Ph.D. Qualifying Examination and Dissertation Proposal

Procedures and Forms

**Preparation:**

- During the semester of the Doctoral Screening process, the student and adviser collaborate on proposed coursework and begin discussions regarding research areas, methodological preparation and potential topics for the dissertation.

- When the student is close to completing required coursework (58 units), the student and adviser further define dissertation topic and discuss possible members for the 5 person Qualifying Examination Committee.

**Committee membership requirements:**

- The qualifying exam committee is composed of no fewer than five members, although additional members may be included at the student’s and committee chair’s discretion. The committee chair and at least two additional members must be affiliated with the student’s program. The committee chair must be from the student’s home department. Faculty eligible to serve as committee chairs and members include tenured and tenure track faculty, and non-tenure track faculty of outstanding stature who have a documented record of exceptional expertise and superior achievement in a field relevant to the exam and who have been approved by the dean of the school. At least three members of the committee must be tenured or tenure track. Visiting faculty may not serve on qualifying exam committees.

- Requests for non-tenure track faculty committee appointments are submitted to PhD program office. The PhD Governance Committee reviews the request and makes a recommendation to the Dean. Final approval is granted by the Dean. **Requests must be submitted at least two weeks before the exam begins.**

- Requests for remote participation (Skype) are submitted to PhD program office. The student, chair and outside member must be physically present at the defense meeting. **Requests must be submitted at least two weeks before the exam begins.**
After required coursework is completed:

Before or during this period, the student and adviser collaborate on the questions that may be part of the examination. The questions generally include the following components: 1. Literature review 2. Theoretical framework 3. Research methodology. Although the student and adviser collaborate on the proposed questions, the actual questions are not known to the student until the exam begins.

During this period, the student, in collaboration with adviser, will begin to prepare the Teaching and Research Portfolios:

- The teaching portfolio reflects the student’s experiences as a Teaching Assistant. The 5-10 page dossier includes course syllabi, teaching evaluations (if available), an analysis of the experience and student’s teaching philosophy.
- The research portfolio reflects the student’s development and productivity in the area of writing from the point of entry into the Ph.D. program. The student’s CV and examples of articles that students have submitted or published, and/or research projects that have been completed will be provided to the Committee at the qualifying exam defense meeting.

Enrollment options:

- **GRSC 800, section 36600 – Studies for the Qualifying Examination.** Enrollment in the course is usually the semester prior to exam commencement. This course satisfies full-time student status. PhD program office will request D clearance from the Graduate School on the student’s behalf.

- **EDUC 791, section 26681 – Preparation for the Dissertation Proposal.** Students usually enroll in this course during the semester that they are actually taking the exam. The PhD program office provides D clearance for this one unit course that satisfies the full-time student status.

Prior to Starting the Examination:

- The student will complete the *Appointment of Committee* form, to formally establish the guidance committee. Students initiate the paperwork and submit the signed form to the program director.

- Once the committee is determined, the student will complete the *Request to Take the Qualifying Examination* form. The completed form is submitted to program director.

- The student completes the *Program of Study* template and submits it to the program office. Program director will review the student’s program of study to verify that the student has compiled with all degree requirements and will be eligible to take the Qualifying Examination.

Forms: [http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_guidelines_forms_03.html](http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_guidelines_forms_03.html)

- Student and advisor determine start date of the exam and notify the PhD program office.
• The chair and the committee finalize the questions which are emailed to the PhD program office at least one week prior to the commencement of the exam.

• Completed Appointment of Committee, Request to the Take the Qualifying Examination, and Request for Remote Participation (if applicable) forms must be provided to the PhD program office prior to the start of the examination.

The Examination Begins:

• At approximately 9:00 am on the exam start date, the PhD program office will email the student (cc Committee members) the exam questions. The student has 30 calendar days to complete the “open book” exam. It is due on by 5:00 pm on the 31st day. The student emails the completed exam (PDF) to all five committee members and the PhD program office. If members request paper copies, the student will deliver copies to their offices by 5:00 pm the next business day.

• Examination Criteria:
The exam is an original paper written by the student on a question that has been worked out with and approved by the Guidance Committee. The paper will be no less than 25 and no more than 50 pages double spaced, excluding references and footnotes. The question will have an explicit theoretical, methodological, and content focus in the student’s chosen area. Students are encouraged to make extensive use of the literature. Critical reviews of the literature or reports on empirical research are acceptable, as are papers that deal with a research project that the student has conducted. The paper must follow the APA documentation format and should be of publishable quality. Students may have colleagues read drafts of their work, but the text must be entirely their own. The services of the Doctoral Support Center are not available for the Qualifying Examination.

• It is customary to provide at least two weeks for the committee to read the examination.

• The student will notify the PhD program office regarding the day, time and location of the defense meeting. Meetings usually are approximately 90 – 120 minutes. If desired, the PhD program office can assist in reserving a room for the meeting.

• The Teaching and Research Portfolios should be emailed to the committee several days prior to the defense meeting.

Defense Meeting (aka Oral Exam):

• On the day of the meeting, the PhD program office will provide the following forms to the Committee Chair:
  • Report on Qualifying Examination
  • Review of Teaching and Research Portfolios

• The Committee Chair will “officiate” over the meeting. The first portion of the meeting will be a review of the examination and suggestions for the dissertation
proposal. At least 20 minutes should be reserved for a discussion of the *Teaching and Research Portfolios*.

- At the conclusion of the meeting, the chair (or representative) will return the forms to the PhD program office.

**Advancement to Candidacy:**

- After passing the Qualifying Examination, the student is Advanced to Candidacy.

- The student will enroll in EDUC 794 (Dissertation) the following semester and all subsequent semesters until the dissertation has been approved and submitted to the Graduate School Thesis Editor.

- The Qualifying Examination Committee is disbanded and the student appoints the dissertation committee.

**Dissertation Committee Requirements:**

- The dissertation committee is composed of at least three members, although additional members may be included at the student's and committee chair's discretion. The committee chair and at least one additional member must be affiliated with the student's program. The committee chair must be from the student's home department. Faculty eligible to serve as committee chairs and members include tenured and tenure track faculty, and non-tenure track faculty of outstanding stature who have a documented record of exceptional expertise and superior achievement in a field relevant to the dissertation and who have been approved by the dean of the school. At least two members of the committee must be tenured or tenure track. Visiting faculty may not serve on dissertation committees.

- Requests for non-tenure track faculty committee appointments are submitted to PhD program office. The PhD Governance Committee reviews the request and makes a recommendation to the Dean. Final approval is granted by the Dean. Requests must be submitted at least two weeks before the exam begins.

- Requests for remote participation (Skype) are submitted to PhD program office. The student, chair and outside member must be physically present at the defense meeting. Requests must be submitted at least two weeks before the exam begins.

- When the committee is finalized, the student will complete the *Appointment of Committee* form (with signatures of all committee members). The completed form is given to the PhD program office.

**Dissertation Proposal**
At separate meeting, after the Dissertation Committee has been appointed, the student will then defend a dissertation proposal. The proposal is an entirely original document. It is not the same manuscript as the Qualifying Examination.

**Dissertation Proposal Basics:**

The proposal will contain at least the following components:

1. Statement of purpose (i.e., what you intend to do and why).
2. A review of the pertinent literature that addresses the theory and empirical work that informs your research and relates to the questions being posed.
3. The hypotheses or research questions that will be posed in your study.
4. The research designs, including: the type of methodology to be employed e.g., qualitative, quasi-experimental, etc. and why this design is appropriate given the purpose of the inquiry. This section should also include a discussion of the data sources the student will draw upon and any logistical and/or human subjects protection issues that can be anticipated and how these will be addressed; the sampling plan; operationalization of the variables and the measures and data collection techniques you will use; and the data analysis plan, including the kinds of analytic procedures to be used and why these are appropriate to answering the study questions or hypotheses.
5. A work plan which details the tasks to be done, the time frame within which they will be accomplished, the resources (including cooperation needed from agencies) that will be necessary to complete the work. A Gantt or Milestone chart is helpful.
6. A draft of a complete Human Subjects application, which will be ready to be submitted to USC immediately after the proposal hearing.
7. A bibliography.
8. Appendices, including copies of instruments.

The fully developed dissertation proposal not only affords the student an opportunity to think through the conceptual, methodological and practical issues that will arise, but it is also a way to explain and defend the proposal to the committee. The proposal must be of sufficient length and detail, to serve as a kind of contract between the student and his/her committee. To the extent that this process has occurred at the proposal stage, the committee will be in a better position to critique the work and assist the student with his/her future research.
The qualifying examination committee is normally composed of five members, although additional members may be included at the student’s and committee chair’s discretion. The committee chair and at least two additional members must be affiliated with the student’s program. Faculty eligible to serve as committee chairs and members include tenured and tenure track faculty, and non-tenure track faculty of outstanding stature who have a documented record of exceptional expertise and superior achievement in their field. At least three members of the committee must be tenured or tenure track. Visiting faculty may not serve on qualifying exam committees.

The original form is to be kept in the department and a signed copy provided to the student.

### Student Information

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### Committee Members

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Revised September 2013
Request to Take the PhD Qualifying Examination

When signed by all parties, this form indicates approval to sit for the qualifying examination. Present the completed form to the dean’s office at least 30 days prior to the first day of the exam. The original form is to be kept in the department and a signed copy provided to the student.

Student Name: ___________________________________________  Student I.D.#______________________

Phone: ___________________ E-mail:________________________  School: ______________________

Major: __________________ POST Code:________

I request permission to take the Qualifying Examination as administered by my Qualifying Exam Committee in ____________ semester of 20____. I understand that both written and oral parts of the Qualifying Examination must be taken on the USC Campus.

Signature: ____________________________________     Date: ________________

The department or program verifies that the student has satisfactorily completed all pre-Qualifying Examination requirements:

GPA: _____(minimum of 3.0) Units: _______ (minimum of 24 units in residence)

Students who have completed all coursework for the PhD and who are not otherwise enrolled during the semester in which the Qualifying Examination is to be taken enroll in GRSC 800: Studies for Qualifying Examination. D-clearance for GRSC 800 can be obtained by calling the Graduate School at 213-740-9033.

Students may not enroll in 794A until the semester after having passed the Qualifying Examination. However, if a student passes the Qualifying Examination prior to the Add/Drop date of a given semester, then s/he registers for 794A in that semester.
REPORT ON DEFENSE OF DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

| Name: _______________________________ | Date: ________________ |
| Last                                | First                   | MI |
| USC ID #: __________________________ | E-Mail: ___________________ |
| Advisor: ___________________________ | Phone: ____________________ (Area Code) |

*PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO Ph.D. PROGRAM OFFICE*

| Date Received: __________________________ | ____________________________ |
| Filed: ____________________________ |

**PROPOSAL APPROVED**
Dissertation Topic: ______________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

**PROPOSAL APPROVED WITH COMMENTS**
Student must complete/satisfy the following conditions prior to approval of dissertation proposal:

(1) _______________________________________________________________________________
(2) _______________________________________________________________________________
(3) _______________________________________________________________________________

Conditions must be met by the following date _______________________________________
Follow up meeting required ___ Y ___ N  Scheduled on ____/_____/_______

**PROPOSAL NOT APPROVED**

NOTE: Student has two opportunities to present his/her proposal and seek unanimous approval from the committee.

DISCUSSION COMMITTEE:

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*PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO Ph.D. PROGRAM OFFICE*

Date Received: __________________________
Ph.D. Program Office
USC THE Graduate SCHOOL

REPORT ON PH.D. QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

1. This report form is to be retained by the student's Department and provided to the Guidance Committee at the time of the oral portion of the Examination. The student's signed "Appointment of Committee" form should also be provided to the Guidance Committee at that time.

2. This form must be completed and signed by all members of the Committee immediately following the oral portion of the Examination and returned directly to the Department Chair or signature within 48 hours. The Department Chair must forward a copy to the Graduate School within five days. A prompt return of this form to the Graduate School will facilitate a prompt entry of the Date of Candidacy on SIS.

3. A COPY OF THIS FORM MUST BE GIVEN TO THE STUDENT AFTER IT HAS BEEN SIGNED BY THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR. The original form should be filed in the Department.

