

**Critical Analysis and Application:  
The Qualitative Doctoral Dissertation Proposal  
By Brent Kilbourn**

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The main purpose of this article is to present the reader with an overview of the entire doctoral dissertation proposal (chapters 1-3 of the complete dissertation), to dissect each section to expose and detail the required and necessary components, and to show the connection between dissertation proposal and the dissertation itself. In the article, Kilbourne explains the key characteristics of the dissertation proposal, and shows the progression from the proposal to the complete dissertation. The reader can then use this article to evaluate dissertations collected for reference as well as a guide for building their own dissertation proposals.

The parts of the dissertation discussed in depth by Kilbourne include:

- Problem
- significance
- literature review
- theoretical perspective
- questions
- methods
- ethics

A dissertation that I am using as reference for my dissertation topic is “An exploratory study of the presentation of special education law in administrative preparation programs for aspiring administrators”, written by Patricia Richey Powel and submitted in partial fulfillment for

the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Educational Leadership, Policy, and Technology Studies in the graduate school of The University of Alabama.

In this paper, I will be using