him again.

Every methodology chapter you have ever read presents access as a settled fact. This one shows what it cost, across twelve months in the field. The data analysis section is equally concrete: fieldnotes split into descriptive and reflective halves, research memos written from those, NVivo, and member checking done in public: he put his interpretations in front of student activists at livestreamed forums to be argued with. The caveat is real, though. It is 373 pages of dense decolonial theory, and a student who copies the structure without the grounding underneath it will struggle to defend it. Read chapter 3, not the thesis.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

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2. "There is wealth in the struggle": Unearthing and Embracing Community Knowledges Through Organizing Work in Appalachia

Erin Brock Carlson · PhD · Purdue University · 2019 · 183 pages

APPROACH Focus groups, Participatory

WHY WE PICKED IT

Read this one if your project involves a community, an employer, or anyone whose time you are asking for. Carlson worked with 11 of the 12 fellows in one Appalachian fellowship cohort, using photovoice, focus groups and site visits to three of their communities, and chapter 3 is unusually honest about the machinery. Section 3.3.1 works through a genuine bind: a properly participatory study lets participants write the research questions, but the ethics board wants approved questions before you are allowed to talk to anybody.

Her answer, two sets of questions with Table 1 on page 62 setting hers beside the ones the participants generated, is a real solution to a real problem rather than a paragraph about rigor. She also states what participants were paid, per activity, in dollars. Section 3.3.2 records a recruitment plan that half failed (host community members were invited, exactly one said yes) and says so. And the coding section treats narratives, images and relationships as three different problems instead of pretending photographs code like transcripts.

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3. Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of Culturally Responsive Teaching and Their Sense of Belonging and Academic Self-Efficacy in Higher Education

Yujie Huang · PhD · Purdue University · 2019 · 210 pages

APPROACH Survey, SEM / factor analysis

WHY WE PICKED IT

If anyone has told you your research questions, your methods and your results chapter do not line up, read Table 1 on page 80 before you read anything else in this collection. Huang sets out all five research questions in one table, each against its variables, its scale of measurement, and the exact analysis that answers it.

Everything downstream obeys that table: chapter 4 heads each results section with the question written out in full, and chapter 5 is five numbered conclusions, one per question. That is the golden thread on a single page, and it is the cheapest thing here to copy into your own draft tonight. The study behind it is a survey of 1,061 undergraduates at a predominantly white institution and an HBCU, run through exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. Section 4.4 is worth a second look for a different reason: she accounts for every one of the 286 discarded responses by reason, which is how you report data cleaning without sounding like you are hiding something.

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4. Exploring Motivation for Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language

Akari Osumi · Master of Arts · Purdue University · 2019 · 96 pages

APPROACH Survey

WHY WE PICKED IT

This is what a Master's thesis is actually meant to look like: 96 pages, one campus, 100 students, a survey run over the closing weeks of a single semester. If you are currently designing something that needs three countries and two years, read it as a corrective. The structure is the main lesson.

Five research questions are numbered in chapter 1, and chapter 4 answers them in order under headings that repeat them, so nobody has to hunt for where a question got dealt with. Two smaller things repay a look. Table 2 gives the Cronbach alpha for every scale and names the three items she deleted and why, which is how you write about a measure you had to repair. And the limitations section on page 80 is analysis rather than apology: 100 responses from 400 invitations, a survey she thinks was too long (23 people quit partway), and the self-selection problem named outright, that students who volunteered for a survey about motivation were probably the motivated ones.

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5. Teacher Standards and Professionalism

Pauline Deborah Barnes · Master of Education · Victoria University of Wellington · 2019 · 108 pages

APPROACH Case study, Focus groups, Document analysis

WHY WE PICKED IT

Read this if you are researching your own workplace or your own sector, which describes a lot of part-time Master's students. Barnes asked what professionalism looks like in practice for New Zealand teachers, and whether the new teaching standards strengthen it, while working at the body that wrote those standards. She says so on page 31, and then lists four specific things she did about it: declaring her role in the recruitment materials, stating plainly that the project was not her employer's work, guaranteeing anonymity, and excluding any teacher she already knew through work.

That is how a conflict of interest gets handled, and it takes her one sentence. The other reason to open it is Table 2 on page 25, a recruitment funnel almost nobody publishes: 127 schools and early-childhood networks invited, 66 teachers interested, 41 who then could not do it, 16 who could not make the times, 5 who pulled out after agreeing, 45 in the room. She had planned 15 to 20 teachers per sector and finished primary school with two focus groups after repeated reminders brought no further interest, and she explains that rather than quietly reporting the final number. Chapter 5 is worth copying too: each of its main headings is one of her three research questions, phrased as a question, so the discussion visibly answers them.

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How to use an example dissertation

An example is a map of how one study was put together, not a template to copy. These four steps get the most out of one.

- 1. Read the abstract and the contents first.** They show the shape of the whole document before you spend an hour in it.
Recommended reading: [Dissertation and thesis structure](#)
- 2. Read the chapter you are writing next.** Look at how it opens, how it is organized under headings, and how it ends.
Recommended reading: [How to write the methodology chapter](#)
- 3. Check the level and the field.** A doctoral thesis goes further than a master's dissertation, and fields differ in what they expect.
Recommended reading: [What is a dissertation?](#)
- 4. Follow your own handbook over any example.** Where an example and your program disagree, your program wins.
Recommended reading: [Every example in the collection](#)

Used this way, two or three good examples teach you more than any amount of general advice.