Student Name: (Last) (First) (Middle)

POST Code:

FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL ONLY--

Degree:

School:

Major:

Additional information and supporting documents have been uploaded with petition

Submitted by: (Department Staff Advisor)

Student Information

USC ID #:

Primary Email: Secondary Email: Phone:

(Draft)

Guidance Committee completes this section

☐ PASSED: The above named student is hereby recommended to the Graduate School for admission to candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy as of this date: ________________________________

- Students must enroll in 794A in the semester after passing the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination. If a student passes the Qualifying Examination prior to the Add/Drop date of a given semester, they must register for 794A in that semester.

☐ NOT PASSED: The above named student has NOT PASSED the Qualifying Examination as of this date: ________________________________

☐ A. The Committee recommends the termination of this student's Ph.D. degree objective.

☐ B. Being the first administration of the Qualifying Examination, the Committee agrees to offer this student a re-examination to be administered after six months and within twelve months of this date, subject to the following conditions:

- This student must file a new Request to Take the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination form, indicating that it is a re-examination prior to the beginning of the semester for which the examination is requested and at least 30 days prior to the start of the re-examination.

Guidance Committee

(Committee Chair)

Rank

Signature

Department

Approval of Dean/Department Chair/Director

(Dean/ Department Chair/ Director) (Printed Name) Date

For Graduate School only-- Date of Candidacy has been entered on SIS by the Graduate School

Notes to Student:
If you have passed your Qualifying Examination you are now required, as soon as possible, to nominate a Dissertation Committee. You must nominate all or some of the Guidance Committee. Until you appoint a Dissertation Committee, the Guidance Committee will have responsibility for your program of study. Please use the "Appointment of Committee" form for this purpose.
The dissertation committee is composed of at least three members, although additional members may be included at the student’s and committee chair’s discretion. The committee chair and at least one additional member must be affiliated with the student’s program. The committee chair must be from the student’s home department. Faculty eligible to serve as committee chairs and members include tenured and tenure track faculty, and non-tenure track faculty of outstanding stature who have a documented record of exceptional expertise and superior achievement in a field relevant to the dissertation and who have been approved by the dean of the school. At least two members of the committee must be tenured or tenure track. Visiting faculty may not serve on dissertation committees. The original form is to be kept in the department and a signed copy provided to the student.

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| Student                      |               |           |      |
| Director/Department Chair    |               |           |      |
| Dean                         |               |           |      |

Revised January 2013
Student Name: __________________________________________
USC I.D.#________________________________
Last First MI
Advisor: ________________________________
Email: ______________________________________
Date: ______________________________________

Qualifying Exam—start date: _________________________
Qualifying Exam—completion date: _________________
Qualifying Exam—defense meeting date: _______________

Review of Research Portfolio

☐ Approved  ☐ Approved with comments (below)  ☐ Not Approved
Student must complete/satisfy the following conditions prior to approval of Research Portfolio
(1) ___________________________________________________________
(2) ___________________________________________________________
(3) ___________________________________________________________
Follow up meeting required _____ Y _____ N
Scheduled on ____/____/____

Review of Teaching Portfolio

☐ Approved  ☐ Approved with comments (below)  ☐ Not Approved
Student must complete/satisfy the following conditions prior to approval of Teaching Portfolio
(1) ___________________________________________________________
(2) ___________________________________________________________
(3) ___________________________________________________________
Follow up meeting required _____ Y _____ N
Scheduled on ____/____/____

COMMITTEE SIGNATURES:
Chair ________________________________ Date: ________________________________
Member ________________________________
Member ________________________________
Member ________________________________
Member ________________________________
Outside Member ________________________________

*PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO PH.D. PROGRAM OFFICE*

____________________________________ Date Received: ____________________________
Ph.D. Program Office
Sample Qualifying Exam Questions
Rossier Ph.D. Qualifying Examination

Qualifying Examination Criteria:

The exam is an original paper written by the student on a question that has been worked out with and approved by the Guidance Committee. The paper will be no less than 25 and no more than 50 pages double spaced, excluding references and footnotes. The question will have an explicit theoretical, methodological, and content focus in the student’s chosen area. Students are encouraged to make extensive use of the literature. Critical reviews of the literature or reports on empirical research are acceptable, as are papers that deal with a research project that the student has conducted. The paper must follow the APA documentation format and should be of publishable quality. Students may have colleagues read drafts of their work, but the text must be entirely their own. The services of the Doctoral Support Center may be not utilized for the Qualifying Examination.

