

## Higher and Adult Education Comprehensive Exam Part 1: Research Design Question

**You are charged** with designing the methodology for a research study. This study CAN be based on your dissertation topic. This is essentially a complete, fully-justified chapter three of the dissertation proposal. Provide details, explain your choices, and justify each decision. An outline for a quantitative or qualitative study appears below.

### Chapter Three: Methodology Quantitative Study

1. **Research Design.** *This is a relatively simple, two-to-five-sentence paragraph indicating the type of research study you are going to do and justify your choice. It is good to refer to research guides, traditions, or experts for your type of study; this helps your reader place your methodology in the context of the guidance provided by experts.*
2. **Theoretical/Conceptual Framework (if applicable).** *Describe the theoretical/conceptual framework that you will be using in your study and provide a rationale on how the different theories and/or concepts are applicable to your study.*
3. **Guiding Research Questions.** *Provide your guiding research questions (and hypotheses if applicable for each research question).*
4. **Research Approach (if applicable).** *What is the research method, and why is this the best approach for your study. Provide an overview of the approach and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this approach.*
5. **Instrument.** *Describe the development of your instrument and how you intend to pilot-test it to ensure face validity. A draft instrument should be available as an appendix. Indicate which items will be used to answer which research questions. If your instrument has already been developed, you will want to describe the instrument, who validated it, how it has been used, research or researchers who use it, where it is available (or how it was acquired), and a copy should also be*

*included as an appendix.*

6. **Variables.** *Define major variables: independent and dependent variables and their relationship to the instrument. Explain how they will be coded. Do this in prose, but you can add a table if appropriate to help better portray this information. Note that if a table is included, the table must be explained in the prose and cannot stand alone.*
7. **Population and Sample.** *Describe the population you wish to study; identify your sampling technique; justify your sampling technique in terms of its ability to get you a useful and valid sample. Discuss limitations of sample, if any. Address IRB issues, including how you will protect human rights, ensure anonymity, and gain consent.*
8. **Data Collection.** *Explain in detail the how the instrument will be administered. Include a timeline for data collection, participant contact procedures and frequencies, etc. How you will enter the data and treat missing data?*
9. **Data Analysis.** *For each research question (and hypothesis where applicable), how you will analyze the data—which statistical analysis method you will use (and justify this choice).*
10. **Reliability and Validity.** *Address how you will assure these aspects of your study. What tests for collinearity, homogeneity, normal distribution, et cetera will you use?*
11. **Final Paragraph.** *Summarize the chapter and briefly introduce what will be covered in Chapters 4 and 5 of your dissertation.*

### **Chapter Three: Methodology** Qualitative Study

1. **Guiding Research Questions.** *Provide your guiding research questions.*
2. **Theoretical/Conceptual Framework.** *Describe the theoretical/conceptual framework that you will be using in your study and provide a rationale on how the different theories and/or concepts are applicable to your study.*
3. **Research Approach.** *1) Identify the type of research study you are going to do (i.e., ethnography, phenomenology, narrative inquiry, etc.) and justify your choice. Make sure to refer to traditions or experts for your type of study; this helps your reader place your study in the context of the guidance provided by*

- experts. 2) Give an overview of your research approach, including underlying philosophies (if applicable), key players, development, and critique.
4. **Research Site and Participants.** You need to describe your research site, participants, participant selection process, and justify why you need this research site and these individuals to answer your research questions. Address recruitment and IRB issues, including how you will protect human rights, ensure anonymity or confidentiality, and gain consent.
  5. **Data Collection.** 1) Address sources of data (for triangulation, if required). 2) Describe the steps, in order, of your data collection. This is a “how to” manual for someone who might want to repeat your study. Put a sub-header for each type of data such as Participant Interviews, Observations, Archival Documents, Field/Expanded Notes, and give the steps necessary to obtain each type.
  6. **Trustworthiness/Credibility.** You must address trustworthiness and credibility issues: this is done usually through member checking, peer debriefing, checking your decisions, et cetera.
  7. **Data Analysis.** Describe, in detail, how you will a) identify, classify, code or label, and order or combine your themes; b) how you will verify or triangulate themes or other findings; c) how you will handle inconsistencies; and d) how you will create your theory (if your study involves grounded theory). Be very detailed. Have a plan. Make sure to include the scholars that you will be using for your analysis.
  8. **Positionality.** Identify the researcher’s preconceptions or biases and how these will be addressed during data collection or analysis.
  9. **Final Paragraph.** Summarize the chapter and briefly introduce what will be covered in Chapters 4 and 5 of your dissertation.

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>
----------------------------

There is no specific page count for this question; all items must be described and justified in depth.

Completeness:

Conforms to APA 7th edition:

**Evaluation Scoring**

Exceeds Expectations:  
Meets Expectations:  
Fails to Meet Expectations: