This document is a sample capstone proposal submitted by an M.A. TESOL student. Read on to see how this student put together their proposal.

MA TESOL CAPSTONE PROPOSAL

Please type your responses (single-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font) into this form, and submit 4 hard copies to the MA TESOL Program Coordinator.

Name: Deirdre Hallman
Student ID#: 900815960
Expected Graduation Date: Fall 2015
English 891 Instructor (if known): Abeywickrama

Working Title of Project: Identifying the Successes of IEP Training Among University-Matriculated Alumni

Faculty you have consulted for this project: Santos

List the courses (in TESOL, Linguistics, or other program areas) you will be integrating into this capstone project: ENG 700, 732

Capstone Description (350 words):
In the space below briefly describe the key questions your capstone project will address:

Each year, approximately 60 students matriculate at San Francisco State University (SFSU) after preparatory language studies at the American Language Institute (ALI) on the same campus. I propose a capstone project that investigates student perceptions of their academic English competence at the various levels of ALI studies, among the current ALI students, and in composition and content classes at SFSU among ALI alumni. There is a dearth of research into the trajectory of academic English acquisition from the point of view of the learner. I hope that the results of this project will inform ALI curriculum planning while creating an opportunity for current and former students to reflect on their successes. It is not my intention to write a critique of the ALI program, but rather to identify elements of its curriculum that its alumni perceive to have been the most useful to their university studies. The evolution of student perceptions will be investigated by including current ALI students at every level, from beginning through advanced. Although there may be more focus on reading and writing skills, especially because the pathway for locating the participant students will be through writing classes, speaking and listening skills will also be an area of focus. An inquiry into concerns of student acceptance into the academic discourse community and self-identification as a successful member of that community will also be conducted. These are my research questions:

1. What are the perceived needs, wants and lacks in achieving competence in academic English among current ALI students at all levels and ALI alumni currently studying at the university?
2. How do student perceptions of needs, wants and lacks in achieving competence in academic English change from level to level within the ALI and post-ALI, at the university?
3. How do student perceptions of needs, wants and lacks in achieving competence in academic English change across the curriculum, i.e., in content vs. composition classes?

A corollary project will be to assemble a significant number of ALI alumni for a panel presentation and discussion with current ALI students with the purpose of providing the current students with a successful model of transition to the university.

Revision 7/14/15
Approach and/or Methods (350 words):

Methodology for data collection will include student questionnaires and interviews completed on a voluntary basis by current ALI students at all levels and by ALI alumni currently studying at the university. Due to university privacy concerns, participants must be limited to those students who self-identify after being informed of the study through announcements made either by me personally or by instructors in the Composition for Multilingual Studies (CMS) program who choose to facilitate this communication. All ALI alumni take their composition classes through the CMS, so I expect to find a large number of participants there. The announcement will inform the students about the study and invite their participation, which will be handled via surveymonkey.com so that class time will not be required for their participation.

Questionnaires will address all skill areas: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some speaking and listening items (such as note-taking and communication with professors) may be drawn from Ferris’s (1998) study and the overall design of that study will provide a model for the current study. Reading and writing items will include such tasks as paragraphing and paraphrasing. The questionnaires will investigate levels of difficulty experienced by students across a host of tasks and will probe the connections between the students’ perceived successes and challenges and their learning experience at the ALI. Liu, Chang, Yang and Sun (2011) used the categories of “necessities, wants and lacks,” borrowing Hutchinson and Waters’ (1987) terminology, to create a needs self-assessment questionnaire, and I find that a useful framework for investigating students’ perceptions. The questionnaires will be composed primarily of multiple-choice questions evaluated on a Likert scale, but will also include open-ended questions and an opportunity for students to make comments. Demographic information, including the number and level of courses taken at the ALI, will be collected.

Using the Leki & Carson (1997) study as a model, two series of interviews will be conducted in an effort to measure early- and late-semester performance and to collect data about the types of writing the students are engaged in across the curriculum. This participant group will be determined once alumni identification is complete, as conducting interviews with all questionnaire participants may prove to be unfeasible.

Timeline
(attached)

Outline
(attached)

Bibliography
(attached)

Capstone proposals will be considered incomplete unless a timeline, outline and bibliography are attached.

Student Signature

July 5, 2015

Date

Date Received: ___/___/____

Approved by: ___________________________
**How Is It Working? Identifying the Successes of IEP Training Among University-Matriculated Alumni**

*Deirdre Hallman*

**San Francisco State University MATESOL Program**

**December 2015**

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**TIMELINE**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>August</th>
<th>Draft Literature Review</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Draft Questionnaires for Advising Feedback</td>
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| Week of Sept. 7 | * Meet with Advisor and ALI Director for feedback on Questionnaires  
|                 | * Finalize Questionnaires                       |
|                 | * Contact instructors of classes with likely ALI alumni enrollment re: inviting students to participate |
| Week of Sept. 14| Distribute Questionnaire to participants       |
|                 | → to include Interview invitation               |
| Week of Sept. 21| * Collect and compile Questionnaire responses  |
|                 | * Conduct Phase I Interviews                   |
| Late October    | Conduct Phase II Interviews                    |
| Early November  | ALI Alumni Panel Discussion                    |
| December        | Capstone presentation at MATESOL Conference    |

*Revised 2/14/15*
PROJECT OUTLINE

I. Introduction (1-2 pages)

A. Overview of the project scope:
   Current and former ALI student self-assessment of academic English proficiency and how the ALI serves and served them

B. Rationale:
   No previous tracking of ALI alumni
   Needs assessment to inform curriculum development

C. Outline of the project
   Questionnaires and Interviews with current and former ALI students
   Analysis of data to identify most successful features of ALI curriculum

II. Literature Review (4-5 pages)

A. Brief History of English for Academic Purposes and Intensive English Programs

B. Research on Student Perceptions of Needs

C. Identity and Academic Discourse

III. Body (8-10 pages)

A. Research questions

   1. What are the perceived needs, wants and lacks in achieving competence in academic English among current ALI students at all levels and ALI alumni currently studying at the university?
   2. How do student perceptions of needs, wants and lacks in achieving competence in academic English change from level to level within the ALI and post-ALI, at the university?
   3. How do student perceptions of needs, wants and lacks in achieving competence in academic English change across the curriculum, i.e., in content vs. composition classes?

B. Research context and sample description

C. Methodology

   1. Questionnaires
   2. Interviews
D. Findings

E. Data analysis and interpretation

IV. Conclusion and Final Reflections (2-3 pages)

A. Recommendations for future research

B. Project’s contribution to my future as a TESOL professional
BIBLIOGRAPHY