Sample Qualifying Examination Questions – cohorts 2004 – 2009 (random order):

1. One focus of school finance research has been to look at how public schools spend the resources available to them. Trace the history of this research, and discuss how the findings from these studies have been applied to analyses of equity and adequacy.

2. State aid formulas that distribute funds to public school districts often make adjustments in the amount of money a district receives. These adjustments generally are made for student characteristics, district characteristics and price differences. Describe the policy tools available for making such adjustments and to the extent possible, the effect these adjustments have on the equity and adequacy of school finance systems.

3. One common adjustment for district characteristics provides additional resources for small schools and/or small school districts. This is typically done under the assumptions of diseconomies of scale in the provision of educational services. Describe the research on scale economies in education and discuss how this research might be applied to school finance distribution formulas in the future. Be sure to consider the recent interest in understanding the impact of smaller schools on student learning.
1. The evaluation of graduate education has risen in importance over the last twenty years. Outline a traditional framework for defining quality in graduate education, including the current system for monitoring and ensuring graduate education quality in the U.S., and discuss the theoretical and practical strengths and weaknesses of that framework. Be sure to make use of the extant literature, and consider the underlying theoretical notions attached to that framework.

2. The fastest growing sector in higher education is that of for-profit colleges and universities. Discuss the disproportionate rise of for-profits, including explanations for its causes, and pay particular attention to (a) graduate education, and (b) the measures employed to evaluate success and quality.

3. Provide two possible methodologies that might be employed if one were to COMPARATIVELY study graduate education in a traditional and non-traditional (i.e. for-profit) setting. In particular, consider the fundamental purpose of the research and the research design that might be utilized and the sampling strategy with a focus on three constituencies: the organization, the discipline, and the student.

The implementation of the federal No Child Left Behind Act has set the stage for schools to become “data-rich.” The federal government, states, and districts all play a role in defining and supporting how data will be used at the local level. However, there is no “recipe” for data driven decision making, and indeed there are often tensions within and among these policy groups, as well among researchers and practitioners. Thus, at the local level, data-driven decision making occurs to varying degrees and with varying results, depending on the context. So too, teachers engage in the use of data and evidence for different reasons and with different results.

1. Discuss why and how teachers use data/evidence, referencing relevant literature. As part of your answer, please discuss the decisions or issues for the individual teacher (e.g., their notions or understandings of data and evidence), as well as the broader contexts (e.g., the pre-existing school culture with respect to data, supports) of their work, noting possible enablers and constraints to the use of data. Please discuss how the policy assumptions about the use of data alter traditional school reform theories with regard to the teachers’ role in the classroom.

2. Building upon the above, suggest one or two theoretical frameworks that might be useful in studying how teachers use data/evidence to inform instruction. If you use a comparison, be sure to consider their strengths, weaknesses and how each framework might view the issues differently.

3. Explain how we would be able to learn whether data use by teachers makes a difference, imagining that district or state policymakers were part of your audience. Identify, provide the rationale for and describe research strategies that might be employed in addressing this question.
There is a great deal of attention to language minority (English Learner) students in the research literature. Part of this is due to long-standing and continuing differences in achievement for this group, especially in the area of reading and literacy. The research in this area is complicated by the fact that there is no consistent definition of the population. In addition, there are many methodologically-related factors which make research with this population more difficult than research with English-speaking groups. Given this information, you are being asked to review the research and present an essay where you:

1. Review the various definitions of English learners. How do they differ or how are they similar? How do they reflect different theoretical perspectives? What are weaknesses or strengths in capturing the heterogeneity of the population?

2. Review the research on the development of reading/literacy for 2nd language learners. What seem to be the key variables that have developmental significance? What are limitations and gaps in the way that existing studies have looked at this area? How do these studies compare to each other? What new direction in research do they suggest?

3. In your review of this literature, describe the gaps or problems in the existing studies from a methodological perspective, paying particular attention to methodological issues in tracking developmental progress as well as assessment. What is the optimal approach(es) to capturing developmental trends? In your answer, point out why those optimal approaches are best or what advantages they provide.

Low-income students experience challenges with regard to access and equity to higher education. While different low-income students (e.g. youth in foster care and undocumented youth) face different problems, they also have similarities.

1. Discuss the similarities and differences between homeless youth and low-income students with regard to education in general and higher education in particular. Once you have outlined these similarities and differences of the two populations compare and contrast two theoretical frameworks that might be useful in studying homeless youth. Be sure to consider their strengths, weaknesses and how each framework might view educational structures in which adolescents find themselves.

2. Finally, choose two qualitative strategies (e.g. life history, case study) that might be employed in studying homeless youth and the educational process. Explain how each strategy is supported by an underlying theoretical framework (e.g. social construction). In particular, focus on issues of veracity, trustworthiness, and the standpoint/reflexivity of the researcher.
Higher education is characterized by the problem of racial inequities in student outcomes, which may result from unquestioned policies, practices and norms that perpetuate structural racism. One challenge in addressing such policies, practices and norms is the documented reluctance within higher education institutions to openly discuss topics of race in meaningful ways. An additional challenge is that higher education institutions are characterized by distinct characteristics that make them resistant to simple, top-down approaches to change that may be more readily employed within other organizations. Finally, like all organizations, higher education institutions are subject to a tendency to reproduce existing cultures. All of these factors represent constraints on the agency of individuals who might seek to work toward changing higher education institutions in the interest of greater racial equity.

1. In considering the aforementioned constraints, explain how the methodology of action inquiry may serve as an effective approach to bringing about change in higher education institutional cultures, specifically change toward greater racial equity. How does the assumption of individual agency undergird action inquiry? How might this agency manifest within these constraints?

2. Select one or more theoretical frameworks that might be used to examine how individuals who engage in action inquiry methods effect equity-focused change within their respective higher education institutions. The framework(s) should appropriately address such concerns as:

- The transition by action inquiry members from inquirers to message carriers in terms of their findings, and the potential resistance to messages that may contradict the dominant narratives within the campus cultures
- The relevance of individuals' positionalities (professional position, race, gender, etc.) as they engage in change efforts
- The role that members' previous experiences or identities may play in their agency decisions and communications
- The role that new language, tools and data acquired from the action inquiry setting may play in members' communications

Review and synthesize past research in which the framework(s) have been employed to study questions related to the previous concerns, both inside and outside of higher education, and what has been found via this research.

In summarizing, make a case for how the selected framework(s) provide a useful lens to study the agency of action inquiry members, as well as how the study stands to make a contribution to existing gaps in the literature for these framework(s).

3. Select a methodology that would be appropriate for the study of how individuals engaged in action inquiry develop into change agents (or exercise agency). Briefly contrast it with another methodology that might also be appropriate, comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the two. Finally, use the previously reviewed literature to defend your methodological selection. How does the methodological approach align with the questions and frameworks articulated herein?

In utilizing this methodology to study the agency of action inquiry members, what theoretical and paradigmatic tensions might emerge? How might these tensions be resolved? How does one achieve trustworthiness?
1. A third of incoming students are underprepared to write at a college-level and are diverted to writing remediation. What constitutes college writing readiness according to the extant literature? Identify and describe the problems associated with writing remediation and develop a rationale for pre-college options that can improve students’ readiness upon postsecondary matriculation.

2. Present and critique at least two theories – one cognitive (i.e. process writing theory) and one sociocultural (i.e. funds of knowledge) – that support investigating the influence of classroom writing experiences on college writing readiness. In your response be sure to discuss how these theories might be impacted by the particular group under study (e.g. girls, Latinos, etc).

3. Describe and compare no more than two methodologies to understanding student literacies that may be used to study the implications of classroom college writing readiness. Be sure to discuss literature that has employed these methodologies and consider their strengths and weaknesses. Finally, compare and contrast data collection and analysis techniques associated with the two methodologies selected, and consider the suitability of these techniques for research on students’ classroom writing practices.

1. In the last twenty years, research on student college choice has increasingly focused on the contexts surrounding students’ postsecondary choices. This research has resulted in the development of ecologically oriented, conceptual models, in an attempt to unify empirical findings and honor the complexities surrounding student college choice. Select two ecologically oriented models of student college choice. Discuss the strengths and limitations, as grounded in prior empirical research, of applying these models to military-connected youth.

2. Ecological approaches to social science research are complex. Complex methods and analyses are thus needed to understand interactions between multiple ecological contexts and resulting social behavior(s). In the last decade, mixed method approaches have increasingly grown in favor given their ability to capture the complexities surrounding human action/behavior. The growing trend towards the use of mixed methods, however, has led to a number of paradigmatic debates regarding the appropriateness of mixing approaches. Discuss the strengths and limitations of using mixed methods within a positivistic paradigm. Be sure to discuss the strengths of alternative paradigms as part of your response.

3. Design a study to examine student college choice among military-connected youth. In your design consider the complexities surrounding student college choice among military-connected youth. Be sure to discuss your method(s) as part of your response.
1. Community colleges have two primary missions: preparation for transfer or for immediate job entry through occupational education. Although these two missions remain distinct, scholars argue that there has been a “blurring of the lines” between missions in recent years. Please discuss this trend. Include in your discussion the following:
   
   a. The history of career and technical education in the community college. What was the original purpose of technical education? How has technical education changed over time?
   
   b. The challenges career and technical students experience in the transfer process.
   
   c. Current transfer pathways and state/system policies for technical students. Please discuss the implications these transfer options have for technical students in higher education today and specifically for racial equity in higher education.

2. Theories about policy implementation have traditionally emphasized structure, inputs, outputs, and roles. More recently, scholars have shifted their attention toward cultural and critical analyses of policy implementation. Describe and compare at least three policy analysis frameworks that would be useful in studying policy implementation. What are the core constructs of the frameworks you selected for discussion? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these frameworks?

3. Please describe an appropriate research methodology to study the implementation of transfer policy within two-year technical colleges from a cultural perspective. Provide a rationale for your choice of methodology, as well as a review of strengths and weaknesses. If relevant, discuss your role in shaping the dialogues about transfer in Wisconsin’s technical colleges as part of the Transfer Equity Study.

1. Do science and engineering bachelor's degree holders who attend community college experience any disadvantages in terms of educational and professional outcomes? Provide a theoretical framework for interpreting your findings. What are the limitations (e.g., methodologically) of your findings? How might these limitations be overcome in future work?

2. Do science and engineering bachelor's degree holders who attend community college experience any disadvantages in terms of educational and professional outcomes? Provide a theoretical framework for interpreting your findings. What are the limitations (e.g., methodologically) of your findings? How might these limitations be overcome in future work?
1. To ensure that there will be a domestic workforce with the necessary academic credentials to occupy future job openings, the National Science Board (2010) stresses that it is necessary to capitalize on untapped talent by increasing the number of racial ethnic minority (REM) individuals pursuing baccalaureate degrees in STEM related fields. The National Science board assumes that if more REM individuals enter and complete baccalaureate programs in STEM, they will pursue advanced degrees in STEM or enter the U.S. STEM workforce. However, baccalaureate degree attainment does not necessarily translate into graduate school enrollment or an occupation in STEM. Discuss the related literature on post-baccalaureate outcomes—graduate school enrollment and employment. In your discussion identify gaps in the literature and consider institutional type (e.g., 4 year, community college, and for profit-institutions).

2. The work on student access and choice can provide a model for exploring students’ post-baccalaureate choices - graduate school and/or employment. Research models on student college choice are commonly grounded on human, social and cultural capital. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each form of capital in relation to student college choice.

3. What quantitative methods have been commonly used to examine graduate school enrollment and employment? Choose two from among these commonly used techniques and discuss the strengths and limitations of each technique and when it is appropriate to utilize them.

1. Describe the theoretical frameworks within both education and economics supporting the use of educational accountability policies. Based on these frameworks, how can accountability enhance the educational opportunities for traditionally underserved populations?

2. Review the empirical research on the major intended and unintended consequences of educational accountability policies, both pre- and post-No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and discuss how this evidence might be used (e.g. in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) on state accountability legislation) to mitigate some of the unintended consequences of these policies.

3. Describe how California’s dual-accountability system (API & AYP) and its Algebra policy for 8th graders creates a unique, and likely unintended, relationship between low performing schools and algebra enrollment for eighth-grade students. Propose a robust methodology to empirically investigate the effects of the dual-accountability system on algebra enrollment and long-term school and student outcomes.